

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

**Meeting Minutes of October 20, 2010**

A meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was held at SWCRPC in Ascutney, VT, at 7:00 P.M.

**Attendance** – TAC members present: Sharon Bixby (Vice Chair), Ludlow; Tom Kenyon, West Windsor; Kristi Morris, Springfield; Steve Cottrell, Windsor; and Neil Daniels, Weathersfield.

Others present: Costa Pappis & Sue Clark, VTrans; and Katharine Otto & Jason Rasmussen, SWCRPC.

**Discussion of Statewide Rail Plan**

Costa Pappis, VTrans, provided an overview of VTrans' Freight Plan. Tasks completed to date include economic & demographic trends, freight infrastructure inventory and freight flow analysis. A draft needs assessment and performance framework is currently under review and will be released for public comment shortly. Below is a summary of key points:

- 1/3 of freight goes through the state without stopping
- Lots of natural resource trade with Canada, particularly lumber. How can we tap into this?
- Lack of federal funding for rail so the burden is on the state.
- Issues of traffic in several areas – e.g. WRJ, Rutland, St Albans.
- Decline of manufacturing has led to a decline in freight.

**Discussion of Interstate Weight Limit Pilot**

Costa Pappis, VTrans, provided an overview of the one-year Congressional pilot allowing trucks in excess of 80,000 pounds on the interstate highway network. The pilot is nearly complete. VTrans is working to develop a congressional report on the impacts of the increased weight limits. Below is a summary of key points:

- There are many interest groups that oppose making the increased interstate weight limit permanent.
- VTrans maintains that freight is safer, more efficient and generally better suited to the interstate system than it is to state highways.
- Congressional Report will cover highway safety, bridge and road durability, commerce, truck volumes and energy use/emissions.
- VTrans is collecting data for the report. Costa will try to update everyone on status of report when possible.

Towns that are interested in making the pilot permanent might consider writing letters of support to Congressional Reps.

### **Project Deletions**

Jason Rasmussen reported that VTrans and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are proposing terminating two projects in this region, including:

- The Chubb Hill ledges scoping project along VT Route 131 (Cavendish, STP 0156(9)SC) – terminated due to lack of activity;
- The Smithville road reconstruction project on VT Route 103 Cavendish-Ludlow (NH F 025-1(30)) – terminated by FHWA due to a lack of activity.

Terminations are not official until approved by the Legislature.

While the Smithville project is being terminated, it is noted that the project has long been the Region's #1 project, and was VTrans #10 priority in FY 2011. VTrans noted in their correspondence that work is still needed at this location, and they want to re-program a new project to address the need. The TAC agrees that re-programming a project on VT 103 in this location is a priority. They expressed a desire to invite Kevin Marshia, VTrans Roadway Program Manager, to the next meeting to begin discussing how to proceed.

### **Review Proposed Changes to Model Town Highway & Bridge Standards**

Jason Rasmussen and Katharine Otto reviewed the proposed changes to the town highway and bridge standards per Act 110. Comments/questions include:

- The second bullet under Roadways includes a standard for a 2% crown on unpaved roads. Typically, the standard for paved roads is 2% with 4% crown for unpaved. Why is this standard different?
- Parabolic ditches are problematic for the Town of Windsor.
- Is the intent of the Access Management standard to also include access review procedures for driveways off private development roads? If so, that would need to be accomplished under zoning or subdivision.

### **Acceptance of the Minutes of August 18, 2010**

Deferred until the next meeting

### **Updates and Announcements**

***State Public Transportation Policy Plan*** – VTrans hired KFH as project consultant and the process to update this modal plan is now underway. The State is no longer funding short range transit plans for transit providers, but they still receive federal transit planning money. VTrans has established a new competitive funding program for transit provider planning initiatives.

***Better Backroads Grants*** – Applications are due on October 28<sup>th</sup> for this small water quality/erosion control grant program.

### **Future Agenda Topics:**

- Smithville Project – Kevin Marshia, VTrans

- Transit update – Mary Habig, CRT

**Next Meeting:** November 10, 2010 at 7 PM (tentative)

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Rasmussen  
Senior Planner, SWCRPC