CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT

CITY COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION, ENERGY & UTILITIES COMMITTEE

c/o Department of Public Works
645 Pine Street, Suite A
Post Office Box 849
Burlington, VT 05402-0849

802.863.9094 VOX
802.863.0466 FAX
802.863.0450 TTY
www.burlingtonvt.gov

Councilor Mark Barlow, **Chair,** *North District*
Councilor Gene Bergman, *Ward 2*
Councilor Evan Litwin, *Ward 7*
Councilor Marek Broderick, *Ward 8*

Inquiries:
Madeline Suender
802.735.5324
msuender@burlingtonvt.gov

Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee of the City Council
Tuesday July 11, 2024 – 5:30PM
--DRAFT MINUTES--

Chair Barlow calls meeting to order at 5:37PM

1. Agenda
Councilor Bergman moves to approve the agenda. Councilor Litwin seconds. All in favor, passes unanimously.

2. Minutes of 6/25/24
Councilor Bergman moves to adopt as written. Councilor Litwin seconds. All in favor.

3. Public Forum
Jack Hanson (JH) spoke to address how City figures out to incorporate transportation & climate goals with walk/bike infrastructure. Align all street projects and plans more closely. Actions not matching plans on paper, though we all share these goals. JH references VTrans communication and thinks there is potential. Concerned that we are not seeing bike infrastructure, especially with parking garage right there. Glad to see TDM on agenda. Need to figure out parking and all subsidies, land devoted to it. Parking infrastructure limits bike infrastructure.

Shane Johnson – college student, living in Burlington, works on Pine. Need to move away from being car-centric city. Parking is low value use for land. We have opportunity to not put parking in on new construction projects. Would allow City to reduce taxes. Biking infrastructure needs to be supported; recognizing that local businesses often object. Factor this into Bank and Cherry.

See Attachment 2 at end of this document for public comment, as submitted, by Barbara Headrick.

4. Deliberative Agenda
- **4.1 TDM Update**

Principal Planner Charles Dillard offers presentation on TDM study, emanates from 2021 Council direction. Chair Mark Barlow (MB) asks for brief overview followed by questions. CD says TEUC important to help prioritize different TDM strategies/give policy direction.

Presentation includes: Transportation Options Strategies; Regulation & Planning Strategies; Management and Funding Strategies; Neighborhood TDM Strategies; Next steps.

Councilor Evan Litwin (EL) asked what organizations and stakeholders in accessibility community to get feedback, including City Accessibility Committee. CD responded that Walk-Bike Council is on PAC; met with Cathedral Square residents & Leadership; Rhino food workers. EL clarifies that mobility and visual impairments is his focus. Also pointed out to check with Accessibility Committee Chair. CD confirms they did talk to Committee Chair.

Councilor Gene Bergman (GB) says the institutions are missing in this focus; and is intrigued by the relationship of TDM to the Institutional Parking Plan. Getting employees in different modes of transport into the City is important/missing from the consultant's TDM study. GB says that in terms of prioritization – a coordinator and funding for the position should be high. In terms of priorities, take care of lowest hanging fruit and identify that to build momentum/increase capacity.

CD says that in terms of TDM coordinator, meeting with other local municipalities to discuss TDM coordination. Also discussed with CATMA and CCRPC for more regional coordination. Agrees that this is priority.

CD offers to come back whenever TEUC needs.

- **4.2 Flixbus Property Use Agreement**

DPW Director Chapin Spencer (CS) joined by Assistant City Attorney Erik Ramakrishnan (ER). City approached by interstate bus carrier – Flixbus (Montreat to Boston routes). Downtown Transit Center can accomodate. Agreement w/ GMT allows this. Looking for your approval to send this to Council on 7/15. Flixbus wants to start shortly thereafter, Burlington to Boston and Montreal.

ER says that easement allows us ultimate control to allow or not allow. Our approach was to allow use with provisions that protect City's interests. Clarifies that FlixBus insurance doesn't meet City's requirements, but City feels that this is protected enough.

GB asks who our insurance advisor is. ER clarifies that it is Amy Merrit at Hickock Boardman who also advised to check with their reinsurer.

GB asks if Amy discussed what the risk is. ER says that City has no way of verifying if risk management group is capitalized enough, though they are listed with USDOT which means they meet certain insurance requirements. No way of knowing what their existing claimrs and payouts is, however.

GB asks how long notice for City to terminate. ER says we can terminate without cause at 6 months, but less for breach. ER also says that FlixBus has purchased Greyhound.

MB asks if existng Greyhound activity has similar agreement. CS unclear on status.

EL asks what the risk is to City. ER says that there is theoretically joint liability, established by Courts.

Discussion ensues about existing Greyhound pickup and drop off which is across from Post Office and is actually part of Transit Center, as clarified by CS.

EL thinks we may want to hold steadfast on insurance, given the number of pedestrians and existing number of bus accidents regionally; along with poor BBB reviews.

GB not comfortable about approval, given EL's points about risk and proximal risk.

MB asks if there is a path to move this, factoring in comments that allow City's insurer and Attorney to make final decision about risk.

MB asks if moving this to future TEUC to allow ER/CS to "push back" on insurance question with Flixbus. CS agrees that tabling is fine.

EL asks for further clarity on Greyhound relationship, agreement and insurance.

GB makes motion to postpone at next TEUC on 7/22. Second by EL. All approve.

