

City of Essex Junction
Bike/Walk Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
December 18, 2023

Meeting Attendees: Micah Hagan, Chris Kline, Mark Breslin, Tacy Lincoln, Phil Bieber, Russ Miller-Johnson; Guest: UVM Professor John Lens

Meeting Called to Order: at 7:07 p.m.

Meeting Minutes: Tacy Lincoln volunteered to take minutes for the meeting.

Changes to Agenda/Review/Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the November 20th meeting were unanimously approved. Mark requested to add an item to the agenda: Google Map Update.

Public to be Heard: No comments.

UVM Capstone Project: As a follow up from the November meeting, the Committee suggested that the focus of this project be on identifying the connectivity and the “gaps” in the City’s biking/walking network. Professor Lens indicated that there would be one, and possibly two, groups of students interested in working with the Committee and would like them to attend the regularly scheduled beginning in January 2024 so that they can be informed of the Committee’s work as well as to report on the project’s progress. The BWAC will develop a list of potential “deliverable” outcomes and time-line to discuss with the student groups following the January, 2024 meeting.

Bike Rack Inventory: Phil shared the Bike Rack Inventory Survey https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1vKWI_FFxmWkq-n_6Kb3XgHW-PqXOnXVVosNIUv1n480/edit with Committee members via email. Each member is asked to document their observations of existing bike rack options throughout the City through the link to the survey. Data will be collected, compiled and reported at a BWAC in the near future.

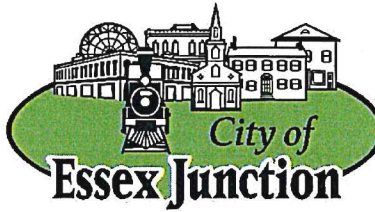
Bike Safety Event: The BWAC plans to partner with the VT Youth Cycling event in the Spring and will need to provide information to Mark no later than February 9, 2024 for the purpose of including in the EJRP brochures.

Upcoming Events of Interest: Chris will send BWAC members a list of the upcoming bike/walk webinars sponsored by Local Motion. Tacy informed the Committee of the Community Dinner and Open House scheduled to be held on January 27 as an opportunity for BWAC to connect with community members at large. Additionally, given Chris’ involvement with a variety of groups related to the BWAC activities, Tacy invited Chris to participate in the City’s Vision and Strategic Planning Focus Groups scheduled to be held in late January.

Google Map Update: The maps have been updated but not yet published for the general public to access. Once the map is public, the Committee would like to reproduce this map in a 11x17 format so as to distribute as needed.

Next Meeting: January 11, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:40 p.m.



MEMORANDUM

TO: City of Essex Junction City Council
FROM: Chelsea Mandigo, Water Quality Superintendent, and
Christopher Yuen, Community Development Director
MEETING DATE: January 11, 2024
SUBJECT: CCRPC FY2025 Unified Planning Grant

Issue: Whether to support three applications for the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for:

1. GIS Services
2. Pearl Street Short-Term Multimodal Improvements Scoping Study
3. A TV condition assessment of select stormwater pipes

Discussion:

Staff has prepared three UPWP applications in descending order of priority:

1. **GIS Services** - GIS services were previously conducted for the City by Town of Essex staff. This benefit was lost with separation. In 2023, CCRPC supported the City's request for GIS support and the need continues until an in-house GIS solution is identified. This request will include assistance for online mapping, keeping stormwater infrastructure maps updated, stormwater utility GIS support, updated zoning district maps, large scale hard copy maps to reflect zoning bylaw amendments and other similar projects.
2. **Pearl Street Short-Term Multimodal Improvements Scoping Study** - In 2018, Essex Junction and the CCRPC commissioned a Scoping Study for Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements along VT Route 15 (Pearl Street), between Susie Wilson Road and West Street Extension. This study produced a \$2.5 Million preferred alternative that proposes the removal of the center median, and the reconfiguration of motor vehicle travel lanes from 4 lanes to 2. The design also includes buffered bike lanes, and the replacement of the existing 5-foot concrete sidewalk with an 8-foot asphalt shared-use path. While this design remains a viable long-term option, City Staff recognizes that near-term funding for a project of this scale is a challenge, as it far exceeds the grant amounts typically awarded through the VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program.

This request is for an update to the 2018 Scoping Study, for a short-term design option that improves multimodal safety and connectivity while minimizing changes to existing curbs, sidewalks, and utilities. This design would also consider the addition of crosswalks and eastbound bus stops within the project area, which currently only has westbound bus service.

