

Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee RPC Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday March 10, 2011

Bethel Town Hall, Bethel, VT, 9:30am – 11am

Meeting Summary

Attended: Michael Brands, Woodstock; Nelson Lee, Jr., Bridgewater; Kent Gilman, Sharon; Rod Maclay, Strafford; Jon Mackinnon, Strafford; Tori Lloyd, Strafford Selectman; Mardee Sanchez, Randolph; Frank Roderick, Corinth; Rich Menge, Hartford; Nancy Jones, Bradford; Eric Benson, Bethel; Dee Montie, Brookfield; Nate Cleveland, Royalton; Phil Dechert, Norwich; Kevin Russell, VTrans Transportation Enhancements, and Rita Seto, TRORC.

Regrets: Bob Stacey, Hartland; David Palmer, Stagecoach; Pete Webster, Norwich; Van Chesnut, Advance Transit; George Deblon, Pittsfield; Aaron Brown, Upper Valley Transportation Management Association (UVTMA); Susan Clark, VTrans; Jim Lanctot, Thetford; and Frank Barrett, Jr., Fairlee; Allyn Ricker, Hartford; and Tut Doane, Braintree.

1. **Introductions** – Nelson Lee called meeting to order at 9:40am, Frank arrived a few minutes later. Group made introductions. Dee Montie from Brookfield is newest TAC member.
2. **Approval of January 27 Minutes** – Motion by Nelson Lee, 2nd Eric Benson. No revisions. Nathan Cleveland abstained. Minutes approved.
3. **VTrans Transportation Enhancements (TE)** – Kevin Russell, VTrans Transportation Enhancements Section

Kevin distributed a handout explaining the TE program under VTrans (Rita will mail a copy to those not present). Kevin gave an overview of the TE program (currently around 100 TE projects) under the Local Transportation Facilities (LTF) Division. This year's program is fully funded in addition to \$600,000 rolled over from last year (totaling \$4.4 million). Application will be out in April, a letter of intent to apply is due in June, application due in August. There is mandatory training in the TE process. The program highly recommends working with the RPCs to assist in the application (and provide a letter of support – Rita prefers a heads up earlier than later, please!). Eligible projects under the TE program can include: bike-pedestrian facilities, acquisition of scenic easements, salt sheds, and historic preservation.

Kevin will send a link to Rita to distribute about the LTF Guidebook (an informative read on programs, funding and process) and the Bike Ped Design Manual.

Mardee asked if existing sidewalks can be eligible. Kevin says the TE program is not meant for sidewalk maintenance and tries to focus on new sidewalks that provide connections to destinations. However, many older sidewalks may not meet the minimum sidewalk standards (at least 48 inches) and this could be an eligible project. Rich says he recommends at least the minimum standards for sidewalks coming from a maintenance standpoint. Some sidewalk plow equipment may be slightly larger than the sidewalk and ends up damaging the edges. Kevin says it takes around 3-5 years from project funding to actual construction. Rich asks can we amend the contract to account for the increase in cost over the years. Yes, there is a contingency fund for towns that apply for amendments (up to \$100,000) and will be decided by TE Committee. Rich also asks if there's consideration for increasing the max. \$300,000 as sidewalk projects cost more than that? Kevin says at this time, we've encouraged towns to apply for 2 years in a row to cover project funds. Phil asked if the TE Committee prefers town right-of-way or state right-of-way projects? Kevin says projects involving state routes, railroads or rivers require more time, money, and stakeholders involved

(DTAs). The process is a more complex and you need greater local support but the committee will also look at those factors.

4. **FY'13 TRORC Annual Project Prioritization** - Rita

Rita distributed the current list of capital projects and recapped the process. No major changes to the list of projects, Rita updated some of the advertising dates. Last meeting we talked with Kevin and Tina from VTrans Roadway on 2 projects identified for Legislature cancellation. A third project was also recently identified – Plymouth State Bridge #8 on VT100A. This project was already closed by Federal Highway Administration and is waiting for Legislature cancellation. Rita has spoke with the Town of Plymouth. They still support this project however under this project number, there's no funding allocation. Once it's officially cancelled, VTrans Bridge Division will reassess the scope of the bridge and assign a new project number if the priority need is determined.

Rita received additional comments from the Brookfield Selectboard about the Brookfield Floating Bridge project. Dee presented the comments indicating that the Selectboard wishes the TAC to consider adding additional 15 points under the miscellaneous category (only 3 floating bridges in the US, local and regional impact not captured in other criterion, tourist destination, and key connection to Allis State Park). Nathan made motion to add 15 points under miscellaneous category. Mardee 2nd. Discussion – Rich disagreed saying that none of other projects were assigned points under miscellaneous and we don't have time to re-evaluate projects for that. It would be unfair to other projects. There was brief discussion of point allocation under other categories, number of points and whether to withdraw, amend or continue motion. Nathan reaffirmed his motion and group took a vote. Rich opposed. Majority approved point allocation. Project now ranks #2 with 95 points. Group agreed that current list with Brookfield amendment is being submitted to VTrans. Rita will also present to Board of Commissioners on March 30.

Rita also briefly suggested revisiting the project prioritization methodology in future meetings and discuss whether the group wants to take over project ranking rather than having Rita initially pre-rank projects. Rita noted that other RPCs are doing it differently and wants to know what the group wishes. Eric asked if Rita could put together a summary of what other RPCs are doing to present to TAC and see what options are out there.

5. **Annual High Risk Rural Roads (HRRR) Program** - Rita

Rita presented attached HRRR handout and recapped the VTrans program to assist municipalities (at no cost to the municipalities) with the highest crash locations with safety improvements (signage, pavement markings and guardrails). Some issues brought up are that there are locations with known high crash incidents but are unreported – so it's challenging to get those problems addressed when there is little data to support it. Kent suggested looking into towing companies as they keep track of all calls out. Mardee asked to double check Randolph's location Angel Rd (there is no road – Rita verified it is Momsen Dr). Group agreed on submitting current HRRR list to VTrans.

6. **Future meeting topics:**

- Annual Election of Officers (Chair and Vice Chair up for grabs)
- Discussion on revising project prioritization methodology – open to TAC members ranking

7. Meeting adjourned 11:09 am

Next meeting on May , location TBD.