

APPENDIX B

**“Capital City Welcome & Multimodal Center,”
City of Montpelier, 3/1/02**

Capital City Welcome & Multimodal Center



City of Montpelier

3/1/02



City of Montpelier, Vermont
"The Smallest Capital City in the United States"

Mayor Chuck Karparis

City Council:

Timothy Tomasi, President
Claude Stone
Doug Zorzi
Nancy Sherman
William Patno
Jim Sheridan

City Manager
wfraser@montpelier-vt.org

Beverlee Pembroke Hill,
Assistant City Manager
bhill@montpelier-vt.org

January 25, 2002

Barry Driscoll, Director of Policy Planning
VTrans Policy and Planning Division
National Life Drive
Drawer 33
Montpelier, VT 05633-5001

Dear Barry:

The City of Montpelier would like to work with VTRANS to obtain funding for implementation of Montpelier's Capital District Master Plan. This plan was developed cooperatively by the City of Montpelier and the State of Vermont through the City/State Commission chaired by Senator Vincent Illuzzi. This plan has been endorsed by that Commission, as well as by the Montpelier City Council.

The first phase the City would like to address is an area defined by Taylor Street on the west; Stone Cutters Way on the east; the Winooski River on the south; and the existing railroad tracks on the north. The following is a brief summary of each component of this phase.

Capital City Welcome/Multi-modal Center: At present, Montpelier has an incomplete and inefficient transportation system. The proposed Center ties the existing infrastructure together into a working system. The Center will coordinate the existing public transit providers such as Vermont Transit, Wheels, Amtrak, and private taxi companies. Also mentioned are bike and car rentals. The Center would allow public transit companies to share a common management, common heated waiting area, public restrooms, cafe, etc.. The central location which "bridges" the downtown area and Capitol Complex will serve as a commuter hub for the existing existing parking areas. The Center will also provide a "home base" for the dozens of tour companies that visit our State Complex and city.

(802) 223-6502, Telephone

39 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

(802) 223-6510, Fax

www.montpelier-vt.org

The Welcome Center component to the facility envisions a partnership with Vermont's Montpelier Tourist Center that would allow expansion including a screening room capability in order to show visitors what the State and region have to offer. Because of the Center's projected location on an existing rail line, it is well positioned to accept any future commuter light rail system. The riverfront location provides the opportunity to develop a park area adjacent to the Center.

Bike Path/Riverfront Greenway: A longstanding goal of the citizens of Montpelier is to take better advantage of our riverfront. The City has had a number of successes in the past few years in this effort, but the proposal in this project is the first in the heart of downtown Montpelier adjacent to the Capitol Complex. Proposed plans call for a sizable urban park at the confluence of the Winooski and North Branch Rivers, as well as an extension of the existing riverwalk system. Our current bike path system has been tremendously popular but is missing a key piece through the downtown. This proposal would provide the critical link between two existing paths to become a fully integrated system with the Welcome and Multi-modal Center.

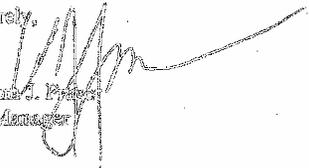
The City was approached by Senator James Jeffords and his staff about our project needs. We have received favorable word from Senator Patrick Leahy and his staff, as well as Congressman Bernie Sanders and his staff. They all suggested that we get into the VTRANS "pipeline".

Much of the information you request to be provided is attached. The City is the recipient of an EPA Brownsfield grant for this site and the first phase of that assessment has been completed and the owner has given permission for the second phase to begin. We can provide more information if necessary.

The City of Montpelier will own, manage, and maintain the proposed Capital City Welcome/Multimodal Center. The Application prepared by the Central Vermont Regional Planning represents, to our best understanding at this time, who will occupy the facility and how it will function. The project design process will further define the exact space needs for each designated use. The City is committed to resolve parking issues in the Downtown, and will not remove existing spaces (beyond what is needed for the Capital City Welcome/Multimodal Center and Bicycle Path) until replacement parking is provided elsewhere.

Thank you for putting this process into the "pipeline".

Sincerely,


William J. Ketchum
City Manager

WJK:ag

Enclosures

(802) 223-9602, Telephone

39 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

(802) 223-9619, Fax

www.montpelier-vt.org

VTrans Capital City Welcome and Multimodal Center Application – 3/1/02

1. Name and organizational structure of the project sponsor.

City of Montpelier.

2. The purpose of the facility.

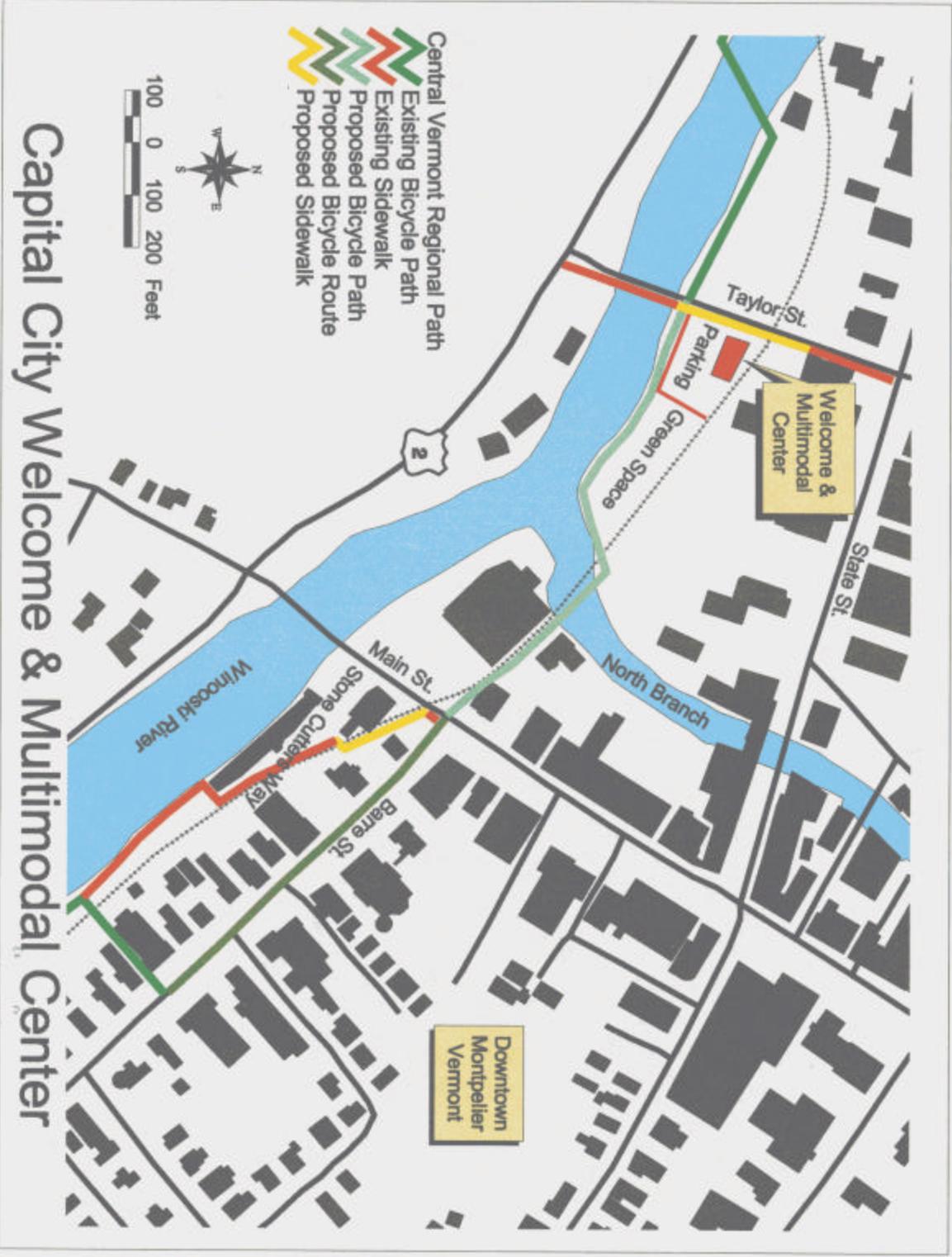
? Purpose & Need Statement

The purpose of this project is to improve downtown Montpelier's vehicular transportation efficiency and mobility, provide safety and efficiency for bicyclists and pedestrians, and restore the natural and built environments by creating usable open and green space. This project will improve transportation access into the city and provide for coordinated public transportation of local bus service, inter-city bus service, commuting vans, and provide the termini for a potential passenger rail link to the downtown area. The project will bridge a gap in the downtown bicycle and pedestrian network. This project will provide visitors with a central location for information. The project will create usable open and urban green space. This project will also provide greater access to the Winooski River and enhance the river ecology and aesthetics.

The need for this facility is substantiated by:

- ? poor and uncoordinated transportation modalities;
- ? no all weather waiting areas for local bus service;
- ? being so far from the core of the downtown, the capital's Welcome Center is not readily visible to visitors, and has little available parking;
- ? the Welcome Center's existing technology will be soon outdated;
- ? incomplete bike paths and pedestrian ways;
- ? the train station is located outside of the downtown;
- ? little public greenspace or access to the Winooski River;

The concept of a centrally located Capital City Welcome and Transit Center has been advanced by City of Montpelier officials as a way to efficiently bring together public transit providers, such that comprehensive services can be made efficient and accessible for local and regional/statewide riders. The facility has been conceived as a place for residents, visitors, and people who work in the city, integrated with a larger urban plan as a unifying public facility to link the different ways that people come to Montpelier (see attached location map).



