

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

Meeting Minutes of January 24, 2018

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

Attendance – TAC members present: Kristi Morris, Springfield (Chair); Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore (Vice Chair); John Saydek, Cavendish; Arne Jonynas, Chester; Sharon Bixby, Ludlow; Gordy Eastman, Reading; Tom Kenyon, West Windsor; and Jeff Taft-Dick (At Large).

Others present: Katharine Otto, SWCRPC

Meeting Opened: The meeting opened at 6:00pm

Welcome and introductions

Changes to the agenda

No changes.

Acceptance of minutes

Tom Kenyon moved to approve the minutes of November 29, 2017. Seconded by Gordy Eastman. Approved unanimously.

New Active Transportation Plan

Katharine gave a handout and overview of the new Regional Active Transportation Plan. Some of the highlights discussed included:

- Physically active travel includes walking, bicycling, running, people with mobility assistance devices, etc
- Last plan in 2006 – and lots of changes over the last decade, including technology, funding pressures, healthy communities focus, Complete Streets law, etc
- Goals with include infrastructure and non-infrastructure needs (eg Education, Encouragement and Evaluation)
- TAC as main committee to review and provide direction
- Seeking people who might be interested to get involved
- Website - <http://swcrpc.org/atp/>

Some notable items of discussion from the TAC included:

- New Trails, Greenways and Bikeways Committee in Springfield. They recently saw a map from the state chamber that shows walking routes on a map – but it includes areas that are not good
- Cavendish also has a walk-bike related committee
- Visiting Bike Tours (eg from out of state) often ask local bike groups for recommendations of where to ride
- Bike shops would be a good resource to get local connections
- Connections to schools useful – eg Chester working to connect the Rec center to the High School
- Jeff gave an example of two Springfield churches creating a path in the woods so children didn't need to use the road to get to the gardens.
- Horse uses of roadways is a consideration in some areas – such as West Windsor

VTransparency Update

Katharine highlighted some of the features of the revamped “VTransparency” <http://vtrans.vermont.gov/vtransparency>
Let Katharine know if there is something missing from it that you want to see!

Project Prioritization and Town Highway Bridge Pre-Candidates

Katharine gave a handout and overview of the proposed Project Prioritization methodology for this year. The TAC agreed they wanted to keep the process the same. Key items of prioritization methodology:

- Katharine seeks input from Town Managers and Road Foremen to help the TAC prioritize
- TAC prioritize based on the main criteria such as importance for economy, conformance with local and regional plans, and local support.
- Prioritizing town highway bridge pre-candidates also involves some consideration of bridge condition.
- TAC prioritizes projects and then the RPC Board confirms their priorities.

TAC will be prioritizing projects and pre-candidates in their February meeting. Katharine will send out info to the TAC about a week before the meeting so they can review things and ask questions.

The TAC was also given a handout which outlines some key sources of information that can help them track a project – including several websites.

TAC was wondering about funding. Will the TAC have to consider the new Clean Water requirements? Katharine said they do not – as those funding streams are separate. TAC is wondering where the funding will come from for all the work needed for the Municipal Roads General Permit

Annual Reports

Katharine gave an overview of 3 of 4 Regional Annual Reports (Traffic Count Annual Report due around April). All reports are available at <http://swcrpc.org/transportation/>

a) *Park and Ride Counts*

- a. Weathersfield P&R lot has continued to see decreased usage from a high of over 63 cars in 2012, to around 44 vehicles in 2017. Is this due to the new NH bus route parallel to I-91? Or gas prices? Or other factors?
- b. Springfield P&R is relatively stable, with a slightly increase from the previous year, back to close to 2015 numbers
- c. Hartland/ Windsor P&R is showing a small decline in usage from 27/28 users in 2012-2014 to 21 in 2017

b) *Bicycle and Pedestrian Counts*

- a. Counts show Ludlow Main Street having solid pedestrian numbers in all seasons (always about 300 people per day)
- b. Springfield Main Street counts have remained steady between 100 and 200 people per day
- c. Windsor Main Street is keeping steady around 100 people per day
- d. Springfield Toonerville Trail has seen a notable decrease in the number of people over the last 3 years – from a high of around 150 people in Spring 2014 to a low of 25 people per day in Fall 2017. Kristi reported that the trail needs some maintenance (eg roots coming up through surface) so that it's not as smooth ride as it has previously been. Due to do some brush trimming and maintenance this year. Dog poop is also an issue.
- e. TAC was wondering how the counter counts – how do we know about the number of people standing next to each other who would only break the signal once? Maybe we could have some manual counts as verification/ for standardization factor?

