

Two Rivers-Ottauquechee RPC Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday Sept. 8, 2010

Stagecoach Offices, Randolph, VT, 9:30am – 11am

Meeting Summary

Attended: Frank Roderick, Corinth; Kent Gilman, Sharon; Nelson Lee, Jr., Bridgewater; Bob Stacey, Hartland; Eric Benson, Bethel; Holly Brown, Stagecoach; Nate Cleveland, Royalton; Phil Dechert, Norwich; Rich Menge, Hartford; Mardee Sanchez, Randolph; Michael Brands, Woodstock; George Deblon, Pittsfield; Tut Doane, Braintree; Susan Clark, VTrans; and Pete Fellows and Rita Seto, TRORC.

Regrets: Rod Maclay, Strafford; David Palmer, Stagecoach; Van Chesnut, Advance Transit; Jim Lanctot, Thetford; Nancy Jones, Bradford; and Frank Barrett, Jr., Fairlee

1. **Introductions** – Frank called meeting to order at 9:35am, group made introductions.
2. **Approval of July 8 Minutes** – No amendments. Michael made motion to approve minutes, 2nd – Mardee. Unanimously approved.

3. Road Issues

a) Class 4 erosion, water quality and solutions – Pete Fellows, TRORC

TRORC, White River Partnership, Dept of Forests, Parks and Recreation and Dept of Environmental Conservation have worked together to assess Class 4 town roads in White River watershed to locate and identify water quality impairments associated with public roads, prioritize restoration projects and develop recommendations for mitigation. The group has identified 75 impaired locations in WR watershed. This project is geared towards compliance of Clean Water Act, improve fishing, culvert functions and flood prevention. Pete presented several innovative options for towns to assist on Class 4 roads (closed road signage to deter ATV/Jeep traffic, tying DMV demerit points to trespassers, educate users, and improve local highway ordinance to have users follow Forestry Acceptable Management Practices (AMPs)). Pete also pointed out that VT ANR has now removed small watershed exemption, now everything needs a stream alteration permit. Question is, how small of activity will require this permit? If you're not altering stream with your activity, good chances you don't need one.

Rita passed out a handout summarizing Vermont Act110 on river corridors and buffers.

b) Ancient Roads, what will it mean for towns even after the deadline – Rita Seto/Pete Fellows

Rita passed out an excerpt out of the Orange Book for Local Officials on Highway Classification (Section 14-1).

Previous TAC meeting, a question was asked about if towns don't meet deadline. First deadline has passed July 1, 2010 where you have identified a Class 4 road to be an unidentified corridor only if it met ALL 4 criteria. The town has until July 1, 2015 to reclassify the unidentified corridor to Class 1, 2, 3 or 4 highway or as a trail. After July 1, 2015, the corridor becomes discontinued and reverts back to ownership of the property. If you are unsure of a Class 4 road becoming an unidentified corridor, document now

(take a picture), you can always go back to reclassifying as a highway or trail. Half of towns are aggressively addressing roads, the other half not doing anything.

c) Class 3 gravel upgrade / widen roads by property owners – Rita Seto

Rich had a question last meeting on how to deal with a property owner who wants to widen an existing Class 3 gravel road, to what standards are allowed? The property owner would take care of expense but what about long term maintenance? Class 3 roads are the municipality's responsibility and should already be defined in your highway ordinance.

State statute says: "A town must keep class 3 highways "in good and sufficient repair during all seasons of the year." 19 V.S.A. § 310(a). In addition, "The minimum standards for class 3 highways are a highway negotiable under normal conditions all seasons of the year by a standard manufactured pleasure car. This would include but not be limited to sufficient surface and base, adequate drainage, and sufficient width capable to provide winter maintenance." 19 V.S.A. § 302(3)(B). If a town fails to properly maintain a class 3 highway, the Vermont Transportation Board may require the town to return all state aid generated by that portion of highway. 19 V.S.A. § 302(b)." (VLCT Highway Handbook, 2001)

You can say no to owner if: the road has always been maintained at that level for years with no issues and if there are no other equivalent roads that you have made adjustments for (remember the all or nothing rule – equality application for all Class 3s with similar number of houses). If you already allowed a similar Class 3 get widened, tough luck.

d) Update on Sign Reflectivity changes / changes to Manual for Unified Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), how will it affect towns – Rita Seto

New sign changes to improve reflectivity, and overall structure of signs and posts – towns have 7 to 10 years to replace non-compliant signs. Federal Highway Adm. has developed a Sign Retro-reflectivity Guidebook and toolkit CD to assist municipalities – this is a national requirement. Vermont Local Roads is hosting 2 workshops in Sept and November on this.

Deadlines – *January 2012* to approve a sign management plan and use an assessment method to maintain traffic sign reflectivity at minimum levels specified; *January 2015* to replace regulatory, warning or post-mounted guide (except street name) signs; *January 2018* to replace street name and overhead guide signs identified as non-compliant.

The RPCs are working with VTrans and Vermont Local Roads to determine how best to provide technical assistance to towns. Rita will update TAC at next meeting on recommendations from next TPI meeting (Sept16) to address issues (cost, funding, sign management plans). Rita warned about towns accepting non-compliant signs from sign companies (they're trying to get rid of old inventory too!).

4. **Updates on projects** (Bike/Ped counts, Park & Rides, Mobile Acres, 19th National Transportation Research Board conference) – Rita Seto

- Rita conducting annual Bike/Pedestrian manual counts this month to 3 selected permanent count locations (sidewalk location: post office, Bradford; on road segment: 10A, Norwich; and shared use path: Wilder path by Dothan Brook School, Hartford). This is a fairly new VTrans program, 4yrs old to establish baseline trends of bike and pedestrian traffic and networks in State.
- Park and Rides – will conduct annual P&R capacity counts in October to all State and Municipal lots. Also as part of TRORC Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant, a Park and Ride Assessment Study was recently completed, looking at sufficiency of each lot, providing recommendations for improvements, looking at new locations for lots and conducting a CO₂ emissions and Vehicle Miles Traveled analysis for all lots. Report will be ready for presenting and distribution at next TAC meeting.
- Mobile Acres – recap of status. Rita noted that with TAC's motion to put project on prioritization list, it's currently a challenge as there is the VTrans process of either illustrating critical need or by project substitution. At this time, the project is unclear as what exactly needs to be done (build a structure? Road alignment?). The project needs a feasibility planning study to assess what the best solution is, and what scope the project will include (just a road alignment? Road grade improvements? Rail bridge structure?) as well as cost (where the money will come, how much will it exactly cost?). There was suggestion of a Structures Class 2 grant used to assist towns will projects. Rita will look into it. Main goal is to provide clear access on road into and out of property.
- We ran out of time but just FYI, the Transportation Research Board 19th National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation is in town October 24-27 in Burlington.

5. Future meeting topics

- Update on new standards/changes to Manual for Unified Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
- Present Park and Ride Study
- Update on project prioritization, project status – good refresher leading up to next annual prioritization in February.
- Obama's new Infrastructure proposal (if/when passed), how will it affect us?

Meeting adjourned 11:15am. Bob 1st, Rich 2nd.

Next meeting on Thursday November 4, 2010 Location TBD @ 9:30am.