

CCTA Transit Center Study

Advisory Committee Coordination Meeting #2 Meeting Notes

***Purpose:** To provide a status update on the study and discuss the preliminary results of the initial screening analysis of alternative sites.*

DATE: Tuesday, January 17, 2012

TIME: 3:30 – 5:30 PM

PLACE: Fletcher Free Library Community Room – 235 College Street, Burlington

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Ann Fingar, CCTA Rider
Aaron Frank, CCTA
Peter Keating, Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO)
Larry Kupferman, Burlington Community & Economic Development Office (CEDO)
Steve Magowan, CCTA Commissioner
Karen Paul, Burlington City Councilor
Ron Redmond, Church Street Marketplace
Bethany Whitaker, CCTA Commissioner
Tim Bouvier, CCTA Bus Driver

OTHERS: Stephen Carlson, CCTA
Rose Getch, CCTA
Kristine Wickham, VHB (Consultant Team)
Kristen Bergassi, VHB (Consultant Team)
Tim Rusteika, VHB (Consultant Team)
Richard Deane, TruexCullins (Consultant Team)
Suki Rubin
Wayne Senville
J. Jeffrey Munger
Austin Hart
Pam Scanlon
Chapin Spencer
Sandrine Thibault
Stephen Falbel
Joel Baird
Tom Buckley
Don MacDonald

1. Welcome, Introductions and Project Overview

Aaron Frank, Advisory Committee member and CCTA Assistant General Manager, welcomed Advisory Committee members, members of the public and other guests. Aaron Frank stated the existing Cherry Street facility is inadequate to serve current ridership and cannot sustain the level of growth experienced in the past decade (63 percent increase in the past 10 years). The current transit station on Cherry Street, which was built in 1981, can no longer meet the needs of CCTA bus riders nor fulfill the requirements of CCTA staff. The purpose of this meeting was to update the Advisory Committee on the status of the Transit Center Study, the goal of which is to find a viable location at which CCTA can operate its transit services. An additional objective of the meeting was to summarize the preliminary findings from the initial alternatives analysis.

CCTA Transit Center Study

Kristine Wickham, member of the consultant team, gave a presentation with PowerPoint slides. She stated that between 2006 and 2008 the City of Burlington performed an Alternatives Analysis to identify potential sites for a new Transit Center. At that time, eighteen sites were considered and two were studied further – Department of Employment and Training (DET)/Department of Labor at Pearl Street and an on-street transit mall on St. Paul (between Pearl and Cherry Streets). In late 2010, the process was reinitiated under CCTA's direction.

The Transit Center Study is currently completing the Alternatives Analysis, which examined 37 possible site alternatives. This examination of potential alternative sites is being managed by CCTA. The examination includes sites that had been previously considered by the City of Burlington. It also included many new sites for consideration. The goal of this phase of the project is to evaluate each site alternative against specific criteria. That evaluation process is intended to screen out alternatives that do not meet the criteria.

The presentation to the Advisory Committee included:

- 1) A project status update;
- 2) An overview of four special analyses that were performed since the last meeting;
- 3) An overview of the initial alternatives analysis including the evaluation of site alternatives;
- 4) An overview of the site alternatives that are recommended for further review and analysis; and
- 5) Discussion of the next steps in the project process.

Once the presentation concluded, the meeting was opened for discussion by the Advisory Committee members, followed by questions and comments from the public.

2. Project Status Update

Kristine described the work that has been accomplished since the last Advisory Committee and public meetings held in June 2011 and September 2011, respectively:

- The project's Purpose & Need was updated based on feedback from stakeholders.
- The program for the new transit center was updated;
- Four special analyses related to issues raised by stakeholders were performed and the results were presented to the CCTA Board;
- The alternatives evaluation methodology and criteria were expanded based on feedback from stakeholders;
- Meetings were held with various stakeholders, including local developers, property owners, local businesses, the City's Department of Planning and Zoning and the Department of Public Works;
- Thirty-seven (37) site alternatives were identified and evaluated as part of an initial screening process.

3. Overview of Special Analyses Performed

Based on feedback from the stakeholders, four special analyses were performed to further inform the Alternatives Analysis process. These analyses include the following topics:

- Why Downtown? – Outline of need for public transportation to provide service to Vermont's largest and densest downtown, following the path of major roadways.
- Why a Pulse System? – Rationale for CCTA's current operation which permits convenient transfers, as well as alternatives thereto and their impact on space needs, cost, and ridership.

CCTA Transit Center Study

- Alternate Hubs – Options for an out of downtown hub and two smaller downtown hubs, including operating costs, capital costs, and ridership impacts.
- Top 10 Stops – Overview of CCTA’s top ten ridership stops, including ridership, space, lighting, protection from weather, and security.

The presentations that were developed on each of these topics are available on the CCTA’s website at www.ccta.org.

