



Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

January 25, 2012

DRAFT

1. **Breakfast and Networking.**

2. **Call to Order & Introductions.** Sandy Miller, ECOS Co-Chair, brought the meeting to order at 8:05am.

2. **Quick Review of Project Status & Documenting Efforts.** Sandy Miller distributed the activity sheet and asked members to sign in and note the amount of time spent on the project to date to help meet federal matching requirements. He then turned the meeting over to Charlie Baker. Charlie Baker ran through the agenda, documentation efforts, project overview and status.

3. **Approval of October 26, 2011 Meeting Summary – ACTION.** Penrose Jackson asked for a motion and second. There were no changes. **Sandy Miller moved, seconded by Jim Dudley, to approve the minutes of October 26th.** Penrose Jackson commented that the minutes were complex and complete. **Vote: motion carried.**

4. **Acceptance of Analysis Reports – ACTION.** The Final Draft Analysis Reports were submitted on January 13th after a 45 day comment period. 686 comments were received from 18 individuals/organizations. **Garret Mott moved, seconded by Joe Speidel, to accept the Analysis Reports, understanding that as part of the final ECOS product they remain open for amendment until the whole product is finalized.** No discussion. **Vote: acceptance carried.**

5. **Preview Draft Indicators (attached).** Penrose Jackson reminded the Steering Committee that the indicators are in rough draft form and there is a great deal of work that needs to be done going forward. She introduced Elizabeth Reaves from The Center for Rural Studies, who provided a presentation on the purpose of indicators and provided an example from the Draft Indicator Report. She explained the questions that the ECOS Steering Committee should be thinking about when they review the Draft Indicator Report.

The floor was opened for discussion and comments:

Doreen Kraft, Burlington City Arts: What raised a question for her is her observation that we have had a 60-yr cycle and ended up exactly where we were 60 yrs ago. If we are at 2012 and have already achieved the 2035 target, is that alarming? Will it continue to trend exactly this way or does that raise a different set of questions? Reaves noted another key indicator (not included in this slide presentation) looks at density or the size of lot development in each of these areas and she thinks that helps fill the picture out. Charlie Baker explained that this is not cumulative, and occurs for each time period: do we want to keep growing at this pace? So the question for the future is 'do we still continue to have 80% of growth where we want it to go?' We haven't really reached our target other than in the past five years, and we didn't know what the target was until a few months ago. The



municipalities and the development community changed the trend line in the last few years – an interesting commentary on growth policies in our towns and region.

Jim Dudley, Shelburne: This begs another question: whether the planned growth was so heavy that it had the rural growth percentage wise abnormally low? There was a lot of growth in the growth areas, and that can mask what is happening. Reaves pointed out that the indicators are only part of the story, and still need people to analyze them and build them into the larger narrative. The indicators will be used over a long period of time (10 – 20) years.

Megan Moir, City of Winooski and Program Manager for the City of Burlington Stormwater Program: There almost needs to be an entire definition section. It would help all of us and other laypeople who will review this later, not all are familiar with all the metrics and how the indicators are collected and definitions such as “new structure.”

Sara Martinez Osaba: She wonders if there will be the capacity to do primary data collection? Charlie Baker responded, saying he wanted to leave room in the goal statements, and noted that some goals are very light on data; if you know where the data is, that would be a great comment to get. The Report covers four large topic areas, and covers all of us in the room. It will take all of us to participate; if you have data, feed it in, help people understand it or identify priority issues on which data should be collected. This will be as good as we make it. Megan Moir asked if the money for implementation can be used for collecting new data? Baker responded that that is a possibility, and up to the Committee.

Garret Mott, Buel's Gore: Re Natural Systems #7, page 40 - Protect and Enhance Working Landscapes, etc. There is quite a bit of detail, however this should include information on sugaring, the data for which Mott thinks can be obtained from the Vermont Sugarmakers Association; as well, Christmas trees and there is a state association for that. Other piece: most suited to ag land. Development tends to happen on the least expensive to develop land. It's a lot cheaper to carve up a field and lay down fabric and gravel for a road than it is to clear a wooded hillside and bulldoze a road. I have long been concerned that our best ag land is being lost forever this way – or as Joni Mitchell would say ‘pave paradise and put up a parking lot.’