3. **A TV condition assessment of select stormwater pipes** - In 2020, 2022 and 2023 the City received a grant from this program to conduct a condition assessment of select portions of the storm sewer system using pipe televising services based on known problem areas or pipe material. The videos

and data provided a condition assessment that developed a prioritization framework for replacement or repair of aging stormwater pipes. We would like to continue this project so that it encompasses as much of the City owned stormwater infrastructure as possible into the priority framework. This framework database/document will then be used as part of the planning process for the stormwater capital fund development in FY25 after the launch of the stormwater utility.

Costs:

1. GIS services- This is a fee for service request. CCRPC will bill at an hourly rate, not to exceed \$10,000. Up to 83 hours will come from Community Development budget and up to 40 hours from the Stormwater budget.
2. Pearl Street Short-Term Multimodal Improvements Scoping Study: \$25,000, with a 20% match required of \$5,000. The match budget would be paid out of the Community Development budget.
3. TV SW Pipe Phase 4: \$50,000 with a 20% match required of \$10,000. The match will be paid out of the Stormwater budget.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the City Council authorize staff to submit the UPWP requests application for GIS Services, and Pearl St Short-Term Multimodal Improvements, and, Phase 4 TV condition assessment of stormwater pipes.

Recommended Motion: It is recommended that the City Council authorize staff to submit the UPWP requests application as drafted.



PROJECT APPLICATION FORM
FY2025 Unified Planning Work Program

Applications should be no more than 6 pages (excluding any maps and letter of support from your governing body to document the availability of the local match and commitment of staff time). **A Project Application Form must be submitted for each project request. If you are submitting more than one request, please indicate projects in order of priority. There are separate forms to request transportation counts and infrastructure inventories. The Deadline for receipt of completed submissions is Friday, January 19, 2024. Please email completed forms in Word format to mdistel@ccrpcvt.org. All forms are available on the CCRPC website: <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/commission/annual-work-plan-budget-finances/>.**

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Submitted by (Name, Title): Christopher Yuen, Community Development Director
Municipality/Agency/Organization: City of Essex Junction
Telephone: 802-878-6944 x1607
Email: cyuen@essexjunction.org

2. PROJECT INFORMATION

a. Project Title: Pearl Street Short-Term Multimodal Improvements Scoping Study

b. Project Location: Pearl Street (VT15), between Susie Wilson Road and West Steet Extension

c. Project Description (200 words max):

Please state whether this is a multi-year effort and identify each phase, and for which phase this application is requesting funding.

In 2018, the CCRPC and the Village of Essex Junction commissioned a Scoping Study for Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements along VT Route 15 (Pearl Street), between Susie Wilson Road and West Street Extension. This study produced a \$2,570,000 preferred alternative that proposes the removal of the center median, and the reconfiguration of motor vehicle travel lanes from 4 lanes to 2. The design also includes buffered bike lanes, and the replacement of the existing 5-foot concrete sidewalk with an 8-foot asphalt shared-use path. While this design remains a viable long-term option, the City recognizes that near-term funding for a project of this scale is a challenge, as it far exceeds the grant amounts typically awarded through the VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program.

The City is interested in an update to the 2018 Scoping Study, for a short-term design option that improves safety and connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians while minimizing changes to existing curbs, sidewalks, and utilities. This design should also consider the addition of crosswalks and eastbound bus stops within the project area, which currently only has westbound stops. This UPWP request is only for the scoping phase of this project and is intended to be a single-year effort.

Figure 1: The 2018 preferred alternative includes both a shared-use path and buffered bike-lanes, but requires extensive changes to curbs, sidewalks, utilities and trees.