- **4.3 Reconnecting Bank and Cherry (RBC) Concept**

CS, City Engineer Laura Wheelock (LW) and Transportation Engineer Julia Ursaki (JU) give overview on where we stand with RBC. CS previews the VTrans letter which clarifies funding obligations at risk for any significant changes. Future flexibility does exist. JU discusses other recent steps, including meeting DPW Commission, Walk Bike Council.

GB says that he was clear last time he wouldn't move forward if progress didn't put project on road to sufficient pedestrianization and bike infrastructure. Met w/ CS in the interim and appreciated the VTrans clarification. Conscious of the positive things that accepting grant does for the downtown, e.g., stormwater and Great Streets improvements. GB wants support and engagement, as well as studies, to move in the direction of pedestrianization, but also references that Departmental capacity is challenged and knows this is a challenge. GB supports moving it to Council and with good faith effort by Department to move project on glidepath to pedestrianization in future.

GB offers motion language, directing DPW to do as much work as possible in FY 25, engage with key stakeholders, conduct transportation plan, etc.

CS suggests moving this to next TEUC to discuss transportation plan, in agreement with GB.

Councilor Marek Broderick (MBr) asks how supplemental motion commits DPW to doing more in future.

LW clarifies that this is new item that commits Department to looking at holistic downtown plan, to begin taking this up at next TEUC meeting.

MBr asks what GB motion commits staff to look into upon approval of RBC motion. CS clarifies that it commits DPW to a host of actions in FY 25 to get ready for future Transportation Plan update. E.g., pilots, possible pedestrianization of Bank and Cherry (conduct traffic study), prioritization of transportation improvements, reporting to TEUC on progress.

EL asks who has been engaged on pedestrianization. CS clarifies that is the process going forward. EL then asks about the process for the public safety kiosk inclusion. LW says that DPW shared this request With Vtrans, but is not eligible as public safety specific. Therefore a multi-use kiosk is possible and will work with CSM Commission, BPD and safety committees to vet the idea.

EL is asking for a confirmation that if we move RBC forward that there can be space for public safety, which is a current public priority.

MBr spoke in opposition.

GB makes motion. MB seconds. Motion passes 3-1 (MBr opposes).

5. Director's Report
NONE

6. Councilor Items

MB mentions 8/22 meeting at 5:30. Scheduling joint meeting with BED Commission to evaluate RFP's.

7. Next Meeting

Next regular TEUC 7/22 @ 5:30PM, Stone Cottage

8. Adjournment

Chair Barlow adjourns at 7:32 PM.

Public Comment from 7/11/24 TEUC, as read and submitted by Barbara Headrick:

1. Given GMT's need for more revenue and UVM and UVMMC need to reduce their high SOV rates (currently at 63%), I'd like to see GMT enter into a contract with the institutions that would result in GMT providing their commuters with non-stop direct bus service from each town's park and ride lot to campus. Given the thousands of UVM and UVMMC employees that drive many miles into Burlington, this suggested program would greatly reduce air pollution, city traffic and demand for on-campus parking. At the same time, the institutions need to raise the price of their on-campus parking permits by a few thousand $.

2. I ask please that Charles add text to item R2 (Commuter Trip Reduction) to close a loophole in the Planning Department's document that would allow UVM shift where commuters park oncampus and mistakenly claim this will result in shorter commuting distances. It's not effective TDM because commuters drive many miles from their hometown into Burlington. Having commuters park on Trinity or Redstone Campuses instead of Central campus doesn't reduce commuters' trip mileage at all or enough to be considered TDM. In fact, most commuters come in on Main Street and they will have to drive further to reach the new parking facilities that UVM has envisioned. Thus, this R2 concept needs to be modified to prevent the institutions from using this "greenwashing" concept instead of implementing truly effective TDM programs -- particularly programs that will result in most commuters leaving their cars in their hometown.

3. I'd like to see language added to the TDM document to encourage the adoption of strategies and programs that encourage everyone, including the institutions, to use and encourage the use of the least polluting transportation method. The document also needs to explicitly say the goal is to reduce SOV rates, traffic, parking demand, and pollution.

4. I'd like to see the Redstone Bus reassigned to bring commuters from Essex to Burlington. This would be better use of the bus than transporting students a 1/2 mile across campus. The Redstone bus only replaces biking and walking, and discourages active transportation, because students can't drive from

their dorm to their classroom and park. UVM's buses pollute and they cycle all day and are often empty. Even though the UVM buses say electricity on the side, the battery is only used to start the bus. The buses operate all day by burning CNG.

5. A good TDM program would be for UVM to significantly improve its ON-CAMPUS bike paths - especially south of Main Street. To encourage student bike riding on-campus, UVM needs to eliminate two long steep sets of steps that interrupt the ON-CAMPUS bike path near the Redstone dorms. UVM should also create campus wide ON-CAMPUS bike paths that don't mix with pedestrians and vehicle traffic. The bike paths should go all the way to the dorm, not stop 200 feet away from the dorm and there needs to be lots of storage space for student bicycles in each and every dorm and classroom building. 6. Keep resident only parking unchanged to disincentive commuters driving to campus and to discourage driving and parking on-street. Less curb-side parking will result in more people commuting by bicycle and walking. Reduced access to on-street parking will reduce air pollution and the level of pollution entering the lake.