Rachel Batterson, Vermont Legal Aid: Regarding the Social Community goals, Pages 45 - In the accessibility piece, one indicator should be owned and rented private housing accessibility. We also should be thinking about walkability of the streetscape and buildings. Reaves asked Batterson to help her locate the data or if this should be primary data; if you don't think it exists, please let us know. Batterson said she is aware that the State just passed a Walkable Streets law [Complete Streets], but she is not good at pointing out the data. Goal 4, Page 48: she thinks it is important to continue to measure housing in its physical relationship to jobs and their affordability. Goal 7: increasing opportunities – she thinks this is really integration (percentage under the Fair Housing Act) and we can use the census or ACS data for this. Goal 8: Is affordable housing co-located near jobs for people with affordability issues? Goal 10: measuring the integration of those schools, Batterson thinks there should be a separate goal for integration, and are most likely beyond that, but perhaps we can fit it in



another place.

Rodney Pingree, Bolton: Natural Systems, Page 42, Goal 8 - Mr. Pingree said that this is significantly deficient in recreational resource identification. The section protects scenic aspects, but if we are going to do a complete job, recreational resources need to be mapped and identified; that would be strongly supportive of Social Community Goal 4, helping the population reach a more reasonable weight standard and activity level. If we don't keep recreational opportunities available, people won't find reasons to go outdoors and become more sedentary over time.

Heather Danis, Burlington District Office of VT Department of Health: Folks may have noticed that there is a Social Community Work group and two sets of sub-work groups (health and education). Ms. Danis said we need to fully form a social community work group, and, in reality, the work group is really the two sub-groups. Staff from Danis' office has written the Health Report, with Barry Lampke spearheading the Education Report. They have wanted to form their broad social community work groups because there are goals (under Social Community) on which they have no expertise or ability to produce reports or goals. For those folks making comments on the social community goals and indicators, please contact us and we will help facilitate the creation of a broader social community work group. If people don't get engaged, there will be some clear health and education indicators but the rest will fall by the wayside without help.

Margaret Bozik, Burlington Legacy Project: Have we looked at how many indicators may be being used by other sustainability indicator projects, and whether it would be possible to do that so we can gauge ourselves against other parts of the country?

Elizabeth Reaves, University of Vermont, Center for Rural Studies: Where indicators did not come up in analysis reports, she referred back to other sustainability projects: Seattle, Portland, Jacksonville, Santa Monica. Both Canada and OECD countries collect quality of life indicators and Reaves is happy to go back through the reports and tell you where those indicators are popping up.

Chapin Spencer, Local Motion: Governance was discussed at their sub-group meeting and it doesn't appear that governance is addressed in the goal indicators. We are talking about trying to get to a new future but not talking about how we need to work collectively, breaking down silos to get there; in our goal statements, we need to look at how we are doing business and making decisions. Why do we seem to have town-by-town governance and so many of our issues are regional? It seems like a policy discussion that we've struggled with in this county, that is a growing metro area, but is making decisions in 18 different selectboards. Spencer said he would like to see something reflected in the plan to help us evaluate how we are making decisions moving forward. Penrose Jackson responded, saying that this is a good opportunity to engage in the social piece. The whole sustainability of ECOS demands that we stay at the table, connecting the dots. We will not move from individual communities to ongoing, cooperative, countywide governance in a moment, this will occur over time. Keep the ethic in play and keep coming to the table. Fletcher Allen is doing a Community Needs Assessment, as are all the hospitals in the state and the Agency of Human Services and Vermont Department of Health and we are talking to each other and sharing information.



Marty Illick, Hinesburg: Marty Illick agrees with Chapin Spencer, Garret Mott and Elizabeth Reaves. Looking across the groups we have created, the next step may be for staff to show us a matrix of all indicators and how they relate to each other. The graph doesn't show how that affects our natural systems so we don't know if the planning areas are serving the natural systems. Analysis is the key, and we need a matrix for our sub-committees to grasp and analyze it at the committee levels. It is difficult to agree on any indicators until Illick sees that part of the project. Elizabeth Reaves responded that a student has helped her develop that matrix. Also CCRPC is working on ways to put the matrix together so that it is easy to use. In the draft Indicator Report, you can look at the growth indicator and then go to the Natural Systems goal and, because you are aware of the connections, look for where they intersect.

