

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

Meeting Minutes of October 28, 2015

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

Attendance – TAC members present: Kristi Morris, Springfield (Chair); Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore; John Saydek, Cavendish; Arne Jonynas, Chester; Gordy Eastman, Reading; and Jeff Taft-Dick (At-large).

Others present: Katharine Otto, SWCRPC; Jackie Cassino, VTrans; Rebecca Gagnon, The Current/Southeast Vermont Transit

Meeting Opened: Kristi Morris opened the meeting at 6:00pm

Welcome and introductions

Changes to the agenda - None

Acceptance of minutes

Arne Jonynas moved to approve the minutes of August 26, 2015. Seconded by Gordy Eastman. Approved unanimously.

Transit Update

Rebecca Gagnon from The Current/ Southeast Vermont Transit (SEVT) gave an update on what has happened since last fall when she spoke with the TAC:

- July 1 – Connecticut River Transit/ The Current completed the legal merger with Deerfield Valley Transit Association/ The MOOver to create the new Southeast Vermont Transit (SEVT). Operations will continue by “division” – The Current and the MOOver – but other admin things are shared like finances and scheduling
- All services remain the same – fixed route, elders and persons with disabilities (E&D), Medicaid, Dial-a-Ride, etc
- Continue to use diverse methods to meet needs – big buses, little buses, volunteers driving cars, small dodge vans for wheelchair transport, etc
- Just completed a two-year application for funding – and all requests were met. Included guaranteed funding stream from CMAQ for the Rockingham-Ludlow service
- Fares were introduced August 2014 – and there has been some decline in ridership – especially from school children
- Rockingham Park and Ride Lot next to The Current facility has been delayed, but hope for it to be constructed in 2016. Approximately \$1.3-1.6 million. Whatever funds are remaining will be used to add some additional bays onto the bus garage
- Route 30 feasibility study is coming to a close – connecting Brattleboro to Jamaica/ Stratton. Planning study included focusing on rides for school kids, as well as providing some extra medical related trips around Grace Cottage Hospital in the middle of the day, and commuter trips. Hopefully will be applying for CMAQ funds next year – although will need a commitment from funding partners for match before apply.
- Katharine and Rebecca are about to start work on a route evaluation project – for Springfield, Ludlow, Bellows Falls areas. Will include public outreach and working with employers and schools. Will evaluate fixed routes, dial-a-ride and others – how can we make minor tweaks to service to make things better for riders and reduce costs for SEVT?
- VTrans planning is just starting a study for the legislature looking at alternative ways to raise local funding match not using the local tax base. This study is looking to the future – as funding dries up.
- Challenges SEVT faces at the moment
 - Merger done, but still in transition to becoming one agency and one board
 - Finding funding – especially local match

- Not enough hours in the day!
- \$4.1 million budget for The Current – of which approximately 50% is Medicaid. 97% of money from grants. 3% of money from fares and donations

Updates and Announcements

- a) *Construction Updates* – Katharine handed out an updated Construction Project List. Major items highlighted:
 - a. Hartford I-91 Bridges – nearly complete
 - b. Springfield P&R update – complete
 - c. Chester rail crossing – delayed
 - d. Cavendish railroad underpass – delayed
 - e. Ludlow railroad crossing upgrades (West Hill Road) – construction last week
 - f. Cavendish VT-131 paving – Katharine received draft plans for the project last week. She will be reviewing. TAC and town are interested to know where the improvements are for the corridor – eg river slope restoration and ledge slope work
 - g. Three projects started scoping with their local concerns questionnaire requests in the last month – Springfield I-91 bridge over the Black River, Thompson Road bridge in Chester, and Bridge 99 in Ludlow on VT-100N just north of VT-103
- b) *Grant Opportunities*
 - a. Strong Communities, Better Connections Grant - <http://vtransplanning.vermont.gov/programs/scbc>
- c) *Scenic Route 100 Byway Expansion*
No word yet on whether the expansion was approved.
- d) *Meetings*
Katharine was at the Vermont Transportation Board meeting in Bellows Falls. Variety of interesting topics of discussion. Do consider sending an email to John Zicconi (Transportation Board Secretary) if you have any issues you want to raise to the board and the legislature. Visit <http://tboard.vermont.gov/> for contact info.
- e) *Act 64 (Clean Water Act)*
Katharine handed out the most recent information she has about the impact of the new Clean Water Act on municipal transportation – particularly as relates to the Municipal Roads General Permit. http://vermontlocalroads.org/sites/aot_localroads/files/documents/HomePage/VTCleanWaterAct64.PDF
VTrans and ANR are just starting work on the permit and related things. Not much information yet, but RPC will make sure many stakeholders at town (including town staff, road foremen, TAC, etc) are kept in the loop – what’s happening, drafts for review, opportunities to provide input, etc. Providing local input is important as the draft municipal road general permit is being developed – collaboration and compromise can help balance all the issues that the state and the towns are juggling.

Other Business

Jeff Taft-Dick gave a quick update on the North Springfield Multi-use Path project which completed scoping a while ago. Unfortunately while there is an enthusiastic committee (STAG), some of the landowners who were set against the project in the past still are now – so the project is stalled again.

Future agenda items and next meeting date

Next meeting – to be in December (so can complete District Leveling prioritization). Date will be determined using a doodle poll since 4th Wednesday is just before Christmas.

Will resume with 4th Wednesdays from January onwards

Agenda item requests – Construction updates, VT-131 paving and safety improvements, calendar of grant opportunities, National Highway System, Park and Ride Facility Study, Transit

Wayne Wheelock moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:10pm. Seconded by Gordy Eastman. Approved unanimously.