Capital City Welcome & Multimodal Center

As a major regional and statewide destination for travelers and state employees, Montpelier has all the characteristics of a city that would benefit from enhanced public transit: a large commuting population that work “regular” hours, a “captive audience” on the part of state employees that are an employment pool that is organized and accessible to being invited to participate in alternative transportation programs, and a local population that lives and works within the city, for whom the convenience of public transit would provide a tangible alternative to commuting short distances and having to locate and pay for long - term parking.

The Capital City Welcome and Transit Center could be a pivotal development to the Capital Area, and its location and function are critical to both the operation of the whole system as a public orientation center for the city.

The function of a Transit Center is to provide interface between differing modes of transportation. Broadly defined, passengers interface in the following ways:

- ? Passengers enter the transportation system either at peripheral parking lots and travel to the Center or directly at the Multi Modal Capital City Welcome and Transit Center;
- ? Passengers change between modes of travel (i.e. leave a car and get on a shuttle bus, etc.);
- ? Passengers interchange within modes (i.e. leave a bus and get on another bus, etc.);
- ? Passengers leave the transportation system (i.e. use shuttle to return to their cars in a peripheral parking lot);
- ? Pedestrians and bicyclists can safely and directly traverse the Capital District and the Downtown and utilize bus service;
- ? Passengers can utilize The Washington County RR line for potential rail service;
- ? Tourists will become aware of alternative modes (i.e. bicycle path, bus service, and tourist excursion train).

With these uses in mind, the new Capital City Welcome and Transit Center accommodate the following activities:

A new Capital City Welcome and Transit Center for Montpelier will be the destination to integrate VT Transit Bus Lines, Wheels (the regional public transit provider), bicycle path users, a Welcome Center for tourists and tour buses, and potential Washington County RR passenger uses.



The existing Vermont Transit Bus Station has few amenities.

A second function of the center will be the major transfer hub for intra-regional buses, commuting vans, and satellite parking lot shuttles for downtown employees and visitors as part of the larger parking policy.



The current Wheels transfer stop has little room for multiple buses.

A third element would be to create a new, larger, modern Montpelier Visitors Center, that is prominently located, with designated parking.

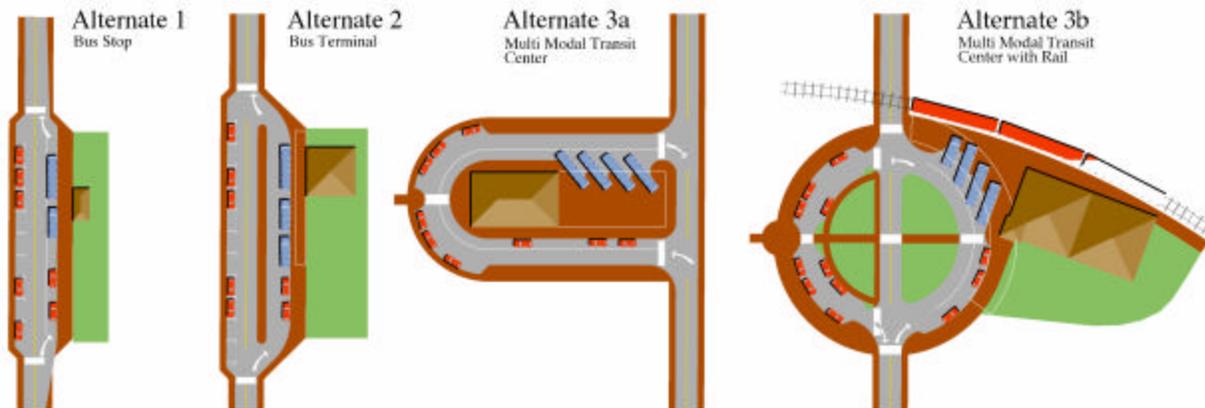


The current Welcome Center is off the main highway with little parking.

Transit service for downtown Montpelier could take several forms depending upon the need, funding and public policy. The options that have been considered are:

- ? A **simple bus stop** at the curb of a street typically with a shelter, similar to the VT transit bus station currently in use.
- ? A **bus station** serving one or more companies providing intercity or interstate service
- ? An **multimodal center** serving multiple forms of transit providers such as buses, shuttle buses, taxi,
- ? A **multimodal** center serving all of the above plus direct connection with Amtrak service, commuter rail station, auto leasing, etc.

HIERARCHY OF TRANSIT FACILITIES



Source: Capital District Master Plan – Montpelier, Vermont 2000.

Montpelier's existing service demands exceed the capacities of the first two options. Montpelier has an established demand for inter- and intra-city bus service, airport shuttle service to Burlington, a shuttle bus/peripheral parking lot system, taxi service and a vibrant tour bus destination demand. However, direct connection (via rail) with Amtrak is infeasible since their existing station is located out of town.

These factors suggest that a multi-modal Capital City Welcome and Transit Center in the downtown would best accommodate the transit needs and provide a facility able to grow to a mature level of service effective enough to contribute to the overall transportation and mobility of the city.

Public policy and user preference for transit has been changing rapidly in recent years and promises to change even more so in the future. Therefore, planning for a true inter-modal Capital City Welcome and Transit Center seems warranted. While commuter rail service from Montpelier to Burlington does not currently exist — and may not materialize for more than a decade — the location and design of the Capital City Welcome and Transit Center should anticipate this development and remain flexible enough to accommodate rail use in the future.

3. Typical daily/annual passenger usage expected at the facility including boardings, alightings, number of transfers, and other intermodal transfer information.

Considering the services identified below, without bicycle and pedestrian use, an initial estimate of passenger usage is 671/day or 200,806/year (* indicates numbers from below are included). In addition, potential and increased services would add to total passenger usage. See attached Table and detailed description below.

Expected Users of the Capital City Welcome & Multimodal Center - 3/1/02			
	Type of Use	Daily	Annual
Public Transit			
	Vermont Transit Passengers	50	18,250
	Vermont Transit Express Package Service	15	5,475
	City Wheels	112	26,000
	Commuter Wheels	47	11,000
	Downtown Wheels	40	4,000
	Hospital Hill Wheels	1	240
	Airport Wheels	5	1,000
	Wheels Transfers	100	24,900
Private Tour Bus			
	State House Tour Buses (420 visits, 40 passengers/bus)	46	16,800
Auto Tourists			
	State St. Welcome Center Visits	254	92,776
Taxi			
	Taxi pickups at VT Transit Station	1	365
Bicycle and Pedestrian			
	(Although there are no firm numbers, the existing paths and sidewalks in the vicinity of the site are heavily used by workers and residents)		
Car Rental			
	(Although there are no firm number, the existing service has 13 cars available with usually 50-90% rented)		
Total		671	200,806
Potential Users			
	Commuter Fringe Benefit Program (27.7% of Downtown workers surveyed indicated they would park in a remote lot and shuttle in)	289	71,961
	Passenger Commuter Rail (Burlington/Essex Passenger Rail Feasibility Study)	100	24,900
	Passenger Tourist Rail (20% of estimated visits)	151	55,000
Total		540	151,861

PUBLIC TRANSIT BUS

Vermont Transit provides intercity bus service to Montpelier scheduling four round trips per day between Montreal and Boston. Northbound buses leave Montpelier at 4:45 am, 2:05 pm, 6:05 pm, and 9:20 pm. Southbound buses leave Montpelier at 9:10 am, 11:30 am, 3:25 pm, and 7:15 pm. Connecting service to New York City is provided at White River Junction. On average the Montpelier Station experiences 50 daily boarding and alightings (18,250 average yearly *). Vermont Transit also offers express package service (15 items daily/5475 items yearly *).

Wheels Transportation provides intra-regional fixed route service between Montpelier, Berlin Route 302 Commercial Area, and Barre City. Two buses provide ½ hour headways, Monday through Thursday 5:25 am – 7:00 pm, Friday 5:25 am – 10:00 pm, and Saturday 7:55 am – 10:00 pm. City Wheels daily averages 112 passengers who get on or off at the State & Taylor St. Intersection (26,000 annually *).

Wheels Transportation provides intra-regional commuter route services between Montpelier and Waterbury, Northfield, and Waitsfield. Three vans provide two round trip am and pm peak hour and one round trip noon hour service. The three Commuter Wheels routes converge on the downtown providing a daily average of 47 rides (11,000 annually *).

State of Vermont provides a downtown shuttle during the Legislative Session, connecting the State House, DET Lot, National Life, State St. and Main St. Downtown Wheels Capital Shuttle averaged 40 rides daily at the State & Taylor St. intersection, during the Legislative session (4,000 during the entire session *). The Capital District Master Plan recommends the downtown shuttle be restored to year round service, allowing visitors to utilize satellite parking lots.