Kate McCarthy, Vermont Natural Resources Council: Ms. McCarthy said she is glad everyone is making these comments, observing that the indicators serve multiple goals. McCarthy is working on a separate project and having the same struggle – how can we illustrate what the indicators tell us? You may want to consider, complimentary to the matrix, a system of icons. There can be an icon for walkability, etc. This can also be done with numbers with color-coded circles; it is a really good way for the public to have a snapshot of the interconnections rather than a web diagram.

Garret Mott, Buel's Gore: Built Environment Goal 7, Page 15 - Should we add CCTA ridership numbers as an indicator for how we're doing getting people off the highways, possibly Amtrak as well (the numbers are available). Reaves agreed that the data is available and appears under a different goal.

Kari Papelbon, Underhill: Built Environment Goal 2, Page 10 – Do you have access to information on the number of homes or businesses that net meter?

Alison Hollingsworth, VEIC: Alison Hollingsworth worked on the Energy Analysis report. In the process of doing the report, they discovered that the VT Energy Atlas, a project through VT Sustainable Job Funds, has a lot of information on the sites of public and private renewable generation and the information can be accessed online in a map-based for and information can be emailed. Reaves noted the difference between key and supporting indicators and our need to identify the key and supporting indicators that tell us the most and trigger the alerts. Which do we want our partners to secure?

Rachel Batterson, Vermont Legal Aid: There are some things for which we don't have good data, but that does not minimize their importance because we don't already track that information. Penrose Jackson reminded members that there is a place for comment on the ECOS website.

Andrea Morgante: Social Community Goal #6, Page 49, second bullet – Perhaps we should word this in a different way. Waterways are not getting impaired, it is the infrastructure around the waterways; we shouldn't be blaming the rivers. It is our lack of good planning.

Marty Illick, Hinesburg: Emphasize key and supporting indicators. It might be good to focus on the key indicators first. Natural resources are her background. If the eco-systems are in good shape, then our land use planning is doing the right thing. For her, our baseline indicators and should be around



the natural world. She doesn't see that the report laid out this way, and Ms. Illick wants to advocate for that.

Megan Moir: Moir agrees. Looking through the goals and indicators, while she agrees that water quality health is how Lake Champlain is doing with its phosphorous load or the number of impaired stormwater streams, she thinks because the eco system response can be so delayed, it is important to have intermediate indicators. For example, impervious acres that have some sort of storm water treatment. We do need to keep track of that so we know if we are improving in the interim because we may not see response from the lake or the streams for 20 or 30 years, so we need to keep track of long-term indicators as well as the intermediate ones. Elizabeth responded that she hopes Ms. Moir can provide us with some intermediate indicators.

Jim Brangan, Lake Champlain Basin Program and local Fire Department member: Built Environment Goal 12, Page 20 – Reduce the Loss of Life and Property from Manmade Hazards. Jim Brangan thinks we have good information from fire our departments, which report to selectboards every year. One of the most devastating hazards are structure fires, and there are a few indicators that can be used such as number of structure fires and also fire prevention programs. Empirically we have seen fires go down because of maintained smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. We can get this info from fire departments and fire insurance ratings from insurance companies. This is a real opportunity to bring in some of the great data that is out there.

6. Next Steps/Engagement Efforts. Charlie Baker emphasized that there are 150 indicators in this report as possibilities and we just came up with more to add. The difficulty will be what key indicators we need to communicate with the public. As we get further info this, Baker sees the public piece (that we report out) and keeping the more technical piece in the appendix. What are they key indicators and what do we want to report out in terms of our progress? The challenge in the next few months is improving this report and the Comments section on the website will be coming in a few days. We are trying to get comments documented on each goal page.

Cross-sector relationships: We have been talking about the icon matrix notion and that these things are related to other goals. Is there a supporting indicator that will give a statistic about rural development's impact on working landscape might be a supporting indicator under Built Environment goal and is related to the Working Landscape goal; it is important to think about supporting indicators that might help make those connections.

