

**SOUTHERN WINDSOR COUNTY  
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)**

**Meeting Minutes of May 21, 2014**

A meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was held at the SWCRPC office in Ascutney at 6pm.

**Attendance** – TAC members present: Tom Kenyon, West Windsor (Vice-Chair); Shep Thomas, Baltimore; John Saydek, Cavendish; Sharon Bixby, Ludlow; Gordy Eastman, Reading; and Jeff Slade, Weathersfield.

Others present: Katharine Otto, SWCRPC; and Jackie Cassino, VTrans.

**Meeting Opened:** Tom Kenyon opened the meeting at 6:05 pm.

**Welcome and introductions**

**Acceptance of minutes**

*Jeff Slade moved to approve the minutes of March 19, 2014. Seconded by Gordy Eastman. Approved unanimously.*

**Election of Officers**

*Jeff Slade moved to appoint the current slate of officers again (Kristi Morris as Chair, Tom Kenyon as Vice-Chair). Seconded by Sharon Bixby. Approved unanimously.*

**Appoint At-Large Members**

*Sharon Bixby moved to appoint Jeff Taft-Dick as an at-large member of the TAC. Seconded by Gordy Eastman. Approved unanimously.*

**Letter of support for CRT's SFY2015 Application**

Katharine explained that the Connecticut River Transit (CRT/ The Current) applies for funding from VTrans each year and needs a letter of support from the Regional Planning Commission. Unfortunately this year the draft of the application was not available around the time of a TAC meeting – so Kristi signed the letter on behalf of the committee, alongside Tom Kennedy (SWCRPC Executive Director). As outlined in the letter, there are no major changes proposed to the SWC portion of CRT's service area.

*Sharon Bixby moved to retroactively authorize Kristi to sign the letter of support for CRT's SFY 2015 funding application to VTrans. Seconded by Gordy Eastman. Approved unanimously.*

**Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI) FFY2015 Work Program**

Katharine explained how the majority of the transportation work completed by the RPC is funded through a cooperative agreement known as the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This program has been running for nearly 20 years. Katharine gave a handout which outlined the key activities that have been suggested by VTrans as activities, as well as outlined some other projects which may be interesting. If anyone on the TAC has any ideas of projects they would like to suggest, they should talk to Katharine by the first week of June, so it can be included in the work plan that is reviewed by the SWCRPC Board of Commissioners.

*Shep Thomas moved to recommend the TPI work program to the SWCRPC Board of Commissioners for approval. Seconded by Gordy Eastman. Approved unanimously.*

**East Central Vermont Transportation Affordability Report**

Katharine drew the attention of the TAC to a new Transportation Affordability Report which has just been completed by the RPC in conjunction with the East Central Vermont Plan funded through the HUD Sustainable Community Regional Planning Grant. This report is a follow up to the earlier affordability study completed by SWCRPC in 2011/2012, and

uses a new source of information – the HUD Location Affordability Index. The idea behind this model is similar to both the Center for Neighborhood Technologies Model and the SWCRPC model, and works relatively well for the rural region. The model goes into slightly more spatial detail in some parts of the region – particularly the bigger towns where you can see the differences in costs between different parts of town.

### **Regional Road Safety Forum – May 12 – Bellows Falls**

Katharine gave a powerpoint summary of the Forum which focused on bringing together stakeholders concerned with improving safety on the road (eg Selectboards, police, drivers ed, etc). The forum focused on the 4 “E”s of safety:

- Engineering (lines, guardrails, signs, etc)
- Education (from a variety of sources including DMV, AARP, VT Bicycling and Pedestrian Coalition, Youth Safety Council of Vermont)
- Enforcement and behavior (including speeding, driving under the influence, distracted driving, commercial driving enforcement, etc)
- Emergency services (the front line)

The TAC had some discussion about:

- What can contribute to distracted driving
- People not paying attention to signs
- How to collect information about local safety issues that the Selectboard and Road Foreman may not be aware of (maps handed out at Town meeting asking people to mark problem areas and describe the issues?)

### **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update**

The committee looked at the remaining chapters of the Regional Transportation Plan Update (Goals and Policies, and Implementation) as well as all the chapters they have already seen. There were no comments.

*Shep Thomas moved to recommend the Regional Transportation Plan Update to the SWCRPC Board of Commissioners for review and a public hearing. Seconded by Jeff Slade. Approved unanimously.*

### **State Plan Updates**

- a) Vermont State Rail Plan Meetings* –Katharine gave an update on the 3/25 meeting Brattleboro. Discussion included whether the number of trains would increase, travel time would decrease, ADA compliance at stations, and providing shelter for travelers while waiting for trains.
- b) Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan* – Katharine gave a brief overview of what this plan looks at – how people get from A to B, particularly elders, persons with disabilities and other people with transportation issues. It is important to recognize the wide diversity of people and groups helping to meet transportation needs – Medicaid, Vermont E&D (Elders and persons with disabilities) funding, local community groups, etc – as well as the innovative ways they seek to meet those needs, reduce costs and increase efficiencies.

### **Updates and Announcements**

- a) Upcoming construction projects* – Katharine gave handout with information about upcoming construction projects. The schedule for the summer still is not set (especially for bridge/ facility closures) – so she will send around updates as they become available. Big projects this summer include – I-91 bridges in Windsor, Hartland P&R, Springfield P&R, 2 bridges on VT-44 in West Windsor, and replacement of Bridge 1 on VT-131 in Whitesville (Cavendish).
- b) Upcoming grant opportunities* – Katharine gave an quick summary of some of the upcoming transportation grant opportunities – including Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, Transportation Alternatives Program and Better Backroads.

### **Next Meeting**

Katharine explained that we need to change the night that we hold our TAC meeting – to enable some other towns to attend. Discussion amongst those attending decided:

- Monday and Tuesday evenings do not work
- 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday is the preference for re-scheduling (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> does not work for one or more people)
- Thursdays on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> weeks would also work for re-scheduling.

Date of next meeting to be decided, depending on availability of people not at the meeting. Katharine will email the next date in the first week of June.

Agenda items – a public transportation themed meeting, maybe at CRT's offices. Legislative update?

*Shep Thomas moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:00pm. Seconded by Jeff Slade. Approved unanimously.*