Wheels Transportation provides intra-regional semi-fixed route service between Montpelier and the Berlin Hospital Hill Area. One bus provides 1 hour headways, Monday through Thursday 7:15 am – 6:05 pm, Friday 7:15 am – 9:05 pm, and Saturday 9:05 am – 6:05 pm. The Montpelier Hospital Hill Wheels only travels on State and Taylor St. as part of its door to door service. Included in this are connections to Vermont Transit, Amtrak, and Airport Wheels. The current average is about one ride daily (240 trips annually *), but in reality these trips are clustered around holidays.

Wheels Transportation provides an on demand service connection to Burlington International Airport. The current average is about 5 rides daily (1000 trips annually *), but in reality these trips are clustered around holidays and seasonal needs from nearby colleges.

Wheels intends to make the new multimodal center the major transfer facility for all their routes. During the day City Wheels and Hospital Hill Wheels hourly converge at the Shaws transfer point, and during the AM and PM peak periods Commuter Wheels also meets at the transfer point. The Downtown Shuttle routes could easily be coordinated at this site as well. Currently transfers occur at Shaws on Main St., which is less than optimal because there isn't room for all the potential buses, or their ability to wait for an extended period, and the shelter is too small for the demand. The estimated increased ridership at the new multimodal center from existing transfers is 100 daily (24,900 annually *).

PRIVATE TOUR BUS

The State House and downtown Montpelier's shopping and restaurant accommodations are a major tourist attraction for private tour buses. Currently they drop their passengers off at various locations in the City, park at remote lots, and have a pre-arranged pick up site. The Multimodal/Welcome Center would provide a central location for this activity. This year 420 buses visited the State House, each with as many as 40 passengers would account for 46 daily or 16,800 annual passenger usage *.

The Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center, which is adjacent to the Multimodal Transit Center site, receives pre-arranged visits from 14 different tour bus companies through the year. Each bus brings between 48 and 56 visitors. Eighty percent of their "motor coach" visits occur during the 3-week period around peak foliage.

AUTO TOURISTS

The existing Welcome Center on State St. has little available parking and is located away from the major highway access. Even with these limitations, 92,776 * tourists visited the center in FY 01. Staff at the center describes typical growth at 4-5% annually. With the improved visibility and parking, it is expected use would increase.

TAXI

There are a few taxi companies that serve downtown Montpelier, on demand they will meet or pickup Vermont Transit passengers. It is estimated that this currently occurs once a day (365 rides annually *). They have indicated they would sit at the site, waiting for scheduled buses if allowed and not needed elsewhere.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN

The Central Vermont Regional Path is a proposed regional bicycle/pedestrian facility which will extend from Montpelier through Berlin, Barre City and Barre Town. Most of the Montpelier sections are also part of the Cross Vermont Trail, which is proposed to extend from Chittenden County to the village of Wells River on the Connecticut River. Segments of the Central Vermont Path have been built, or are currently under design or scooping. In Montpelier, the sections from the Dog River Recreation Area to Taylor St. and from Stone Cutters Way to Granite St. have been constructed, and are heavily utilized by residents and workers. Between these two sections is a gap in this regional bicycle/pedestrian facility. A Conceptual Alignment Study recommends bridging this gap along the river on the Carr Lot property.

The missing gap of the Path would be constructed as part of the Multimodal/Welcome Center and providing non-vehicular access to the site. The creation of amenities for bicyclists and pedestrians would encourage additional use. Bicycle rental maybe a future activity at the site. In the near term, those interested will be directed to Onion River Sports (two blocks away).

CAR RENTAL

Bob's Sunoco, located across the river, currently provides car rental services. There are 13 rental cars available, of which half are currently stored on the Carr Lot. At any particular time, 50% to 90% of the cars are rented. Although Vermont Transit has indicated interest in developing a car rental agreement, in the short term, interested parties will be directed to Bob's Sunoco.

POTENTIAL USERS:

RAIL

Although there is no current passenger rail to downtown Montpelier, there are enough statewide initiatives and studies to support the inclusion of future rail accommodations in the development of this Multimodal/Welcome Center. The Washington County Railroad is adjacent to the site being considered and is currently used for freight service. Many citizens fondly recall the seasonal passenger services offered between Barre and Montpelier in the not-so-distant-past and would welcome its return.

Amtrak currently serves Montpelier though the station at Montpelier Junction located 1.5 miles from the downtown. Last year, the annual boardings and alightings at the station were 6,891 passengers. Wheels currently will meet arriving trains if requested in advance. Wheels has provided 24 rides annually from the Amtrak Station. There is a problem with Amtrak customers not knowing Wheels services are available, and with late arriving trains.

The Vermont Granite Museum of Barre is currently under construction. They expect to attract 100,000 visitors a year. As part of their Master Plan, a tourist train would be developed which envisions a stop at the State House, as well as the Rock of Ages Quarry. The State House currently attracts 150,000-175,000 visitors a year. Tourists riding this train would be accommodated by the Multimodal/Welcome Center.

As part of the Burlington/Essex Passenger Rail Feasibility Study, an estimation of boardings for rail extensions to Washington and Franklin Counties was performed. The modeling considered a downtown Montpelier location, with the year 2009 estimate at 100 boarding daily (24,900 annually). Considering the success of the Champlain Flyer, this estimate may be low.

COMMUTER FRINGE BENEFIT PROGRAM

Both the city and state are interested in commuter fringe benefits. A commuter fringe benefit is a payment or incentive paid by employers to a daytime employee who commutes to work in the downtown or Capital Complex area without using a parking space. The city has implemented a commuter fringe benefit and currently has employee participation. The state is considering a commuter fringe demonstration project, but has not yet received funding to begin the program.

Other interest was demonstrated at a seminar (held on October 19) on "How to Develop and Implement a *Commuter Choice* Program". Created in collaboration with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Transportation, the seminar provided participants

with an opportunity to join other smart employers in learning how to custom create an effective *Commuter Choice* program that benefits businesses, employees and their communities.

Of the 14 employers at the seminar, three (Wheels, Controlled Energy, and Northern Power) have already moved to join the Commuter Choice Leadership Initiative and eight others are actively being recruited (the State of Vermont and the City of Montpelier participated in the seminar). Interest and participation in this program would indicate an increased demand for the multimodal center.

VTrans conducted a Commuter Fringe Benefit Feasibility Study in year 2000. As part of the study, a survey of 1,044 downtown workers was performed to estimate interest in not utilizing a downtown parking space and traveling to work in a non-auto mode. The following are sum of the results, which could indicate an increased demand for the multimodal center.

If an incentive in the range of \$25-\$40 per month were available for full-time participation in the Commuter Fringe Benefit Program:

27.7% indicated they would park at a remote lot and shuttle in (289 daily or 71,961 annual use);
26.5% indicated they would rideshare;
11.5% indicated they would take a bus;
17.2% indicated they would walk or bike;
21.7% indicated they would change their work schedule (telecommute or compressed work week).

4. Parking requirements for the facility and how they will be addressed.

Currently there are 150 spaces on the Carr Lot, used for Vermont Transit and general parking.

Parking required for the Capital City Welcome and Multimodal Center (37 Spaces):

Short term bus parking needs:

1 bay for Vermont Transit;
2 bays for Wheels Transportation;
2 bay for visiting Tour Bus;
1 drop off area for the Downtown Shuttle.
6 Total

Other short term parking needs:

1 spaces for express package and other drop offs;
1 spaces for standing Taxi;
10 spaces Welcome Center Visitor; and
1 space handicap parking
13 Total

Long term passenger and employee parking needs:

11 spaces Vermont Transit passengers;
1 space handicap parking;
2 space Vermont Transit operation;
3 spaces Wheels passengers;
1 space Wheels staff
18 Total

Estimated Spaces lost from the Capital City Welcome and Multimodal Center construction – (150 existing spaces - 37 Spaces retained for site use = 113 spaces).

Other employee, long term parking, and other needs currently provided on the Carr Lot will be provided off site at lots existing or to be developed in Montpelier. The proposal depends on a year round shuttle, and the use of existing and potential satellite parking lots (DET, Econo Lodge, Grossman's). The development of a Commuter Fringe Benefit Program would reduce the demand for downtown parking. The City and State are also considering the feasibility of a downtown parking garage (behind City Hall, 133 State St., Court St.). The City has appropriated funds to study the location for a downtown parking garage.

5. How the proposed location was chosen, including location criteria used, analyses performed, and the results of such analyses justifying the proposed location.

The Capital City Welcome and Transit Center should be located so passengers can combine trips to everyday services such as banks, dry cleaners, etc. and within easy walking distance of their ultimate destination — a place of employment. The center should link travelers with travel modes within the Montpelier area (Wheels, peripheral parking lot shuttle, etc.) and beyond (i.e. buses to Burlington International Airport, Amtrak). The facility should be designed to be visually prominent, while compatible with its architectural setting in historic downtown Montpelier.

Ideally, the center should be easy to get to and easy to get away from; time spent at the center should be as comfortable as possible. The city and state have agreed that the Capital District Welcome Center should be included in the project to provide information and assistance to regional visitors.

Seven potential sites for the Capital City Welcome and Transit Center were evaluated during the Capital District Master Plan. The nominated sites were identified during discussions with public officials, the transit providers, local residents and people attending the various public meetings.

