

CREATION OF BURLINGTON BIKE PATH TASK FORCE

In the year Two Thousand Ten.....

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Burlington, as follows:

That WHEREAS, Burlington has an extensive Bike Path Network, including the Burlington Waterfront Bike Path, a crown jewel of the Queen City and one of the first of its kind in Vermont, is a 7.5-mile transportation and recreation corridor created out of a former railroad bed that runs from the southern end of Burlington at Oakledge Park to the northern end at the Winooski River, where it connects via bike path bridge to Colchester's Causeway Park; and

WHEREAS, the Waterfront Bike Path, while offering spectacular views of Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains to the west, also links six major waterfront parks, as well as Burlington High School, services at the Ethan Allen Shopping Center, the Central Downtown Business District, UVM--the latter two destinations in part by providing access to the free College Street shuttle--and has been identified as a major corridor in the 2008 Chittenden County Pedestrian/Bike Plan and the Lake Champlain Bikeways program; and

WHEREAS, the Waterfront Bike Path is part of a larger bike path network that draws many tourists to the region and provides a spectacular route for the Key Bank Vermont City Marathon; and

WHEREAS, residents of Burlington and many surrounding towns use it on a regular basis for transportation, recreation, and fitness; and

WHEREAS, the Waterfront Bike Path was completed in 1986 with both State and Federal funding and, utilized by an estimated 150,000 bicyclists, walkers, joggers, in-line skaters

CREATION OF BURLINGTON BIKE PATH TASK
FORCE

and cross country skiers annually, it is among Burlington's most popular amenities but it is showing signs of significant deterioration; and

WHEREAS, the Burlington Bike Path Improvement Feasibility Study of March 19, 2009 rightly noted that the City is committed to upgrading and rehabilitating the path to protect this important asset; and

WHEREAS, the overall goal of the project is to upgrade the Bike Path to current standards where possible and make the Bike Path safer, more user friendly, and part of an emerging world-class regional trail that will deliver significant economic, health and community benefits to Burlington; and

WHEREAS, the Feasibility Study noted that improvements are "critical to the sustainability of Burlington's on- and off-road network of bicycle and pedestrian routes. The bike path is critical as a transportation mode and recreation path between the south and north ends of the City. In addition, the bike path carries a large volume of bicycle and pedestrian traffic into Burlington's downtown;" and

WHEREAS, both the Departments of Parks and Recreation and Public Works are already undertaking efforts to repair deteriorated sections of the Waterfront Bike Path, recently including a section south of the barge canal bridge and north of the Bike Path entrance onto Central Avenue, although the fact remains that the capital needs of this recreational facility are much greater than the resources available to fund them; and

WHEREAS, this Council well recognizes that such repairs to the Bike Path Network, including the Waterfront Bike Path, while costly, are also essential because of the great value which the Bike Path Network brings to Burlington in terms of not only quality of life but in terms of the tourists which it draws who help stimulate our local economy; and

CREATION OF BURLINGTON BIKE PATH TASK
FORCE

WHEREAS, a 2008 report published by UVM's Transportation Research Center found that 30-50% of summer path users are from outside Chittenden County and these visitors spend at least \$4.5 million in our region each year. Failing to find sufficient funds to support the Waterfront Bike Path threatens the long-term viability of this important economic and recreational asset; and

WHEREAS, earlier this year, an *ad hoc* group comprised of Burlington Parks and Recreation Commissioners and Staff, Local Motion Board Members and Staff, and Burlington business representatives began discussing how best to protect and enhance the Waterfront bike path and ensure its long term viability; and

WHEREAS, on July 20, 2010, the Burlington Parks & Recreation Commission unanimously endorsed the creation of a "Bike Path Task Force;"

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that based upon the recommendation of the aforementioned *ad hoc* group, the Burlington City Council now creates a task force with thirteen (13) members, called the Burlington Bike Path Task Force, which is charged with studying issues and making recommendations which will address the long term viability of the Burlington Bike Path Network and which will be staffed as appropriate by the Departments of Parks and Recreation, Public Works and the Community Economic Development Office (CEDO); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the Task Force will include one (1) City Councilor appointed by the City Council President, one (1) Parks and Recreation Commissioner appointed by the Parks and Recreation Commission, one (1) member of the Walk/Bike Council appointed by the Mayor, and up to 10 community members appointed by the Parks and Recreation Commission; and

CREATION OF BURLINGTON BIKE PATH TASK
FORCE

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in particular, the Task Force is to: 1) review the current Burlington Bike Path system and the capital needs of the system – focusing on the 7.5 mile Waterfront Bike Path and its connections to the other paths in the network; 2) review the Bike Path Improvement Feasibility Study and the Island Line Sign & Amenity Plan and make recommendations for any revisions to the studies; 3) review the current maintenance budget and any future capital budget allocations; 4) identify any financial gaps in the operating maintenance and/or capital budgets for the Bike Path system; 5) understand how the Burlington Bike Path is becoming part of the regional Island Line Trail and explore how this might provide opportunities for regional signs, funding, and/or maintenance; 6) recommend a preferred funding mechanism to address any maintenance or capital funding gaps; 7) create a concise written action plan for addressing the funding gaps and implementing the Bike Path Improvement Feasibility Study; and 8) present the findings to the City Council, Parks & Recreation Commission, and the boards of the Burlington Business Association, Local Motion, Burlington Rotary Club and other interested organizations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that representatives of the Task Force, once the Task Force begins to meet, are requested to report back to this Council every three months. The final written action plan shall be presented to the City Council within one-year of this resolution's adoption.