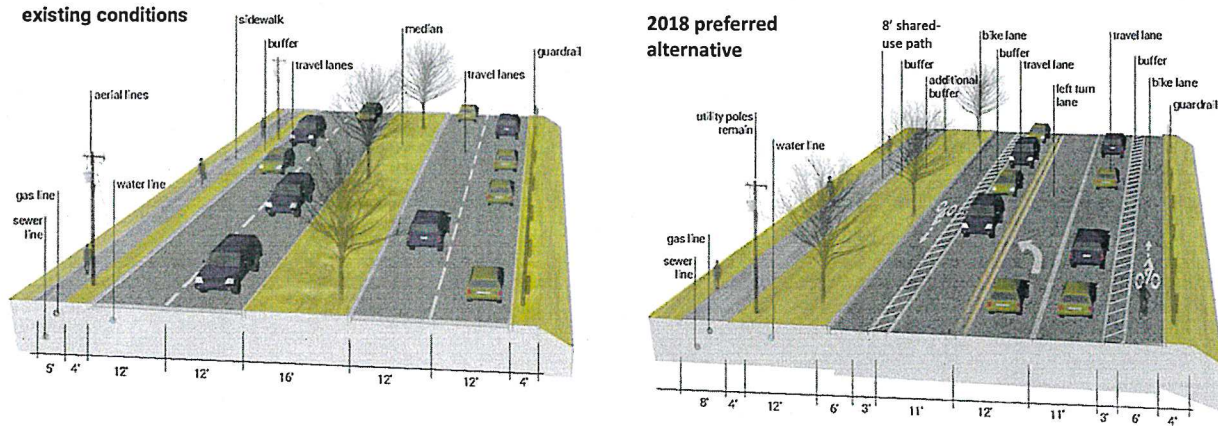
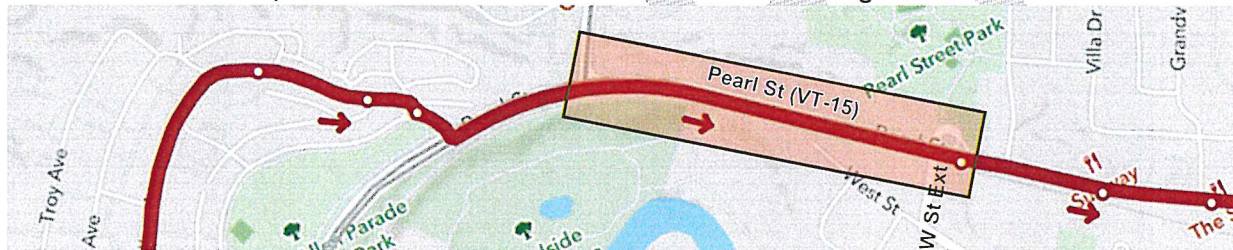


Figure 2: Green Mountain Transit’s Route 2, running every 20 minutes, is among Vermont’s most frequent, all-day transit services, yet eastbound buses currently fly past a ¾ mile stretch of the project area with doors closed, because of the lack of sidewalks and safe crossings.



d. Expected Deliverables:

- Addendum to 2018 Scoping Study that includes the design, cost estimates, and analysis of potential funding and implementation strategies of short-term safety improvements along the project corridor that achieves the following:
 - Improved safety for vulnerable road users
 - Bicycle connectivity along the project corridor between the existing shared-use path west of Susie Wilson Road, and the existing bike lanes east of West Street Extension,
 - If Green Mountain Transit concurs, and if technically feasible, the addition of eastbound bus stops using temporary treatments such as prefabricated temporary bus stop platforms and additional pedestrian crossings.
 - Cost-effective design choices that limit curb reconstruction, utility relocation, and the replacement of existing sidewalks,
 - Can be efficiently maintained with existing City winter operations equipment.

e. Other Project Partners (e.g., other municipalities, agencies, non-profits, consultants, community groups):

- Vermont Agency of Transportation
- Essex Junction Bike-Walk Advisory Committee
- Green Mountain Transit
- Town of Essex

f. Project Cost & Match Requirement:

Please refer to the **FY25 UPWP PROGRAM SUMMARY** for a description of match requirements and check below which applies to your proposal. If matching funds are required, municipalities should attach a letter of support from your governing body to document the availability of the local match and commitment of staff time. Non-municipal partners should provide a letter from their Board or other governing body demonstrating knowledge and support of project request, ability, and intent to provide matching funds, etc.

- **Transportation-Related Projects (PL Funding)**
 - XXXX Transportation and transportation-related land use/water quality projects – 20% non-federal cash match required.
 - The CCRPC may waive the local match requirement for municipal projects deemed to be regionally significant.
 - Transportation Technical Assistance – no local match required
 - Non-Municipal Partner – 20% match required

- **Land Use and Energy Implementation Assistance (ineligible for PL funding)**
 - Non-transportation projects – there is no fee for projects requiring less than 12 hours of CCRPC staff time. Projects over 12 hours will be charged a rate of \$60 per hour.
 - Energy Implementation Assistance – this program provides CCRPC staff assistance to the municipality which, depending upon state grant requirements, may have no local match requirement.
 - Non-transportation projects (including plan and bylaws) – this is a fee-for-service program, cost TBD. We encourage municipalities to also seek Municipal Planning Grants.

Is the Request for CCRPC Staff Assistance Only? (Yes/No)	No
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For Transportation and Transportation-related Land Use/Water Quality (PL Funding) Projects requiring consultants or for non-municipal partners:

Total Project Cost Estimate (100%)	\$25,000
Local Match Required (20% of Total Cost)	\$5,000

Examples:

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Total Project (100%)	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$75,000
Local Match (20%)	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$15,000

Will you accept a partial award? (Yes/No)	No*
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*If CCRPC believes the proposed scope can be achieved with a lower budget, Essex Junction will accept a partial award that meets the adjusted budget.