The sites evaluated were:

- ? The Department of Employment and Training parking lot off Memorial Drive
- ? State Street in front of or behind the existing State Visitors' Center
- ? Taylor Street at the existing Vermont Transit ticket trailer
- ? The I-89 Triangle park-and-ride lot
- ? The Capitol Complex parking lot on Taylor Street
- ? The Amtrak Station

? Court Street behind the Thrush Tavern

Criteria used to evaluate sites

Each site was evaluated and ranked with a numerical score.

- ? Large enough to accommodate all transit operators in the area: Vermont Transit, Wheels, tour buses, taxis, rental car leasing and, in the future, commuter rail service.
- ? Proximity to the downtown central business district and the Capitol Complex is essential to attract ridership.
- ? Convenient walking distance of no more than ten minutes to-and-from principal places of work and the transit center.
- ? Connections between the Capital City Welcome and Transit Center and the Wheels intra-city and shuttle bus stops on State and Main Streets.
- ? Ability of all buses to maneuver quickly and easily in and out of downtown Montpelier from I-89 and from the peripheral parking shuttle lots
- ? Nearby available long - term downtown parking so VT Transit riders can leave their cars if going out of town for several days.
- ? Space for parking for tour buses
- ? Future potential to accommodate commuter rail service to and from Burlington.

The highest ranking sites in order, with a brief explanation for the reasons why, are:

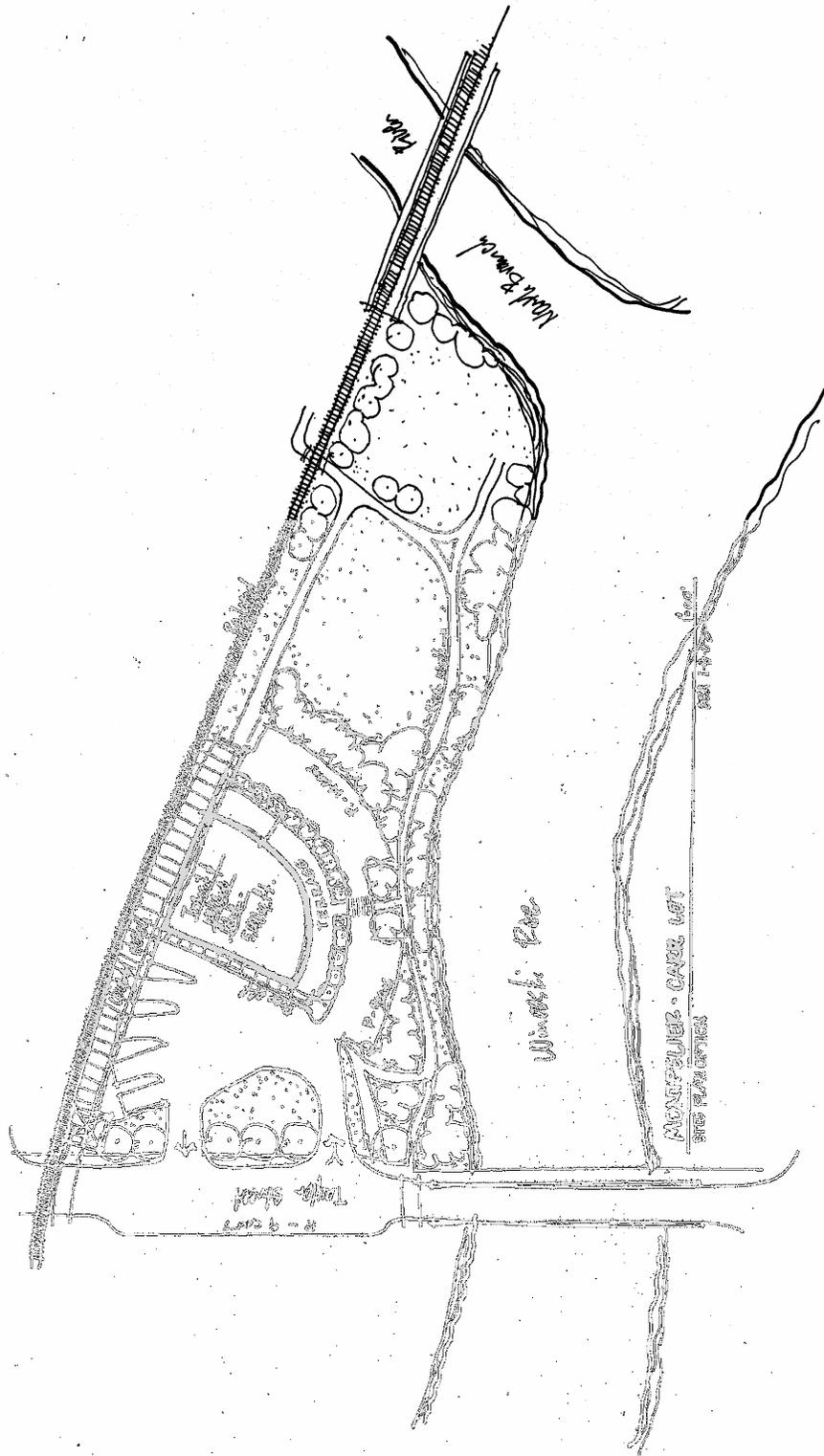
1. Taylor Street in the Capitol Complex parking lot; this site has the best maneuvering space for buses (32 points).
2. Taylor Street in the same location as the Vermont Transit trailer; this site is currently being used as a bus station and is available (30 points).
3. Taylor Street between the Chittenden Bank building and the rail lines; this site has the best potential for coordinating with a future commuter rail service but requires that buses cross the tracks. The existing bank drive-in teller operation would need to be relocated to accommodate this scheme (24 points).
4. The DET site; this site is already being used as a shuttle bus parking lot and could be available for development as a Capital City Welcome and Transit Center, but is located very far from downtown (21 points).

The optimum site

The highest ranked, and therefore recommended site for the Capital City Welcome and Transit Center is on Taylor Street. Locations either in the Capitol Complex parking lot or across the street at the existing Vermont Transit trailer on the Carr property. Due to limitations on the part of the state that precluded use of state land for the facility, the conceptual plan shows the Capital City Welcome and Transit Center on the Carr Property on the east side of Taylor Street, a location generally supported by all participants. Other sites evaluated were dropped from further consideration for a variety of reasons as noted.

6. Amenities to be provided at the proposed facility, e.g. heated shelter/waiting areas, seating, traveler information, telephone, vending machines, ticket sales, security (design features, lighting, cameras, glass, or other features.)

See attached conceptual Floor Plan Diagram, and Site Plan. Detailed description is provided below.



Capital City Welcome and Transit Center Space Needs

The transit portion of the center needs approximately 1,250 square feet of space, and the visitors area needs 2,500 square feet (waiting areas, restroom/shower facilities, and hallways are included). An additional 1,250 square feet is included in the cost calculations for future needs. Some of the program could be on a second floor level to reduce building footprint. The building, bus platforms and other circulation can easily fit on less than one acre of land, particularly if combined with other complementary uses. Whereas other transit centers have integrated parking with public transportation and required large expensive structures, this is not the case with this facility as proposed.

Internal facility space program

- ? A ticketing counter with secure package storage so that a single agent can sell tickets for Vermont Transit, Wheels, and Amtrak
- ? Office space for Wheels and VT Transit
- ? A waiting room sufficient to handle approximately forty-five people
- ? Space for tourist information and educational displays about Vermont, surrounding attractions, and alternative transportation options, including video room
- ? Welcome Center office space and meeting room
- ? Public restroom/shower facilities and a public telephone
- ? Space for vending machines and vendor carts and rough - in plumbing to accommodate a potential coffee shop operation with a small number of tables and chairs

Some of the amenities typically found in successful transit facilities include a coffee or sandwich shops, gift shop, displays of local crafts, agricultural products and merchandise, information guides, etc. The center should be designed to be secure, well lighted, well signed, affordable to construct and easy to maintain. The sheltered waiting area should have all of the amenities of a public building and, if possible, attractive views of the Winooski River, the State Capitol and the hillsides around the city.

External facility space program

- ? Berthing space for 5 - 55' long buses
- ? Parallel parking for shuttle bus stops, van pools, express package drop off, and standing taxi.
- ? Handicap parking;
- ? Long term parking for public transit employees and passengers.
- ? A covered passenger platform over the waiting areas
- ? Sidewalk connections to State Street
- ? Short-term parking spaces for vehicles coming for information at the Visitor Center
- ? Bicycle connections to the Cross Vermont Trail and Central Vermont Regional Path
- ? Bicycle storage racks, lockers or a combination of both for short and long term storage

- ? Good lighting for after hours schedules for security of the public
- ? Exterior pay phone
- ? Physical proximity to the existing rail line so that future access and space for a covered rail platform is accommodated

7. Hours of operation and staffing of the facility.

It is envisioned the hours and staffing will be consistent with the following users:

Vermont Transit operates from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Mon – Fri, half a day on Sat, and closed on Sunday. Staffing comprises of one person on a shift.

Wheels staffing would entail one dispatcher, and up to three drivers at any given time waiting to exchange shifts. Typical hours would be 8am to 5pm. Mon-Fri.