c) *TAC*

- a. TAC has reviewed and accomplished a lot over the last year. Katharine and other RPC staff have completed a lot of fieldwork with and for towns.

Updates and Announcements

- a) *2018 VT Walk Bike Summit in WRJ* – Friday, May 4th – New website is live <https://vtwalkbikesummit.com/>. Call for proposals are out. Looking for sponsors.
- b) *Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP)* - Final standards were due by the end of 2017. The release has been delayed a few months in order for ANR to properly evaluate some items of concern – including equitability of

fees. TAC had considerable concerns about funding MRGP related work. Chester will be purchasing a roller which they are hoping will improve grading and maintenance on unpaved roads.

- c) *Project Prioritization Process Update* - Katharine gave an update on new project prioritization process – VTrans has validated the model from a high level perspective and are now digging into the details to see how it will work. VTrans intends to discuss the project with the legislature this season, but will not make legislative language or amendments this year. Katharine will keep the TAC informed of updates as more details become solidified. She will forward a copy of a report about the new process with the meeting minutes – it is very long and convoluted, but if TAC members are interested in the proposed details that will give them an overview.
- d) *Construction Updates*
 - a. Katharine gave an update on the Woodstock village project – 21 day closure in April/ May 2018
http://southcentralvtbridges.vtransprojects.vermont.gov/bridge_projects/woodstock_village/
 - b. Katharine reported that VTrans is looking into installing a 4 way stop at the intersection of VT-131 and VT-131 in Downers (Weathersfield) in an effort to improve safety/ reduce crashes in the area.
- e) *Grant Opportunities* - <http://swcrpc.org/grants/> - No new grant opportunities right now
- f) *Meetings*
 - a. 2/1 – Annual STIP (Statewide Transportation Improvement Program) Hearing – 2pm at the RPC office for webinar into Montpelier.
- g) *Permit applications* – No applications of regional concern
- h) *Legislative updates* – No major updates, other than what was already shared about Project Prioritization updates and MRGP
- i) *2018 VTrans Factbook and Annual Report is now online* -
<http://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/planning/documents/planning/VTrans-2018-FactBook-web.pdf>

Other Business

John asked why VT-131 repaving in Cavendish and Weathersfield has been delayed until 2020. It is a concern of the Town Manager, Selectboard and local residents. Katharine will look into it.

TAC is concerned about the increased number of crashes on I-91. Why is that happening? How can we encourage safer driving? Sharon remembered a good period of radio and tv commercials on roadway safety in the past. Could that happen again? Katharine will reach out to the Governor's Highway Safety Alliance to see if they have materials they could share with public access tv stations in the area. Sharon would be happy to provide connections to Ludlow's.

The TAC had a discussion about automated vehicles. How fast will they arrive? How much will they cost? How will they change transportation? There is a new report from VTrans about the future of automated vehicles that the TAC may find informative - <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/2017-Act-38-Sec-15-Automated-Vehicles-Report-to-Legislature-Jan-15-2018.pdf> Katharine will forward a powerpoint version of the report with the minutes. We could also have a future agenda item on the topic.

Future agenda items and next meeting date

Next meeting 2/28 at location to be decided (future meetings will be at ADA accessible locations)

Future topic ideas: Rail meeting (including maintenance practices), sign markings, highway safety, automated vehicles, Reading bridges construction

Sharon Bixby moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40pm. Seconded by Gordy Eastman Approved unanimously.