For Other Land Use (Non-PL Funding) Project Requests (this is a fee-for-service program, cost TBD):

CCRPC staff hours requested:	N/A
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For Non-Transportation Land Use Project Requests, please contact Taylor Newton (TNewton@ccrpcvt.org, (802) 846-4490 ext. 115 to discuss project and budget needs.

For Non-Transportation Water Quality Project Requests, please contact Dan Albrecht (dalbrecht@ccrpcvt.org, (802) 861-0133 to discuss project and budget needs.

h. Public Meeting Requirement:

All municipal applications (local or regional), including match amounts, must be presented to and approved by the governing body at a warned public meeting by the end of March 2024. For non-municipal partners, a public meeting is not required but applications should be approved by their Board or similar governing body. If available, please provide documentation by the January 19, 2024 deadline. The public meeting requirement is not applicable for Minor Technical Assistance projects.

***The City Council will meet and discuss this application on 1/10/24.

3. BENEFITS TO REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING (please keep your responses brief)

a. Identify at least one of the CCRPC’s top 10 actions or 8 ECOS strategies that this project will primarily address (http://www.ecosproject.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2018-ECOS-Plan-Summary_20180807_FINAL.pdf).

This project will address CCRPC’s top 10 actions by enabling smart, multi-modal development in areas planned for growth; and by maintaining our existing transportation system with multi-modal safety improvements.

Additionally, by improving access to Green Mountain Transit’s Route 2, which provides frequent and direct service to Downtown Burlington, and multiple medical and higher education institutions, the project would address the following ECOS strategies:

- Strengthen regional economic opportunities,
- Increase opportunity for every person to achieve optimal health and personal safety,
- Equip our residents with the education and skills they need to thrive,
- Ensure that the projects and actions in all ECOS strategies assess equity impacts.

b. Please describe how the project need is documented. Is the project identified in a local plan? Or, does this project address a newly identified need? Please elaborate.

The need for this project is documented in Essex Junction’s 2014 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, in the 2018 VT Route 15 Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements Study, and in Essex Junction’s 2019 Official Plan.

c. Please describe how the project benefits the community.

The project would improve safety for all road users along the entire corridor and at two intersections currently identified by VTTrans as high-crash locations. If eastbound bus stops can be included in the final

design, it would also introduce frequent, all-day public transit service in both directions to residents and businesses along Pearl Street and along Susie Wilson Road in the Town of Essex. Finally, the project would close a critical gap in a 4-mile-long regional cycling connection between Essex Junction and the Town of Essex, and Colchester, and in the future, Winooski and Burlington.

d. Please answer the following questions:

(see the CCRPC's 2014 Public Participation Plan for resources: <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/public-participation-plan/>)

- What historically excluded and/or underserved populations are in the project study area or potentially impacted by the study? Please be specific.

The equity maps in Appendix E of the CCRPC Public Participation Plan show populations in Essex Junction with limited English proficiency, income below poverty level, racial diversity.

- In what ways does this project have the potential to create, ignore or worsen existing equity gaps or produce other unintended consequences? Describe ways this project can lead to increased racial equity, economic equity and other forms of equity.

Improving access to frequent, two-way, all-day public transit along a corridor lined with multi-story mixed-income apartments is likely to improve equity outcomes since it can improve access to opportunity for residents who cannot drive due to age, physical, or financial limitations. Reducing traffic speeds and improving safety for vulnerable road users along such corridor may also yield environmental justice benefits.

- What public outreach and engagement tools will you use to ensure awareness of and participation by all population groups? What additional public outreach and engagement tools will you use to ensure awareness of and participation specifically by historically excluded and/or underserved populations?

Meeting populations where they are, in-person and online participation options, and targeted outreach to transit users and low-car households, will enable broad participation that includes historically excluded or underserved populations.

- Describe ways your budget and timeline include the capacity to support a thorough public participation process.

Since this project is an addition to an existing scoping study, the budget and one-year timeline, should be sufficient for an adequate public participation process.

- Specify how the public participation process will include the voices of BIPOC and other marginalized community members or be informed by previous engagement efforts (by others). Name the partners you will work with to ensure your project is informed by the voices of people who are most likely to be impacted.

Essex has a non-profit organization called VIEW – Voices for Inclusion in Essex and Westford; the intention would be to engage them in this project and to help meet other groups to engage with.