The Welcome Center staffing currently has two full time, one temp, and one volunteer workers. They are open 365 days a year, from 8 am – 8 pm.

One of the advantages for co-location is the ability to share staffing and provide more service for the public.

8. Estimated costs to acquire the site, construct the facility, and operate the facility.

See attached Tables.

Building and Site Operational Cost Breakdown					
(Includes: Heat, Electricity, Telephone, Trash, Snow Removal, Grounds Maintenance, etc.)					
User	Sq. Ft. Unique Use	Sq. Ft. Shared * Use	Total Sq. Ft.	Percent of Building Used	Operational Cost \$12/sq.ft.
State of VT	2,000.0	487.5	2,487.5	49.75%	\$29,850.00
City **	750.0	487.5	1,237.5	24.75%	\$14,850.00
VT Transit	200.0	487.5	687.5	13.75%	\$8,250.00
Wheels	100.0	487.5	587.5	11.75%	\$7,050.00
Total	3,050.0	1,950.0	5,000.0	100.00%	\$60,000.00
* Shared Use includes waiting areas, restrooms, and halls					
** City's unique use is the area available for future needs					

Federal Transit Administration Funded - Estimated acquisition and construction costs - 3/1/02				
Item	Total	Federal Share FTA	State Share	Local Share
3,000sf for ticket sales, waiting room, parcel storage, transit offices, restrooms, and vending area (\$120/sf)	\$360,000.00	\$288,000.00	\$36,000.00	\$36,000.00
Berthing for buses (5), parallel parking for shuttle bus stop, package drop off, and taxi, includes circular drive, covered platform, sidewalks, island	\$300,000.00	\$240,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
Transit Parking Spaces (21 @ \$2000)	\$42,000.00	\$33,600.00	\$4,200.00	\$4,200.00
Construction of sidewalks along both sides of Taylor St., includes crosswalks, lighting, drop-off area	\$150,000.00	\$120,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
Construction of the Bike Path from Taylor St. to Rail Crossing	\$53,000.00	\$42,400.00	\$5,300.00	\$5,300.00
Site improvements	\$1,000,000.00	\$800,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00
Sub Total	\$1,905,000.00	\$1,524,000.00	\$190,500.00	\$190,500.00
Survey, Engineering, and Design costs (20%)	\$381,000.00	\$304,800.00		\$76,200.00
Administration and Construction Engineering costs (10%)	\$228,600.00	\$182,880.00	\$19,050.00	\$26,670.00
Contingency (15%)	\$377,190.00	\$301,752.00	\$31,432.50	\$44,005.50
Acquiring the Carr Lot costs	\$640,000.00	\$512,000.00		\$128,000.00
Total FTA Funded facility cost	\$3,531,790.00	\$2,825,432.00	\$240,982.50	\$465,375.50
Other Federal Funded - Estimated construction costs				
Item	Total	Federal Share Other	State Share	Local Share
2,000sf for Welcome Center (\$200/sf)	\$400,000.00	\$320,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00
Welcome Center Parking Spaces (11 @ \$2000)	\$22,000.00	\$17,600.00	\$2,200.00	\$2,200.00
Replacement Parking Spaces (113 @ \$23,000-garage space)	\$2,599,000.00	\$2,079,200.00	\$259,900.00	\$259,900.00
Construction of the Bike Path from Rail Crossing to Stone Cutters Way	\$232,638.00	\$186,110.40	\$23,263.80	\$23,263.80
Park related improvements (benches, tables, playground, river access, other landscaping)	\$250,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Sub Total	\$3,503,638.00	\$2,802,910.40	\$350,363.80	\$350,363.80
Survey, Engineering, and Design costs (20%)	\$700,727.60	\$560,582.08		\$140,145.52
Administration and Construction Engineering costs (10%)	\$420,436.56	\$336,349.25	\$35,036.38	\$49,050.93
Contingency (15%)	\$693,720.32	\$554,976.26	\$57,810.03	\$80,934.04
Total Other Federal Funded facility cost	\$5,318,522.48	\$4,254,817.99	\$443,210.21	\$620,494.29

9. Cost allocation of capital and long-term operating costs, including sources of all capital funds and revenue sources adequate to meet the operating costs.

City of Montpelier to bond for site acquisition. The site value to be used for local match. City is requesting a Federal Earmark with this application for design and construction costs. Wheels has a Federal Earmark that may be available for the Transit Center development. Long Term operating costs to be provided by rental space to Vermont Transit, Wheels, and the State of Vermont. Additional maintenance of the site to be provided by the City of Montpelier.

10. The unmet need for funding, if any, and what sources are anticipated to meet this need. (Note that state funds may be used for construction only, not for planning, design, project administration, or overhead costs.)

Question #9 addresses the expectations for funding.

11. Ownership of the facility.

The City of Montpelier will own, manage, and maintain the facility.

12. Other potential users of the facility, e.g. Amtrak, Vermont Transit, parking authorities, human service agencies, retail or other tenants, etc.

Vermont Transit, Wheels, State of Vermont Information Center Division, a food service, car rental, and bicycle rental.

13. The other users (from the potential list) who have actually committed to using the facility, and what form the commitment takes.

The State of Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services, Vermont Transit, and Wheels have submitted letters of intent (attached).

14. Consistency with the state's downtown investment policies and other applicable targeted investment policies.

The Carr Lot Multimodal Center would be located within the core of Montpelier's Designated Downtown, which achieved official designation in August, 1999 (see previous attached location map). In its application for designation, the City noted its expectation of investing in the creation of a transit center "... which would accommodate Wheels bus service (intra-city), Vermont Transit bus service (inter-city), facilities for bicycle and pedestrian travelers, commuters, as well as the growing number of tour buses has long been contemplated and is an integral part of the Capital District Master Plan."

In 1996, the General Assembly enacted Title 29 VSA Chapter 8 Capitol Area Study Commission and created the City-State Commission to develop a land use and development master plan to encompass the Capitol Complex and downtown area of the city called the Capitol Area District. The boundaries of the district include the Capitol Complex, Court Street, parts of Elm and Langdon Streets, the west side of Main Street, and Memorial Drive (see attached map). This

City-State Capital District Master Plan, as discussed elsewhere in this document, was developed and adopted jointly in 2000 by City and State officials with the shared objective to guide future City and State decision-making in formulating and adopting capital construction plans and projects, spaces needs of state agencies, municipal land use plans and zoning bylaws, and appropriation of public funds. In addition to meeting the space requirements for State offices, investigating a district energy system, and recommendations for the involvement of private development and the City of Montpelier in the implementation of these objectives, developing a riverfront park and greenway along the Winooski River and a multimodal transit center on Taylor Street are significant elements of this plan.

The City of Montpelier Master Plan, an official municipal document adopted September 12, 2000, which incorporates provisions of the Capital District Master Plan, also notes the following:

“Vermont Transit (Greyhound Lines) provides inter-city bus service from its temporary station on Taylor Street. The basic corridor service operates four round trips per day to Burlington and White River Junction, with seasonal adjustments. Located in a trailer on leased land, its current facilities are inadequate and provide few passenger amenities. Vermont Transit officials have proposed moving its station to Berlin, but Montpelier citizens urged them to continue to provide service from downtown Montpelier while efforts continue to develop a multi-modal transit station in which they would be an important component.”

Leased by the City since 1991, this privately-owned site has been an important transportation-related facility by providing valued parking to citizens, visitors, and commuters. City officials, citizens, and business leaders are well aware, however, that this lot could be developed for commercial uses other than as a public transportation facility. At the same time, a large sector of the community has recognized that the unique location of this parcel offers a unprecedented opportunity to create an urban, riverfront public parks space defined by the confluence of the Winooski and North Branch Rivers, both of which are major features that have helped define the character of the city.

15. Community support for the proposed facility, including evidence of such support and evidence of a broad based effort to solicit input from a wide cross-section of community interests.

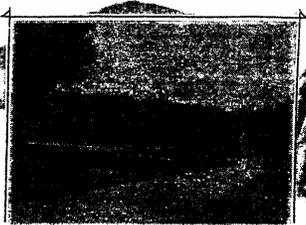
The documents referenced in #14, above, and their statements regarding the creation of a transit center are, in themselves, evidence of broad community support, as those documents were base upon extensive public participation and close scrutiny prior to be being officially adopted or accepted.

A number of citizen committees, formed with the support of the City Council in the past five years, have identified the need to address parking, transportation services, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other transportation services in the downtown as a critically high priority. Some of these groups actively participated in the process described above. Others took shape more recently and are focused on implementation.

The Montpelier Downtown Community Association (MDCA) has played a very active role in addressing downtown Montpelier's parking and transportation system needs and involving the community in that process. They were instrumental in the City's achievement of Downtown Designation.