7. Revised ECOS Working Group Structure. Charlie Baker thanked all that signed up for Working Groups. Baker noted that one of the process challenges we have been struggling with is that the ECOS project will become the Regional Plan, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. But to get there, we need to better integrate the ECOS work with those boards (CCRPC and GBIC). This process is challenging in terms of structure, and perhaps it was not clear enough so Charlie Baker is proposing using the more formal CCRPC structure under the Long Range Planning Committee. ECOS partners such as VEIC, VNRC, Housing, Transportation, Energy will meet along with the LRPC. There are a lot of topics to address: Social Community, Health and



Education may need to meet again but maybe they come together under Social Community; Built Environment was too big so we may have to segregate transportation and housing and then feed it up to a coordinating table at the LRPC so we have a better way to work between the quarterly meetings. The sub-committees have not been set up yet. Please let us, or Garret Mott, know if you feel that a sub-committee needs to be created. The LRPC meets next week and will start talking about what sub-committees are needed, set them up with a chair, and look at the indicators for that topic area and feed back the recommendations so by the first week in April all recommendations have gone through a sub-committee review, development and improvement and fed up to the LRPC and then recommended back out to the ECOS group. All of the boards will be kept in the loop along the way. Jim Dudley asked to have the meeting dates put on the website as well as sign-ups, which we will do. This is an opportunity for the sub-committees to focus on their area, then how they relate to other areas and then feed it up so there will be a collective multi-topic conversation.

Andrea Morgante noted that this project is good at collecting data and allowing us to look at the way we've done things in the past, and she would like to challenge us to think about what data that is missing? We don't want to continue to track data that has not served us that well because we were tracking the wrong thing. Our real challenge is to look forward to creating a shared vision, which is where this project started. Morgante encouraged members to leave this meeting and ask, 'where do we really want to be?' Baker said that hopefully where we want to be is reflected in those goal statements. When re-reading the goal statements, Charlie Baker was struggling with some of them; some may need to have a better statement, so he asked members to provide that feedback as well.

Penrose Jackson mentioned that coincidentally, the Agency of Human Services and the Department of Health are working on an indicator project as well. The United Way is partnering with us and working on indicators that they will track for the County and we are trying to weld this into one indicator report that all the agencies are sharing. Interestingly, the legislature is looking at progress indicators and we can see how much overlap there is and make sure that what we are producing is something that is useful and sustainable annually. The regional planning commission is committed to keeping this going and relevant.

8. Next Steps/Engagement Efforts.

a. Review Draft Indicators with your organization

- ☐ Contact CCRPC to attend your meeting (we will contact towns)
- ☐ Submit Comments on Draft Indicators by Friday, March 16

Baker summarized next steps indicating that comments should be made on the website. He said that the comments from today will be put on the ECOS website and he thanked all for giving us a head start on the comments. We will start working with the committees and subcommittees and look over the comments over the next 45 days. Penrose Jackson told members not to hesitate providing input.



b. Communication Tools input

Penrose Jackson said that we have been talking a lot about how we are talking to the community at large; it is not about us, it is about the region. How do we communicate our message? Recently ECOS contracted with Sp!ke Advertising and Ken Millman, from Sp!ke, is here to talk and get your input.

Mr. Millman said he came here as a marketer this morning and it then occurred to him that he is a citizen of Chittenden County and he feels compelled to share some of his feelings: Millman is a business and property owner, an on-again, off-again resident, with a son attending UVM. As a citizen, Millman said, what you are doing is huge, incredibly hard and important. His feelings are similar to the rest of the communities.' Thank you. Failure is not trying - we are trying. Don't get discouraged. This isn't easy.

As a marketer, what you will be seeing first from us and Charlie's core group, is something that might be called elevator speech: who, what, where, why, how, when. What is it? Who is this for? Millman will be giving the "gatekeepers" (ie. the Steering Committee members) a cheat-sheet so you can all start using the same language, and, using this tool, describe what truly is the ECOS project. This will be coming soon.

The ECOS Steering Committee is a major target audience – because you are the gatekeepers. ECOS is providing some basic tools to give others: the newsletter, copies of Powerpoint presentations, press release copies that you can use to distribute to your local media or community groups. Millman wants feedback from us - is it working? We want to produce as few *things* (that are not sustainable) as possible; it is a waste of money and contrary to our mission. We have the internet, we are utilizing the web, but how is the newsletter working for you? Do you want it printed? Will a pdf suffice? All feedback is appreciated. Send Sp!ke emails at hello@spikeadvertising.com so it will get to Ken and Becca Burns, his partner. What is working, what is not?

