



Two Rivers-Ottauquechee

Regional Commission Newsletter

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Act 115 Permit Reform Law Impacts Our Towns

In 2001, The Vermont General Assembly formed a commission to review Chapter 117, Vermont's Municipal and Regional Planning and Development law, and recommend changes to encourage and promote responsible development of affordable housing throughout Vermont. After fulfilling the legislative mandate through issuance of "Affordable Housing Under 24 V.S.A Chapter 117" the commission convened for a second year to complete a comprehensive update of Chapter 117's zoning, subdivision and other land use implementation tools.

This comprehensive update, put into law under Act 115, will have a direct effect on Towns currently in the process of adopting zoning or subdivision bylaw amendments. If such processes are in the works, you will need to pay attention to changes that went into effect on

July 1, 2004 and those that will be effective next year on September 1, 2005. The requirements associated with these effective dates are described in a memo from DHCA Commissioner, John Hall, sent to all municipalities on June 4, 2004. If your municipality is in the process of updating its bylaws or considering bylaw amendments, you are encouraged to contact TRORC for advice on how to proceed in bringing your bylaws into compliance with the new law.

Staff from TRORC will be visiting our towns to help clarify and explain the changes to Chapter 117 and any impacts that may result from them. If you would like to schedule a meeting with us, please contact us at 802-457-3188.

For more information, go to DHCA's web site at:

www.dhca.state.vt.us/Planning/CHAP117.htm



Don Bourdon Retiring

Thirty years after taking a position with the Two Rivers Regional Commission (then located in Sharon) as a Planner and Cartographer, Special Projects Planner Don Bourdon is hanging up his hat. His departure from TRORC will allow him to dedicate all of his time to his home business, Bourdon Boiler Works, which specializes in the restoration of Stanley Steamers. His departure will become official on October 1st.

During his tenure at TRORC, Don has watched both the Regional Commission (which merged with the Ottauquechee Regional Commission in 1980) and the State of Vermont grow and change. His lifetime of work with TRORC has given him a unique perspective on growth and land use throughout the state, and his skills as a planner will be greatly missed.

The Board and Staff at TRORC wish him good luck and success in the future.

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TRORC Assists Stagecoach

The TRORC Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI) has assisted Stagecoach Transportation Services, Inc. by developing a new web site and publicizing their new bus route, "the 89er".. This is part of our ongoing working relationship with Stagecoach and other state/regional public transportation officials and providers.

Senior Transportation Planner Chuck Wise saw a need for Stagecoach to have a web presence that offered up-to-date schedules, routes and general information. Working with Planner/Webmaster Chris Sargent and Stagecoach Executive Director, David Palmer, a fully operational web site was developed this summer.

The new Stagecoach web site can be viewed at www.stagecoach-rides.org and expect to see the 89er traveling the White River Valley corridor on October 1st.

Stagecoach Transportation Services, Inc., is a private, nonprofit corporation, with a mission of providing public transportation services to the elderly, persons with disabilities, and general public in Orange and northern Windsor Counties of Vermont.



Their new web site is available at: www.stagecoach-rides.org.

TRORC visits Pike Industries

Senior Transportation Planner, Chuck Wise, organized a Transportation Advisory Committee tour of the Pike Industries gravel and asphalt plant. Southern Windsor County and Windham Regional Commission TAC members participated as well as VTrans officials. The tour was focused on educating transportation officials, planners, and project managers about a diversity of



issues from transportation project costs to production standards and plant capacities.

Wise commented that "observing the production side of transportation was an educational experience. The magnitude of operations, their attention to environmental impacts, and their ongoing efforts to maximize production efficiencies is extremely impressive. We had the privilege of meeting with senior level managers who had a comprehensive working knowledge of production processes and material standards. It was a dramatically different perspective on transportation and many of us benefited greatly from the tour related discussions."

Gregory Invited to speak at National Meeting

Executive Director Peter Gregory was asked to speak at a national meeting in July on rural transportation planning. Gregory was sought by the National Association of Development Officials (NADO) to present an overview of the work that regional planning commissions perform relative to local consultation with municipal officials. NADO highlighted Vermont's Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI) as a model of rural consultation.

Urban officials already have a federally mandated method of providing input on transportation policy and project selection. Rural officials have a much weaker federal mandate to ensure local consultation. However, in 1992 VTrans and the regional planning commissions embarked on contractual relationships that now ensures a voice for rural officials.