The Montpelier Conservation Commission (MCC) specifically identified the Carr lot as an important and unique location to establish an urban riverfront confluence park. An ad hoc Montpelier Riverfront Committee formed in July, 2000, with the City Council's blessing, to investigate the possibility of the City purchasing the Carr lot as an important measure toward implementing the Capital District Master Plan. With \$15,000 in City funds authorized by the City Council, the Riverfront Committee conducted a hazardous waste site assessment and continues to research funding sources. In addition, on September 25, 2001, the Montpelier Riverfront Committee sponsored a broad-based, well-attended design charrette to involve citizens in identifying possible uses for this critical parcel. Over 100 citizens participated in this all-day event. With the help of professional designers broken into four groups, conceptual plans were produced that envisioned a public park, bike path, and transit center, as well as significant redevelopment of the site with a new road and bridge across the North Branch. All of the ideas and plans generated from that event were compiled in a report entitled "Where the Downtown Meets our Rivers: Designing Public Space for Montpelier—Results of a Public Design Session for the 'Carr Lot.'" A report was recently produced that summarized the input and designs generated from that event.

Attached are copies of more recent newspaper clippings reporting on this initiative and efforts to solicit public input.



VERMONT TRANSIT CO., INC.

PO BOX 724
WHITE RIVER JCT., VERMONT 05001
AREA CODE 802 295-5074
FAX 802 295-8047

*cc
→ Steve Gladwin
→ Valerie Copels
Bar Hill
file Cam lot*

C. G. ANDREASSON, OPERATIONS MANAGER
W. J. McCORMICK, CONTROLLER

Jon Anderson
Gateway Square
Burlington, VT 05402
November 1, 2001

RECEIVED
NOV 02 2001

Burak, Anderson & Mellon

Dear Mr. Anderson,

Vermont Transit Co., Inc. is prepared to lease space at the proposed transit center in Montpelier, VT. This company currently leases space at municipally owned transit centers in Nashua and Keene NH. The two centers are operated as company terminals by Vermont Transit employees. Vermont Transit's present location in Montpelier is operated on a commission basis by Melanie Buska of Montpelier. We pay the costs of building rent, plowing and electricity.

Vermont Transit states as a goal to maintain annual costs at current levels as follows:

Rent:	\$3820
Electricity:	\$1380
Plowing:	\$ 600
 Total:	 \$10,800

Melanie Buska is willing to operate a municipally owned center in Montpelier on behalf of Vermont Transit. Mrs. Buska is paid a commission based on ticket and shipment revenues. Mrs. Buska stated a desire to operate additional services, including car and bicycle rentals and provide information to tourists to the extent she could maintain or improve current operating margins.

Vermont Transit expresses a need for the following space:

- Minimum 600 square feet for interior bus operations including waiting room with seating for 10 persons
- At least 12 feet of height clearance for the bus
- 15 feet of clearance along right side of coach for full accessibility of lift
- Consideration for minimum 47 foot turning radius of our fleet
- Largest bus size in fleet is 45' 6" in length and 102" wide

- At least 2 parking places for employees
- An area for autos to park temporarily while dropping off or waiting to pick up passengers/shipments coming off arriving schedules (room for an additional 4 vehicles).
- Good lighting for after hours schedules for security of the public
- A sheltered exterior area to protect patrons from the elements for after hours operations
- Exterior pay phones
- Accessibility for our drivers to the interior of the facility for parcel delivery and pick up
- Some long term parking for our passengers would notice our service more attractive.

For car rental we would need space for drop off and pick up of vehicles - amount depends on volume. We are working on a cooperative arrangement with Rutaprise Car Rental to provide car rental options for our passengers at a number of our terminal locations.

For bicycle rental need storage area of at least another 600 square feet.

Sincerely,

Charles G. Andreasson
General Manager

To: Steve Gladczuk, CVRPC
From: Dona Bate, Executive Director



Date: January 21, 2002

Re: Multi-modal Center

We have reviewed the City of Montpelier's application for a Capital City Welcome and Multi-modal Center, and support this downtown project. **Wheels** also commits funds (up to \$10,000) and staff to support the operations of such a center.

Wheels is an active participant in the planning and development of the proposed multi-modal center, which has been recommended by previous consultants and study groups held by the City of Montpelier, the City/State Commission, and CVRPC.

Similar to being a hub for employment and services, Montpelier is the center of **Wheels'** transit pulse system. It's the transfer point for **Wheels'** regional and local transit riders. Increased numbers of transit users (residents & visitors) added to the steadily growing volume of large vehicles (buses and RVs) have created the need for a centralized facility that coordinates and connects the numerous types of services and modes.

A multi-modal center designed and constructed in concert with other planned measures such as traffic rerouting, green ways, and pedestrian / bike paths and clear & well placed signage will have a dramatic and positive impact on downtown traffic flow, congestion mitigation, economic development and cultural life.

In support of this project I would like to emphasize the following points:

1. **Wheels** recommends the vision for the center to serve multiple uses and users.
2. Since the multi-modal center will sit astride Montpelier's bike/pedestrian path and considering that **Wheels Transportation** and other community members are planning to introduce a free community bike program, it is desirable that the multi-modal center accommodates bicycle parking & renting. **Wheels'** vehicles are equipped with both bike and ski racks.
3. The multi-modal center will be the locus of our pulse system, providing our riders and drivers with a comfortable wait and transfer station. Having a room for a dispatch office within this building will enable us to better serve our customers and to better supervise our drivers.

TEL: 802-223-2882
FAX: 802-223-0771
TTY: 800-253-0195

Wheels Transportation Services, Inc.
Central Vermont's Public Transit Provider Since 1978

6088 Vermont Route 12
Berlin, VT 05602-9608

Email: Wheels@RideWheels.org

Its design will provide easy access for transit buses and vans to exit and enter the flow of traffic, while also providing a safe pull off area for our vehicles to load and unload riders as well as having two bays for buses to temporarily park. The integration of tour buses and recreational vehicles will safely guide these very large vehicles out of traffic flow to the east peripheral parking lot thereby encouraging visitors to walk around downtown.

4. Passenger rail service to Montpelier and Central Vermont is also an important piece in the overall transportation picture. It's highly desirable that plans for the multi-modal center also include means for rail passengers, currently disembarking at Montpelier Junction, to be transported to the center. Once there, travelers will have access to information, to other modes of transportation, and to the amenities of the facility, such as bathrooms, telephones, and protected waiting area.
5. It is very important that any plan for mitigating and controlling the flow of traffic must also support the expansion of Montpelier's satellite parking shuttle to a year-round service and to more shuttle services, which will connect peripheral parking lots along all the main arteries entering the city.
6. *Wheels* is willing to share management resources with other businesses making use of the center. Sharing resources such as staff, phone service and radio communications and cross training between modes would also enhance the 'Montpelier experience' for visitors and residents alike. Such collaboration will create a more seamless system for travelers, provide enhanced services and amenities, and greatly expand staffed hours for the public.



State of Vermont

Department of Buildings & General Services
Agency of Administration

Office of the Commissioner

Two Aiken Avenue, Drawer 33
Montpelier, VT 05633

Telephone: 802-828-3519

Fax: 802-828-3533

BGS Home Page: www.bgs.state.vt.us

Mr. Steve Gladczuk
Transportation Planner
Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
29 Main St., Suite 4
Montpelier, VT 05602

12/6/2001

Dear Mr. Gladczuk:

Please accept this letter as confirmation of the support of the Department of Buildings and General Services for your plans to move forward with the redevelopment of the "Can" lot. I wholeheartedly support your application for the funding to begin the planning and development process.

As you know, this Department has been involved with the City of Montpelier in the development of a Capitol Complex Master Plan. Key to the realization of this plan is the proper development of this significant piece of real estate into a transportation hub. We look forward to the day when information services to the traveling public can be coordinated from a single location.

If I can be of further assistance to you in your to secure funding, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Torti".

Thomas W. Torti
Commissioner

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION



Barry Driscoll
Director of Policy & Planning
VTrans
National Life Bld.
Drawer 33
Montpelier, VT 05633-5001

1/22/02

Dear Sam,

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Transportation Advisory Committee has reviewed the City of Montpelier's Application for a Capital City Welcome/Multimodal Center, and has voted to approve and support the application.

The region initially supported the feasibility study of this multimodal center through the Capital District Master Plan, and it has been an element in the Region's Work Program for staff to participate in its development. The growth of public transit service in the region has created the need for coordination at a central facility. The existing facilities can't meet this function. The cost of this project is a long term investment in a quality facility for the Capital of Vermont. Montpelier is a hub of transportation, employment, and services which the entire region benefits from.

The Central Vermont Regional Path has also been a top regional priority. The path exists on either side of the downtown and is heavily used by workers and residents. The bicycle and pedestrian elements of this proposal fill a vital gap in this facility.

The CVRPC TAC has offered to participate in a study of traffic circulation in downtown Montpelier. The TAC also supports seeking replacement parking for the Welcome/Multimodal Center site. If you have questions or comments, please don't hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Gladczuk', written over a horizontal line.

Steve Gladczuk
Transportation Planner



- EXISTING BUILDINGS
- NEW STATE OFFICES
- NEW PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT
- NEW TRANSIT/VISITOR CENTER
- RELOCATED HISTORIC HAUGAAG BUILDING

MASTER PLAN 18 Capital District State Office Park

* The Transit/Visitor Center shown in the Figure contains a museum and access to New Street, which isn't included in this proposal.

City's seed money boosts riverfront plans

By STEPHEN MILLS
Staff Writer

MONTPELLIER — With \$5,000 from the city council, the wheels were set in motion last week on new riverfront development in the capital city. The money will be used to prepare a statement of "purposes and need" to qualify for up to \$12 million in federal and state transportation funds. Those funds would be used to build a multi-modal transit center near the Taylor Street bridge and to create a new road linking Taylor Street and Barre Street. The money would also be used to link two bike paths running east and west of the city.

