

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

Meeting Minutes of January 27, 2016

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); Tom Kenyon, West Windsor (Vice-Chair), Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore; John Saydek, Cavendish; Arne Jonynas, Chester; Sharon Bixby, Ludlow; Gordy Eastman, Reading; Jeff Taft-Dick (At-large), and Mark Huntley (At-large).

Others present: Katharine Otto and Allison Hopkins, SWCRPC.

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

Welcome and introductions

Changes to the agenda

None

Acceptance of minutes

Tom Kenyon moved to approve the minutes of December 17, 2015 with an addition on the top of page 3 “Sharon Bixby moved to submit these priorities to VTrans. Seconded by Tom Kenyon. Approved unanimously.” Seconded by Gordy Eastman. Approved unanimously.

Evacuation Routes for Regional All Hazards Resource Guide

Allison Hopkins from SWCRPC gave an overview of the work that the Local Emergency Planning Committee for this region (LEPC-3) does, and its current project to update the Regional All Hazards Resource Guide. The guide outlines the roles and responsibilities of different entities in responding to an emergency event in the region, gives guidance on how to respond to an emergency event and includes a regional hazard analysis.

The TAC then discussed updates to a map of “Evacuation routes” in the region:

- Should probably be called something more like “detour routes” or “high priority routes” given how they function. Each emergency has different constraints to avoid – so really every road is an evacuation route!
- What is the benefit of identifying these routes?
 - o Helps new people in towns (eg town managers and new emergency responders) to know what the good options are for detours
 - o Setting priorities about which roads to fix first or which roads should get investment allows projects to better score in grant applications – because they show good planning
- Some ideas of streets, although not certain – High St as alternative to VT-131 in Cavendish, South Hill and East Hill Road as alternative to VT-100S (Terrible Mountain) in Ludlow, Harris and Chandler Roads in Baltimore as alternatives for part of VT-10, Fairground Road for VT-106 in Springfield.
- TAC recommends talking to Road Foremen because they really know what is going on!
- TAC would like better guidance from the LEPC about what they are really trying to get.
- Label best alternative routes to the state highways... then the less good alternatives that might be needed if the best alternatives are not travelable (eg road closed or not suitable for trucks).

Project Prioritization and Town Highway Bridge Pre-Candidates

Katharine Otto gave an overview of the methodology for project prioritization and town highway bridge pre-candidates for this year. Katharine will distribute the lists to be prioritized by email a week before the February TAC meeting, which will include pre-assigned responses for the regional criteria, as well as input from Town Road Foremen and Town Managers/ Selectboard Chairs. The TAC confirmed they like to consider the regional criteria without numerical values.

2015 Annual Reports

- a) Bicycling and Pedestrian Count Report – Katharine handed out the report and explained a little about how the counts are done, and then how the data is processed.
- b) Park and Ride Lot Count Report – Katharine handed out the report and explained how we count monthly to see bigger patterns - while overall the averages correspond pretty closely to gas prices, there are other factors affecting lot usage. TAC discussed maintenance a little, as well as the recent lot upgrades. TAC asked how region's lot usage compares to other lots – and Katharine recommended checking the Vermont Park and Ride Facility Plan (to be published online in early February)
- c) TAC Accomplishments Report – Katharine handed out a new report which will become an annual report. Outlines outreach methods, TAC meeting discussions and TAC vision from 2015. Also includes some of the performance measures and reporting carried out for the TPI program. TAC liked the format and would like to see it again next year.
- d) All Annual reports will be uploaded to the SWCRPC website soon (<http://swcrpc.org/transportation/>)

Updates and Announcements

- a) *Construction Updates*
 - a. South Woodstock VT-106 Bridge Closure.
 - i. 21 day closure of the bridge will likely happen May or June 2016. Schedule to be finalized soon.
 - ii. Detour routes would officially only be on state roads (US-4, VT-12, US-5, VT-44), but likely local town roads would be affected as people look for shorter detours.
 - iii. Reading, West Windsor and Windsor are being kept in the loop, as are some of the other nearby towns who might also be affected.
 - b. Depot St bridge in Cavendish had to be closed to traffic in late December. Bridge was already in scoping for the Town Highway Bridge program. There are some safety concerns about the impact on the VT-131 and VT-103 intersection – which the town, RPC and District are currently looking into.
- b) *Grant Opportunities*
 - a. Better Backroads – Applications were released in January, and are due April 15. Some towns are definitely interested in applying already – for both inventories and construction projects
<http://vtransengineering.vermont.gov/bureaus/mab/better-back-roads>
- c) *Meetings*
 - a. February 24 - Mark your calendars for the special February TAC meeting – Jim Ryan from ANR will be visiting to talk about the upcoming municipal roads general permit. Meeting will have dinner and start an hour earlier than normal – at 5pm.
 - b. March 9 – Unmanned Aircraft visit to Chester for LEPC-3. All are welcome.
 - c. April 1-2 – Vermont Walk Bike Summit in Rutland
- d) *Legislative Updates*
 - a. Mark Huntley (House Rep) gave some information about the Depot St Bridge closure in Cavendish
 - b. The TAC should let him know if they would like him to check into anything
 - c. Mark asked the TAC about the communication and relationship with VTrans
 - d. Mark also gave some updates on this year's legislative session. Highway Safety is a big focus. TAC discussed cell phone driving and its safety whether hands-free or not.
- e) *Other updates*
 - a. Check out the new VTrans 2016 Factbook. Really interesting read.
<http://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/documents/other/VTrans-2016-FactBook-Web.pdf>
 - b. Bus Route Evaluation Project – Online survey has just been closed with a great response rate of nearly 130 responses. Katharine will be analyzing results in February and there will be a public meeting later in the winter.

Other Business

None

Future agenda items and next meeting date

Next meeting – 2/24/2016 at 5pm (earlier than normal). Includes dinner

Agenda item requests – National Highway System, Project Prioritization, legislative updates, Information about best management practices (eg good material for gravel roads to stop run off, using compaction roller, etc)

Wayne Wheelock moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45pm. Seconded by Sharon Bixby. Approved unanimously.