Gregory presented the TPI and answered questions from state DOT officials and regional councils from all over the United States. While Vermont's experience is not the only state example of successful consultation, it is one of the few that have existed since ISTEA was passed in 1992 and has matured to begin integrating land use decision making at the local and regional levels with transportation investment decisions.

This presentation follows up on testimony Gregory provided on the same subject to Congress in May, 2002 during TEA-II reauthorization hearings. Please call Peter if you would like further details.

Project Spotlight: Hartford Buildout Analysis

In 2002, Hartford began a phased Master Plan update guided by the Department of Planning and Development Services (DPDS) and its Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC). One goal was to answer the question: Do the current zoning and land use regulations in Hartford achieve the public's vision as outlined in the Landworks report? To answer this question, the Town wanted an analysis of current development potential.

To understand the effect of zoning regulations on development, a build-out analysis estimates the theoretical maximum amount of development the land base can support. According to the current zoning build-out results just completed by TRORC, about 55% of the potential development across Hartford will occur in the three large lot rural zones that make up just over 86% of the land area. Only 30% of the potential development will occur in areas with both sewer and water service.

With over half of the new residential development in Hartford occurring in the three rural zones, this development conflicts with several of the community's stated goals for conserving rural areas and their important natural and scenic resources. As a result, less than a third of the new residential development is occurring in areas with sewer and water services. Additionally, the community goals of less traffic congestion and more public transportation will be difficult to implement with the widely dispersed development that the current zoning bylaw is creating. These trends contrast with the current patterns of an approximately equal number of units spread between the rural zones and the

village areas with services.

If you are interested in learning more about build-out analysis, please contact Pete Fellows at TRORC. Buildout analyses can be conducted on towns with or without zoning bylaws.



Municipal Planning Grants Due

The Municipal Planning Grant Program is a state-funded program designed to support Vermont towns in their municipal planning efforts. The program funds technical assistance for town planning, implementation of plans and ordinances, encouragement of citizen participation and education, and innovative demonstration planning projects. Planning grants have been awarded for projects such as rewriting town plans, updating zoning bylaws, and applying for Village Designation.

New This Year: Unconfirmed towns are eligible to apply for funds to develop a new plan and start the confirmation process.

Applications for the FY05 grant period were mailed to each town in June 2004. The deadline for submission is September 30th.

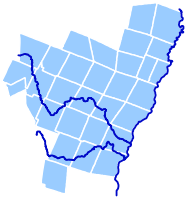
For assistance or questions about applying for a Municipal Planning Grant, please contact us here at TRORC at 802-457-3188.

HUD Consolidated Plan Hearings

The Vermont Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs is developing a new five-year plan for 2005-2009 and is inviting public and interested parties to participate in a series of regional hearings. The hearings are intended as forums to learn about needs and interests in the areas of housing and community and economic development.

Hearing Dates:

- September 9, 2004
When 1-3PM
Where: St. Johnsbury, Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium
- September 16, 2004
When 1-3PM
Where: White River Junction, Vermont Room, Hotel Coolidge
- October 7, 2004
When 1-3PM
Where: St. Albans, City Council Chambers
- October 14, 2004
When 1-3PM
Where: Bennington, Carriage Barn, Park-McCullough House
- October 19, 2004
When 1-3PM
Where: Rutland, Paramount Theatre
- October 26, 2004
When 1-3PM
Where: Brattleboro, Latchis Theatre
- October 28, 2004
When 1-3PM
Where: Montpelier, Room 11, State House



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News Shorts

September 2004

TRORC Region Expands to 30 Towns

It's official! On July 1st, 2004, the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission welcomed three new member towns into our region. TRORC welcomes the Towns of Hartford, Hartland and Norwich. As always, we will continue to offer excellent service and assistance to all of our towns.



Do you Track Act 250 Activities?

The Town of Hartland is looking to set up a mechanism to track Act 250 activity in its area. They wish to know - are any towns using formal mechanisms to track Act 250 projects? If so, what methods are you using and how is it working for you? If you have answers to their questions, contact Peter Gregory @ TRORC.



Cultural Facilities Grants

The VT. Arts Council recently announced its 2004 Cultural Facilities Grants Program. This program, which is open to nonprofits and municipalities, offers grants of \$750 to \$5000 to improve facilities used to provide cultural activities to the public. Applicants may apply for either general facilities improvements or for ADA accessibility renovations, but not both. The deadline is October, 4th 2004.

Info is available at:
www.vermontartscouncil.org, or
 call Janet Ressler at the VT Arts Council at 802-828-3778, email - jressler@vermontartscouncil.org.

visit us on the web!!
www.trorc.org