Riverfront

(Continued from Page 1)

Community Association members Jon Anderson and Claude Stone said the time was right to file an application for transportation funding for the projects.

Anderson said Sen. James Jeffords, R-Vt., supports the projects and had suggested the city submit an application now to qualify for funding in the federal 2002 budget.

"I believe that Senator Jeffords is prepared to work very hard in the next fiscal year to get us money to carry out a portion of the City-State Commission master plan relating to the Carr Lot," Anderson told the city council.

Anderson said it would take about a month for Gossens Bachman Inc., the consultants that drew up the award-winning master plan, to prepare the statement of purpose and need.

"Such consultants have indicated they could complete the

way for a new riverfront park at the confluence of the Winooski and North Branch rivers.

The proposed development would occur on the Carr Lot adjacent to the Winooski River, which is currently used for a bus station and public parking.

All of the proposals are contained in the City-State Commission Master District Plan, a blueprint for future development within the state-owned capital complex and the downtown. Approved at the funding camp at a Wednesday meeting of the city council.

At the meeting, Mayor Charles Kelley said the city council would also pay the

project about \$0.4 million if they are authorized to proceed," said Anderson in a letter to the city council. "This fits well with the schedule I suggested by Sen. Jeffords's staff."

"They would like to begin working to include an appropriation for the work in the fiscal 2001 budget," he said, "on this budget before October 1, 2001."

Anderson told the city council much of the funding was expected to come from the Federal Transportation Agency's "7231 Program," which would pay for 80 percent of the cost of eligible improvements to roads, bike paths and bridges.

"A question has arisen as to what improvements are eligible for 7231 funding," said Anderson's letter. "We believe that at least \$4 million of proposed construction is eligible under the program."

"The only way so far apparent to resolve this question is to prepare the requested purposes and need statement for the riverfront

Plans call for a new park at the confluence of the Winooski and North Branch rivers in Montpelier. The park is part of the development proposed for the Carr Lot area.



by the Federal Transportation Agency," the letter said. "In agreeing to appropriate the \$5,000 for the statement of purposes and need, Mayor Charles Kelley asked for any other item of transportation money included in that statement to be used to support the Carr Lot project."

Transportation Agency's "7231 Program," which would pay for 80 percent of the cost of eligible improvements to roads, bike paths and bridges.

"The amount of money to be applied for transportation funding is commensurate with a decision by an advisory committee to begin steps to purchase the Carr Lot on which the new road between Taylor and West streets would be built. It is also the site of a new transit center, a primary to extend the Carr Lot transit center."

Anderson said the Carr Lot project is a "major project" and that the city council should consider it as a "major project."

Montpelier Commission member Paul Kaminetz said the city council could buy the 1.5-acre parcel owned by Alan Carr for \$750,000.

"Generally we would like to develop substantially and make a plan on developing as a transit park as proposed in the City-State Commission master plan," Stone told. "There is the hope to implement that plan, and we are looking at ways that we could do that."

"One way would be for the city to lease a parcel," he said, "subjecting to a ballot item at the next city election to be put to voters in March."

"The proposed purpose would be through other sources, but we want to move forward," Stone said, referring to the possibility of funding from the City-State Commission.

They noted that the Carr Lot is currently for sale, although the city has the right to buy it.

Despite escalating costs, riverfront project continues

By Stephen Mills
Times Argus Staff
MONTPELIER - The city council has reluctantly agreed to spend \$15,000 to continue site assessment of the Carr Lot riverfront park, despite common about escalating costs of the project.

The money will be used to continue initial work, including appraisals of adjoining land needed to create a connector road between Taylor and Barre streets and build a bridge and bike path across the North Branch river.

The money will also pay for a structural assessment of the riverbank, and hold a forum to seek public input on the way the project should look.

Last week, the City Council hesitated when project consultant Paul Markowitz of the Montpelier Riverfront Committee said the city may have to consider the purchase of adjacent properties to build the road, bridge and bike path. Those costs would be in addition to the estimated \$300,000 cost of buying the Carr Lot to create the riverfront park and build a transit center.

Markowitz said the council should be ready to ask voters to approve a bond vote for the \$300,000 in March.

Councilor Tim Thunell said he was concerned about the additional costs. However, Councilor Claude Stone, a past member of the riverfront committee, said the council must follow its own objectives to the committee.

"They're doing exactly what you asked them to do, and now you're asking them to scale back," he said. "It would be very nice to have a consistent message from the council to the committee if we're going to have an accurate appraisal (of the project's costs)."

Councilor Jim Sheridan also urged the council to buy the Carr Lot while it is still available so the city does not have to pay lesser costs on the site that is currently used for parking.

The city has already received a \$75,000 federal grant to do an environmental assessment of the site. The Environmental Protection Agency grant is being used to look at possible contamination of the site, previously used for railway tracks, a scrap metal facility, wood and coal storage, and a cinderary. An initial archaeological assessment of possible earlier American Indian occupation of the site will also be done.

Riverfront

TR 5/29/91

(Continued from Page B1)

The Carr family purchased the site along the Winooski River near Taylor Street from the Barre and Chaleen Railroad Company in 1947. It has a current assessed value of \$250,000.

The site is identified as a future riverfront park in the City-State Commissioner's Capital District Master Plan, a blueprint for future development in the state-owned Capital Complex and the downtown.

Plans for the site include creating a purpose and needs statement prepared by architect Cassius Bachman at the request of Sen. James Jeffords, R-Vt., to apply for up to \$2 million in federal transportation money. The funds would be used to buy and rehabilitate the site, build the transit center, new road, bike path, riverfront park and river walk, and repair the nearby Taylor Street bridge.

In support of further assessments of adjoining land and the public forum, both

Markowitz and Sheridan said Jeffords' office stated it needed more information on project needs to qualify for the federal funding.

Timing remains a critical issue. Property owner Alan Carr has said he is eager to sell the site and is willing to try to accommodate the city's timeframe, including waiting for the environmental assessment.

However, Carr has also indicated he will not wait indefinitely, and may put the property on the market, although the council still has the right of first refusal to buy it.

Phase One of the environmental study by city-based Doherty and King Inc. will be a hazardous waste assessment that includes a records search to identify potential industrial and commercial sources of pollution and an archaeological survey of possible American Indian occupation of the site.

Phase Two of the study will include soil borings, archaeological backhoe trenches and tests on surface soil, subsurface soil and groundwater.

Community invited to discuss plans for river

By STEPHEN MILLS

been identified as a future riverfront park in the City-Save Commission's Capital District Master Plan, a blueprint for future development in the Montpelier Riverfront Committee. "We're proposing a public park and a transit center. The other pieces are the addition of a road and a bridge."

"We realize this is a long-term effort and we're focusing our efforts on a willing seller and a known parcel for development of the downtown area," he continued. "The design charrette is the first opportunity for the citizens of Montpelier and surrounding areas to share their views on what should happen on this parcel."

"We're talking everything from a playground to access to the river to a

been identified as a future riverfront park in the City-Save Commission's Capital District Master Plan, a blueprint for future development in the Montpelier Riverfront Committee. "We're proposing a public park and a transit center. The other pieces are the addition of a road and a bridge."

"We realize this is a long-term effort and we're focusing our efforts on a willing seller and a known parcel for development of the downtown area," he continued. "The design charrette is the first opportunity for the citizens of Montpelier and surrounding areas to share their views on what should happen on this parcel."

"We're talking everything from a playground to access to the river to a

River

Continued from Page B1

like path through there," he added.

With the help of a \$75,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, the site is undergoing a two-phase assessment.

Phase One of the environmental study by city-based engineering consultants Dube's and King, Inc. is a hazardous waste assessment that includes a historical and property records search to identify potential industrial and commercial sources of pollution, and an archaeological survey of possible Native American Indian occupation of the site at the confluence of the Winooski

and North Branch rivers. The site has been used for railway sheds, a scrap metal facility, wood and coal storage, and a crematory.

Phase Two of the study will include soil borings, ecological habitat transects, and tests on surface soil, subsurface soil and groundwater. Mackworth said it is hoped Phase Two will be completed by the end of October, with results coming in by the end of the year.

The city has supported the project by setting up the Carr Lot committee to study proposals, and commissioning \$25,000 toward investigating other nearby land acquisitions for the proposed connector road and

bridge linking Taylor and Burr streets.

Mackworth said the committee also has been working with a Vermont Agency of Transport to develop an proposal for the transit center, which has urged the committee to pursue the proposed development.

Committee Chairman Jon Anderson said the city would have to make a request to Jeffords to "connect" the project for special funding over and above any money given the state in annual federal appropriations for road projects. State approval of the project as a priority would help secure funding, he said.

Any funding would require a 10 percent match from the city,

toward the project, and could include the purchase price of the site.

The committee hopes to convene funding for the project in January, and receive the money in October 2002, he said, adding that he is "extremely optimistic" that federal funding would be awarded. Jeffords has strongly supported the project and has asked for more information.

