

NPA Meeting Wards 4/7, May 28 2025

6:30: Introductions

6:40: Community Announcements

Re-Ordering of Agenda Items:

Phillip Peterson, Senior Transportation Planner, Burlington DPW

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Current projects: sidewalks on North Ave and the Rock Point bridge

Upcoming projects:

Route 127 Paving Projects:

Beltline: Paving and painting, in mid-June

Ethan Allen Parkway traffic calming: speed humps adjacent to the park, and also a flashing light set-up at Farrington Parkway, near CP Smith. Also re-paving along stretches of the road.

North Ave/Plattsburg Ave intersection: removing right-turn lane. Proceeding with this project. Currently it is timed, but going forwards, there will be a camera to help with cuing the light to change. They will also install raised curb barriers along the bike lane, to make it protected, based on safety concerns.

Speed bumps on Gosse Court; also near school crosswalk on North Ave near Barley Road, due to speeding drivers. Didn't qualify for RFBs (flashing lights).

Sidewalk scoping: Stanbury Road and Green Acres. Stanbury: very basic sidewalk. The existing one ends; this would extend it from Dale Rd to Staniford, where there is currently no sidewalk. Green Acres: a future project that may happen: First step would be to install a study/pilot.

Transportation Planning: Plan BTV Walk/Bike Safety Action plan: going to City Council on Monday for approval. Nothing as major in this as in other plans. They are looking to create a pedestrian safety improvement project (and using some grant dollars, federally or through the state). Transportation Plan is due for an update, and that will start this year (currently from 2011). CCRPC (Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission) and others will weigh in on this, and there will be data collection. Some data collection already in the work on Starr Farm Rd: data shows that the places where people want the traffic calming is not where the speeding is happening. More to come on this.

Questions:

- Why was the bike path detour posted under the Rock Point bridge, on the greenway, but then the path was open? Answer: the concrete slab was poured yesterday and so it was closed, but the detour route was moved. If you don't mind getting wet as water may drip on you, it's fine to walk and bike underneath.

- What are the feelings of residents on the streets where sidewalks are being installed? This project is not imminent (2-3 years) and DPW will gather information as it gets closer.
- Lots of people standing in line in front of creemee stand by Echo: line spills out in front of bike path. Worried about hitting pedestrians and feels it should be addressed.
- Safer crosswalks on Gosse Court: kids are not able to see around cars, and also putting no parking signs in the problem spot is not helping. Feels that existing strategies are band-aids rather than actual effective strategies.
- What options do people have if they want to initiate traffic-calming studies or initiatives? Email Phillip. Tell him we want more studies and traffic calming.
- What are the options for changing the speed limit to 20? Reach out to state legislatures to change the designation of the zones to extend 20mph into other neighborhoods outside of downtown core.
- What about poor paint signage on College Street that makes it hard to bike safety since the bike lane is not clear? It is being paved this year.
- Line striping is related to staffing, rather than funding: this used to be done by college students.
- Bus stop locations are changing out front of the new BHS. Current situation means that kids run across the street. New location will be just north and just south of the intersection, to make it much safer to access bus stops.

Coming up in June: City coming to talk about some Open Space projects. If you want info before then, go to City Website: depts→ city departments→long range planning→ library→ open space project. Leddy Improvement Project: Depts→Parks Rec Waterfront→Space→Active improvement projects.

Clayton : GMT

Regrets having to participate by Zoom rather than in-person. Sends thanks for being on the agenda tonight. Presenting an update about where things are with the overall service, including upcoming changes.

GMT: Currently, they provide service in 5 counties: Chittenden County is the urban service, but also in Franklin, Grand Isle, Washington and Lamoille Counties. It is looking likely that the state of VT will be breaking GMT up. It is rare to have a transit provider that serves both rural and urban areas, and this is because they are funded separately. The funds have to be separate and cannot be mixed. This means GMT operates an urban system that is separate from the rural system that they operate in the other 4 counties. Nationwide, there is only one other transit company that does it this way, outside of California. VT is joining the majority of how transit companies are structured. There has been a 42% reduction in the admin staff (aka not drivers, mechanics or schedulers, or customer service). These are the folks who manage funding and services. Clayton feels hopeful about the urban service after this transition happens because he hopes they will be much more focused when they only have Chittenden County, rather than 5 counties. He also feels this will lead to increased flexibility and responsiveness to folks in rural areas as well.

There has also been a reduction in services in recent years. If a route gets cut, it doesn't matter if only one person used the route; it can still be catastrophic to that single person. (GMT is a municipality: not a for-profit or non-profit. They are a government entity.) Pandemic funding is about to be exhausted. Fiscal cliff approaching when funds are gone. They have reduced service by just over a million dollars a year. Those reductions have not impacted service on the number 7 North Ave line: the only changes have been reducing 3 runs on Saturday night. Route 7 is very productive and is always high on the list of most-used ride (we are often tied for 3rd place out of all the GMT lines). Because it is so robust, it is likely to be insulated from future service reductions.

There is a \$3M funding gap for the fiscal year starting in July 2026. They are working with the state to minimize this gap. Many legislators are working to save services and limit reductions; however, Clayton assumes that there will be some reductions in services in places other than the Route 7 line. Clayton acknowledges that it is hard to be positive and cheerful about the outlook when there are upcoming restrictions in services. This is representative of the time that we are in.

Clayton appreciates that the city of Burlington contributes about 2M a year to services; we match what the state of VT contributes. Local government here has shown a commitment to public transit with this funding. 60% federal funds, 10% from fares, 10% from the state, and 20% from the municipalities where they operate. The reliance on federal funding makes them uneasy in the current political moment.

Questions:

- what can the public do to help GMT improve their situation? Clayton says that sending your legislators an email or a call can be very helpful. Let the Mayor's office know that you appreciate the way that the City has funded GMT.
- Can we imagine a route that is specifically geared to bring folks from the NNE to the hospital during rush hour? Clayton expects it will be difficult to propose new service in the next couple of years, but this is an interesting idea to look at down the road, to see if there is enough demand in the NNE to warrant that kind of route. To stay in compliance with rules around federal funding, they have to be careful to not provide a route that would look like an employee shuttle. Three weeks ago, a team of inspectors from the federal government came through and audited how GMT is using their funding.

Clayton came to GMT 2 years ago after a career working for the state working for human services. He thought this role would be simpler but he has been educated in how complicated it is. He thanks us for our time and our caring about these issues.

Elise on the Burlington History and Cultural Center.

There are over 200 Historical Societies around the state. Burlington has none.

Many aspects of this are in the works. Many stories to be told and there are ongoing efforts to gather more stories. Currently looking for sites. Will offer walking and biking tours. Please take the survey and find out more info at burlingtonhistoryandculturecenter.org

