

Attendees -

Laura Asermily
Dorothy Mammen
Eric Davis
Mary Claire Crogan (ACTR)
Bill Cunningham (ACTR)
John Dale
Bethany Menkart
Steve Maier
Deb Sachs (Go Vermont, Net Zero Vermont)
David Andrews
Adam Franco (Walk-Bike Council of Addison County)
Jon Copans (VCRD)

Notes:

1. Welcome and introductions

The meeting opened with introductions and some shared bus/train stories.

In response to a question, Mary from ACTR shared some of their 2017 outcomes – 174,### mass transit trips in 2017. 18 active buses, 2 in the process of being decommissioned, and 2 likely to be added in the next 2 months. Bus replacements receive substantial state/federal funding with a 10% match. For 2017 bus trips saved 256 tons of carbon emissions for commuters.

Dorothy reported on the ACTR Beta Test of the Open Trip Planner.

2. Review task force action plan

The description of the Task Force mission and the Action Steps were read aloud. There was then a discussion about the various action steps:

Eric suggested a change to Action Step #10. He clarified that “shuttle” would be a better word than Jitney, and that he was imagining an alternatively fueled vehicle that provides frequent regular service to nodes in Middlebury including downtown, the college, the hospital, Exchange Street, and the Hannaford’s Shopping Plaza. This could also possibly serve remote parking on the way into Middlebury.

Mary from ACTR described the standards for ridership that ACTR is held to. There are currently 5 different routes serving these locations.

Steve mentioned the VW Settlement Funds and advocacy from various groups to spend those funds on bus electrification. After some discussion, this was added as Action Step #11.

There was discussion of Action Step #8 focused on the train station. There was a lack of clarity on the current status of planning for this new station. Location of the station and whether or not it would serve multi-modal traffic were raised as priorities. The sense of the group was that

early involvement in the planning process for the train station was important and that the group should check in with the Town and VTrans to get updates.

Bill Cunningham from ACTR raised a question about the future location of the ACTR hub in downtown Middlebury. Bethany shared some feedback she had heard that the current location is not ideal for some. The hub location will be reviewed after the bridge project is complete in 2020. There is a need to look at the big picture and begin planning for this.

There was some discussion about the Action Steps focused on biking and walking and how the work of the Task Force will intersect with the Walk/Bike Council of Addison County. There was a strong sense that the Task Force should not duplicate any work. Adam Franco described the four subcommittees of the Walk/Bike Council (Infrastructure, education and outreach, outreach to public officials, and changing the culture) and indicated that he would be presenting to the Council the Task Force priorities related to walking and biking.

A shared goal is to “change the culture” around both public transportation and biking/walking. There may be great opportunities for collaboration, and Action Steps 2 and 6 both connect to this work.

There was some discussion of possible locations for parking on the outskirts of town. The Fieldhouse at Middlebury College was mentioned as a possibility on Rte 30, and the lot at the Hannaford’s was another.

A question was raised about transportation surveys. The Town Energy Committee has done one of the general population and ACTR will do a new one in 2018 focused on those who utilize their services.

3. Choose priorities for what members want to work on –

Everyone was asked to pick 3 Action Steps they wanted to prioritize and were interested in working on, resulting in the following:

- # 1 – Bringing together ACTR and BETCHA to improve collaboration and reduce redundancy in routes (Mary)
- # 2 – Build ridership and encourage expansion of ACTR routes by developing a “ride the bus” campaign to encourage use of public transit (Eric, Bill, Mary, Dorothy, Laura, Deb)
- # 4 – Work together to be a strong voice for biking safety encouraging safe shoulders, bike lanes, and bringing storm drains to grade (David, Adam)
- # 5 – Advance major bike/ped infrastructure currently in the works and for the future (David, Adam)
- # 6 – Consider developing a town or regionwide “Bike and Bus Community Arts Campaign” (Bethany, John, Dorothy, Deb)

- # 8 – Support advanced planning and full implementation of the new train station as a multi-modal transportation center for the future (Eric, Bill, John, Dorothy, Laura, Bethany)
- # 10 – Explore an alternatively-fueled shuttle service that provides frequent service to nodes in Middlebury including downtown, Exchange Street, the college, the hospital, Hannafords plaza, and possibly outlying parking (Eric, Bill, John, Laura)
- # 11 – Work to access VW Settlement Funds to replace gasoline and diesel school and transit buses with electric buses (Bill, Mary, Bethany)
- # 13 – Encourage schools to improve biking infrastructure (David, Adam)
- #14 – Educate about ride-sharing and use of the Vtrans ride-share software system (Dorothy, Deb)

4. Subcommittee Leadership?

Bill Cunningham offered to lead on Action Step 10, and Laura agreed to lead work on Action Step 8.

5. Next Meeting: Monday, February 12, 3:00 PM, at ACTR