Property owner Alan Carr is interested in selling the site for between \$750,000 to \$800,000, and the city is considering asking voters to approve a bond to cover the cost of land acquisition.

Mackworth said the design charrette would allow citizens to propose uses for the site, dis-

cuss ideas with planners and architects, and view drawings of their ideas for further discussion.

"Montpelier residents are highly supportive of more green space in the city," said Markowitz. "If you look at cities around America, they're turning their attention to their riverfronts."

"We're saying that this is an incredible resource running through the confluence of two rivers in the city, and right now, we have a dirt parking lot there," he added. "We want to see what can happen there."

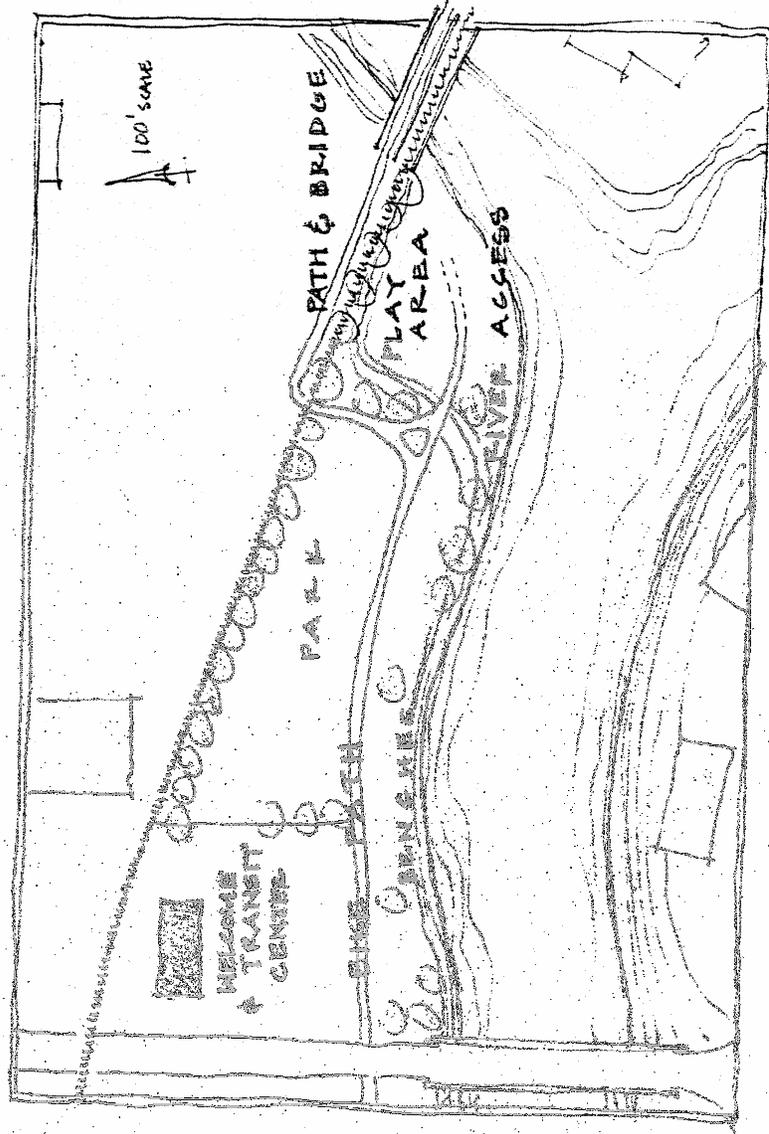
For more information, call Markowitz at 229-6307. Contact Stephen Mills at stephen.mills@timesargus.com

TA 9/23/01

See River, Page D2

TA 9/23/01

“Where the Downtown Meets our Rivers: Designing Public Space for Montpelier—
Results of a Public Design Session for the ‘Carr Lot.’”



Redrawing the map for a riverfront park

By Stephen Mills

TIMES ARGUS STAFF

MONTPELIER — A plan

to create a new green space in the capital city has inspired the community to much greater heights.

The original proposal in the City State Commission Master District Plan called for a transit center, riverfront park, bike path and connector road at the confluence of the Whitehall and North Branch rivers.

But the plan may have to be substantially redrawn after a hearing Wednesday called "Where the Downtown Meets

our Rivers: Designing Public Space for Montpelier" at Christ Church. The 75 participants included community leaders, politicians, architects, planners, residents and schoolchildren.

The "design charrette," the French term for an extended workshop, lasted nine hours, and included a lunchtime brainstorming session, an afternoon planning session with architects who drew several different designs, and an evening review of proposals and drawings.

The basic elements of the plan to develop the 1.3-acre

Carr lot, currently used for parking, are still in the plan.

But a wide range of new ideas generated at the design charrette called for an amphitheater, riverfront marina, a fishing area, children's playground, band courts, ice skating rink, tourist kiosk, fountain, sculpture, a snack bar and landscaping, to name a few.

"This is fantastic, turning out the way you have," said conservation commission chairman Paul Markowitz, who moderated the meeting. "We have a lot of ideas that many of

you hope will be a reality on that lot. But we should remember that it is only 1.3 acres, not 13 acres, so there are some limitations."

Concerns raised included the loss of tax revenue, pollution and noise from the transit center, the loss of acid seed for parking, costs and funding for the project, and the need to preserve and enhance the riverfront.

The results visualized in drawings were surprising. Concerns about the impact of a

(See Map, Page B3)

Map

(Continued from Page B1)

large transit center right on the riverfront prompted most architects to reduce its size and pull it to the back of the site. Another proposal suggested combining housing into its design.

In one design, parking problems would be solved by building a parking garage on land behind the site currently used for parking, and to accommodate more cars. The connector road from the Taylor Street Bridge across a new bridge over the North Branch would have private commercial and retail development along it to offset the cost of public recre-

ational amenities.

Many of the designs included proposals for an amphitheater or stage, clock area, a playground, network and landscaping.

Some of the designs also went beyond the area and scope of the parcel, tying in a larger riverfront park to the Statehouse lawn, and building additional parking and office space west of the Taylor Street Bridge.

Speaking after the meeting, Markowitz said the findings would be included in a report to be presented to the city council within a month.

"Generally, the response was very favorable," he said.

"There were a lot of ideas that made people happy, and those are some concerns."

"We want to build support for something with a lot of public benefit. We look at this as part of a long-term process, with the first major outreach to see what should happen to this parcel and what will ultimately happen on the site."

Because of the strong support from the community, the next step would be to consider issuing a ballot item for a bond of \$500,000 to buy the site for voters to approve in March.

"I feel there's support to do that, and we're moving forward

to buy the site," he added. "Otherwise our window (of opportunity) might be closing for us."

Other ongoing work on the site includes pursuing federal transportation funds for the transit center and connector road. An environmental assessment of possible hazardous waste and the site's historical importance as a possible Algonquian settlement, has been filed by a \$75,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency.

For more information, call Markowitz at 229-6267.

Contact Stephen Mills at stephen.mills@timesargus.com

Grant may be a boon to transit center

By Stephen Mills
TIMES ARGUS STAFF

MONTPELIER - The capital city and Wheels Public Transportation Services have agreed to team up to apply for a federal transportation grant totaling \$1,485,472 - funding that could help build a new transit center in the city.

Wheels asked the city to act as the agent because the three-year grant from the Federal Transit Administration is only available to municipalities or state agencies. The grant was secured by Sen. James

Jeffords, I-Vt., to fund the purchase of transit vehicles and transit facility improvements in central Vermont.

At a meeting at city hall earlier this week, councilors readily agreed to act as the agent for Wheels after hearing more than one-third of the grant could go toward a project to build a transit center on the Carr Lot near the Taylor Street bridge.

"Wheels is willing to share up to \$500,000 of these funds with the city," said Wheels executive director Dona Bate in a

memo to the city.

Bate said Wheels' share of the money would be used to buy more vehicles, hire more drivers and add more routes to its service area.

Wheels employs about 100 drivers and operates 15 routes to 23 towns. It also has another 50 to 65 volunteer drivers who transport people to doctor's appointments or shopping.

City manager William Fraser suggested

(See Transit, Page B3)

Friday, November 16, 2001 Local & State The Times Argus

Transit

(Continued from Page B1)

the city's share of the money could go a long way toward the estimated \$500,000 purchase price of the Carr Lot. The parking lot has been identified in the City-State Commission Master District Plan as the site of a new transit center, riverfront park, bike path and new connector road between Taylor and Barns streets.

The city would be required to match 20 percent of the \$500,000 it would receive from the grant. That 20 percent - or \$100,000 - would be included in a \$300,000 bond issue that could be presented to the voters in March. If approved, the bond issue would make up the difference of the \$300,000 purchase price and would cover the rest of the share requirement, said Fraser.

The city had been considering asking voters to approve an \$300,000 bond to purchase the site. The city council said it thinks it has a much better chance of the bond passing if the new proposal is considerably less.

"The city's 20 percent share match would come from the remaining purchase price," said Fraser, referring to the total amount needed to buy the Carr Lot.

"I believe that the benefits to the city far outweigh the concerns and I believe we ought to go further," he said.

Councilors agreed to request a meeting with federal transportation officials to discuss any potential problems.

Contact Stephen Mills at
stephen.mills@timesargus.com