

# Executive Director's Report

February 3, 2016

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## Municipal Technical Assistance

*East Montpelier:* Eric and I met with the East Montpelier Planning Commission regarding a scope of work for its Village Master Plan project. Building on its past work, the Town will develop village zoning for the Designated Village Center and surrounding neighborhoods that can guide it in making capital investments. A Municipal Planning Grant funds the project.

*Waterbury:* Last month, I met with Waterbury's Community Planner to discuss the community's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan update. CVRPC is providing a scope of services for the project next week, and will be coaching the community toward meeting new federal guidelines for grant administration.

One of CVRPC's important roles is assisting communities to further their goals. During the meeting, we discussed Waterbury's desire to explore how Waterbury Center and Waterbury Village can continue to revitalize, grow and expand while promoting higher density development in non-flood prone areas adjacent to the existing settlements. Part of that effort could be using a Brownfield Area Wide Assessment to investigate past uses that might challenge redevelopment and infill efforts. CVRPC also linked the community to potential support for businesses assistance when Rt. 2/Main Street is reconstructed in 2018. The Village of Johnson used USDA Rural Development grants to work with business owners to develop and implement a business support plan during its Main Street reconstruction effort. Johnson increased business promotion, signed alternative parking, and hosted special events aimed at attracting business customers. One business owner reported its sales *increased* during the reconstruction project, and attributed the increase to the Village's promotion efforts.

## Legislation: H.249, Regional Council of Governments

Testimony related to this bill occurred on January 21<sup>st</sup>. Much of the discussion focused on clarifying what the bill said versus what some participants thought it did. Testimony included:

### *Concerns*

- Conversion from RPC to Council of Government (COG) should required a supermajority vote of Commissioners and municipalities (has been modified to say 67%);
- Creates a duplication of effort as legislative mechanisms already exist;
- COG should be a separate entity formed by municipalities who want to opt in (new organization);
- Need to ensure municipalities decide the governance structure and membership of the COG board;
- Need to ensure that state funds are separated from COG funds;

- How will COG overhead and operation costs be paid (will all municipalities pay to support COG management even if the municipality chooses not to participate in any specific shared agreements?)

#### *Benefits*

- facilitates forming intermunicipal agreements by making the process simpler for municipalities (legislative review and approval process would not be required);
- provide an organizational structure to support shared employees, equipment, and financing based on choices made by individual municipalities;
- allow municipalities, working together, to attract higher qualified candidates for positions that would be part-time if offered by a single municipality (example was a Human Resources Director or zoning administrator);
- give municipalities that contract services from another municipality an equal voice in the cost and structure of those services.

The latest bill and any testimony submitted in writing are available at <http://legislature.vermont.gov/committee/document/2016/14/Date/1-21-2016>.

### **CCTA/GMTA Rebranding**

In the coming months, the Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) and the Green Mountain Transit Agency (GMTA) will rebrand to become Green Mountain Transit (GMT). In July 2011, GMTA and CCTA became one legal entity, which formalized the operating relationship between the two agencies that had existed since 2003. The rebrand marks an exciting time and will finalize the last step in becoming one unified regional agency.

In conjunction with the rebranding effort, CCTA/GMTA will roll out a suite of new technologies to improve the customer experience, starting with a new Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system. AVL will provide passengers with real-time bus tracking information straight to their cell phones, improving service reliability and allowing the organization to communicate changes more efficiently.

The CCTA Board of Commissioners also approved a recommendation from staff to go out to bid for a mobile ticketing system. A mobile ticketing app would allow passengers to purchase fare media directly on their cell phones prior to taking their bus trip. This app will provide convenience for the riders, eliminates the need to carry exact cash fare, and is one step closer to making CCTA a paperless system.

These passenger amenities are expected to be implemented during this calendar year before or in conjunction with the highly anticipated Downtown Transit Center (DTC) grand opening. The new state-of-the-art transit center is expected to be complete in the fall of 2016. To track progress on this, and all upcoming projects, visit CCTA's website at [CCTAride.org](http://CCTAride.org).

CVRPC participates on CCTA's Board of Directors as an Alternate Commissioner for Washington County.