Rachel Batterson said that, for her, the newsletter is not working; it is too much, all at once. Batterson said it would be nice to have a tweet or an email. VHFA has a blog, tweet and email, or a tweet that is an email. That model works for her.

Jim Dudley said that Shelburne had items in the newspaper, brochures in the town hall, but he said he thinks if you walked around town and asked about ECOS, no one in town is getting it. This bottom-up, is missing the top-down. We can't tell the newspapers what to do, but if every week they hear 'ECOS Project,' they would begin to pay attention. There are limited things we can do at the lower level.

Dawn Francis thinks we need to consider a Facebook page. There are young professionals groups to whom we should make a presentation as well as Champlain Leadership; Dawn would like to see some younger folks involved.

Chapin Spencer said that when we asked for a review of the goals, the response was fairly limited. If



we are really talking about a transformative document for how this region will be, looking out fifty years, we need to figure how to get it into the community in a more substantial way and get a dialog from the ground up. Spencer would love to see first-person testimonials to give some legitimacy to the project.

Joe Speidel, UVM: Mr. Speidel said he was fortunate to be part of the process with Sp!ke. One of the things they talked about was 'Why do I care about this as an individual?' He agrees with Spencer; we have to get out there in small groups and find a way to bring the idea of sustainability to the public's level. What do they care about and what are they willing to do?

Doreen Kraft, Burlington City Arts: We are involved in the engagement phase of this project, which is coming after we complete this work so what we take out to the community has had some radical simplification, then using unique techniques to bring it to the community. They have just completed the grant work for *Our Town*, looking at City Hall Park and its future. Andrea Greyson, BCA Engagement Specialist, who will be working with this group, spent time with over 80 groups and individuals. It is phenomenal what comes out, but you have to get to the simplification piece so that people feel that they can touch it. With the techniques used working with ImageFarm (Andrea can talk about them) they developed a story and drew their ideas. At the end, there have a large visual aid that shows how all those pieces relate illustrating what the group envisioned. Also Kraft would like to take this through photographic essays so that when you walk into the Mom and Pop store or a library, you will see a reflection of the young people in our community and what they are thinking about. Kraft thinks this engagement will materialize at the end of April.

Debbie Ingram, Vermont Interfaith Action/Town of Williston: We should one get the word out on Town Meeting Day by using a few power point slides or table displays that can be sent out to the towns and can be used with people we are seeing face to face.

Heather Danis commented on the website, saying she thinks it is difficult to navigate. There is a page on which she is not able to click on the project phases; she can forward the link.

Penrose Jackson asked members if there were anyone who they would like to see at the table; we have had several new members join us today, and that is wonderful.

Jackson said that 16 years ago Champlain Initiative (CI) came into being after a long process. Jackson has seen a good many of the SC members at the CI meetings over the years. When CI first came together, it was the first time people talked to each other; there was not this level of engagement and mutual support wasn't apparent. We were afraid to share culturally and socially - but things have changed enormously. Champlain Initiative was initially supported by Fletcher Allen but as this project came forward, they realize that they are sitting together twice. So Champlain Initiative will declare victory, fold up its tent and has cast its lot with ECOS moving forward in keeping us connected and working together for a sustainable community, where Champlain Initiative began. It is a wonderful evolution, get ready to party and celebrate success.



As part of that, we will have a four-hour meeting at the end of April. If anyone wants a tent in their backyard, let us know; we are looking for a location. We want to put you to work, please dress casually, roll up your sleeves. Please sign the blue sheet, the federal government wants to know you were here. Heather Danis said she wants to make sure she is not giving out misinformation as questions are coming up about the implementation money. She assumes we are using the goals, and the data, the indicators and prioritized actions to make decisions about what gets funded. She assumes that there is an RFP process. Charlie Baker said that the process will be up to the Steering Committee, but that process has not yet been determined.

8. Adjournment. Without further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:02am.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leslie Bonnette'.

Leslie Bonnette
Executive Assistant