4. Alternatives Analysis

Kristine provided an overview of the Alternatives Analysis process. She stated that, with input from the Advisory Committee, stakeholders and the public, thirty-seven (37) alternative sites were identified for the initial screening process. A preliminary “concept” was developed for each alternative site. Each of the 37 site alternatives was then measured against the following evaluation criteria:

- 1) Meets the Purpose and Need
- 2) Meets the CCTA’s program needs and is operationally feasible
- 3) Compatible with the existing transportation network
- 4) Situated conveniently to the origins and destinations of bus riders
- 5) Affordable capital and operating costs
- 6) Impact on social, cultural and environmental resources
- 7) Implementable schedule

Kristine reviewed the 37 site alternatives that were examined in this evaluation. She noted key aspects of each site, including an explanation of why particular sites were recommended or not recommended for further evaluation. Nine sites were recommended for further review and analysis as part of the secondary evaluation and screening process. That secondary screening process will include the development of refined concept plans, order-of-magnitude cost estimates and operating plans. The sites recommended for further consideration include:

- Site #2: 63 Pearl Street (DET Building)
- Site #4: St. Paul Street between Cherry Street and Pearl Street
- Site #5: Cherry Street at Church Street
- Site #17: 151 St. Paul Street (Behind TD Bank North)
- Site #20: 85 Pearl Street (former Doughboy's Restaurant Building)
- Site #21: 20 Pine Street (Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception)
- Site #25: 50 Cherry Street (Dept. of Corrections)
- Site #32: 135 Pearl Street (Papa John’s)
- Site #37: Combination of 63 Pearl Street (DET) and 50 Cherry Street (Dept. of Corrections)

5. Next Steps

The Next Steps in the project will include finalizing the initial screening analysis based upon feedback from the Advisory Committee. The sites that remain as alternatives after considering feedback will undergo the secondary screening process. Another meeting of the Advisory Committee will then be convened to review the results of the secondary screening process. A public meeting will also be held in the future to discuss the findings of the study with the general public.

CCTA Transit Center Study

6. Advisory Committee Discussion

Steve Magowan, Chair of the CCTA Board of Commissioners, noted that the new buildings along King Street at Site #17 (151 St. Paul Street behind TD Bank), were not shown on the GIS aerial photo used in the PowerPoint presentation.

Ann Fingar, CCTA Rider, asked if rider safety was taken into consideration. Steve Carlson, CCTA, stated that rider safety is a critical element of the proposed program and will be considered during design.

Steve Magowan and Karen Paul, Burlington City Councilor, recommended that discussions with property owners continue throughout this phase of the process. Steve Magowan suggested that alternative sites that do not have a willing seller or partner would need to be carefully considered for further advancement.

Larry Kupferman, Burlington CEDO, and Bethany Whitaker, CCTA Commissioner, stated that this process must balance the needs of CCTA and the FTA, as well as help the public understand how the alternatives would be designed in order to minimize impacts and maximize benefits to the region.

Peter Keating, CCMPO, asked about the benefits of the combined Site #37, the DET site (63 Pearl Street) with the Department of Corrections site (50 Cherry Street). Kristine stated that this combined site has the potential to accommodate all bus berthing out of the public right-of-way and could provide more operational flexibility than the individual sites alone.

Karen Paul asked if North Winooski Avenue was converted from a one-way to a two-way street, would Site #26 (Northwest Corner of Pearl and Winooski Avenue) be feasible. Kristine stated that North Winooski Avenue would still be too narrow for on-street berthing and would still pose operational challenges. Either way, this site would still not be able to accommodate the program.

7. Public Comment Period

Jeff Munger, from the office of U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, noted some potential challenges of placing bus berthing on Pearl Street that need to be considered during the next phase of the project. The project team stated that more in-depth traffic analysis will be completed for the remaining sites during the next phase of the project.

Roadway modifications, including curb changes, are currently being constructed along Pearl Street in the vicinity of Church Street. Construction of these improvements will continue for the next year. Tim Bouvier, Advisory Committee member and CCTA Bus Driver, stated that these bump-outs make it difficult for the buses to make left turns onto Pearl Street. Traffic tends to back up along Pearl Street to South Winooski Avenue.

Ron Redmond, Church Street Marketplace, stated that the owner of the Town Center Mall is currently not interested in accommodating the Transit Center in any way.

Wayne Sanville, member of the public, announced there is an upcoming planning charrette for future waterfront development initiatives and encouraged the CCTA to participate in these discussions. Aaron Frank stated that the CCTA has plans to participate in the charrette.

CCTA Transit Center Study

Pam Scanlon, member of the public, stated that she is opening a new diner within the next month at 85 Pearl Street and is concerned about any development proposals for this property. Ann Fingar suggested there may be opportunities for joint development for some alternatives, which could be explored further. Aaron Frank stated that discussions with the property owners will continue throughout this phase of the study.

Larry Kupferman asked that residential development, as well as bus operations near the Pearl Street curb cuts, be considered as part of the Alternatives Analysis.

Suki Rubin, member of the public, asked that CCTA continue to engage its stakeholders often throughout the process.

A member of the public asked about the possibility of using the former Border's building site. Aaron Frank stated that at the Border's site would still require that buses cross the Marketplace, and would continue to impact bus operations.

Peter Keating stated that some transit agencies have a difficult time locating a transit center. Kristine stated that it is intended that the CCTA Transit Center will be designed to be context sensitive with the surrounding community. Richard Deane, Truex Cullins, stated that in Europe transit centers are architecturally significant and make a positive contribution to the character and quality of many European cities.

It was recommended by a member of the public that Union Station remain on the list to be considered for secondary screening.

Suki Rubin suggested that it might be helpful for the public to see examples of other transit centers. The transit center in Boulder Colorado was recommended as one good example. Aaron Frank stated that CCTA has posted on their website examples of other transit centers from across the nation.

Kristine encouraged the committee to provide feedback to the consultant team via Steve Carlson at CCTA (scarlson@cctaride.org, 864-0211 x30).

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30PM.