



The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission

2012 TRORC REPRESENTATIVES

- Barnard - Gerald Fredrickson, Gerry Botha (Alt.)
- Bethel - Yaroslav Stanchak, Olena Stanchak (Alt.)
- Bradford - Nancy Jones, Bobette Scribner (Alt.)
- Braintree - Mark Bannon
- Bridgewater - Nelson Lee, Jr., Norman Martin, II (Alt.)
- Brookfield - Dee Montie
- Chelsea - Carl Pepperman, Cherylanne Linaris (Alt.)
- Corinth - Frank Roderick
- Fairlee - Ken Gulick
- Granville - No representative
- Hancock - Jill Jesso-White
- Hartford - Lori Hirshfield
- Hartland - Richard Waddell, Charles Jeffries (Alt.)
- Newbury - Larry Scott, Scott Labun (Alt.)
- Norwich - Jamie Hess, Jeff Goodrich (Alt.)
- Pittsfield - Jerry Drugonis
- Plymouth - Jim Allen
- Pomfret - William Emmons
- Randolph - Del Thompson, Ken Hafner (Alt.)
- Rochester - Larry Straus
- Royalton - David Brandau, Walter Hastings (Alt.)
- Sharon - Paul Haskell, Deborah Jones (Alt.)
- Stockbridge - Mark Doughty, Bill Edgerton (Alt.)
- Strafford - Steve Campbell, Guy Denechaud (Alt.)
- Thetford - Tara Bamford, Jim Masland (Alt.)
- Topsham - Thomas Flannigan
- Tunbridge - Michael Sacca
- Vershire - Bill Baylis
- West Fairlee - Nancy Malmquist
- Woodstock - Charles Wilson
- Members-At-Large - Christine Walker (UVLSRPC)
- Jennifer Colby (Agricultural Advisor)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 5/2 Public Hearing on Regional Plan updates at Gifford Medical Center in Randolph, 7 PM
- 5/8 Vermont's Digital Future Conference at Champlain College in Burlington, VT (All Day)
- 5/10 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting at the Royalton Town Office (behind the 5 Olde Tavern & Grille), 9:30 AM to 11 AM
- 5/14-18 Way To Go Statewide Commuter Challenge
- 5/16 Living With Vermont's Rivers (A River Science Conference) at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Montpelier, 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
- 5/24 Upper Valley Energy Committee Roundtable at the Bugbee Senior Center in White River Junction, 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM
- 6/11 Public hearing on Regional Plan updates at the Sharon Congregational Church, 7 PM

OUR MISSION

"To advocate for the needs of our member towns, and to articulate a vision for building a thriving regional economy while enhancing the region's quality of life."

The Commission's staff provides technical services to local, state and federal levels of government and to the Region's non-profits and businesses.

STAFF MEMBERS

- Pete Fellows, CFM - GIS Manager
- Kevin W. Geiger, AICP, CFM - Senior Planner
- Dee Gish - Finance Manager
- Peter G. Gregory, AICP - Executive Director
- Brian Hamlin - Planner
- Loralee Morrow, LEED AP - Regional Planner
- Chris Sargent, AICP - Senior Planner
- Rita Seto, AICP - Senior Planner
- Emma Zavez - Planner

For more information, please visit:
www.trorc.org/events.html

To receive a digital copy of this newsletter
e-mail: dgish@trorc.org

SPOTLIGHT ENERGY



Gasoline prices are pushing \$4 per gallon and Vermonters spend an average of 70 minutes driving per day. This is just one way that energy use and the associated costs (both environmental and economic) affect this region's residents. Thanks to funding from the U.S. Dept. of Energy, TRORC's staff is focusing on ways to make our municipalities more energy efficient and affordable.

THE HIGH COST OF ENERGY INEFFICIENCY

Towns receive draft energy use reports

In late March 2012, TRORC's staff mailed draft baseline energy reports to the Selectboards in twenty three of its member towns. These reports detail the energy use and costs associated with municipally owned infrastructure in each town, such as buildings, streetlights, and vehicles and equipment. After Selectboards clarify and validate the data, TRORC will produce a final report for each town that compares energy use, emissions, and costs for various kinds of infrastructure. The report will also compare the energy use intensity score of a given building (energy use divided by the total floor area) to that of other similar buildings at the national and Vermont levels, as well as to similar buildings in other Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee (TRO) towns.

UPPER VALLEY ENERGY COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE

TRORC helps organize the annual Upper Valley Energy Committee Roundtable

Energy Committee members will come together to share their experiences with recent projects and learn about new energy initiatives and opportunities on May 24th (5:30 - 8:30 PM) at the Bugbee Senior Center in White River Junction. In recent years, the Upper Valley Energy Committee (UVEC) Roundtable has drawn over sixty local energy organizers from across the Upper Valley region, including many from TRO member towns.

Energy Committees work to reduce the municipal, residential, and commercial energy impact in their towns through initiatives that include weatherization, energy

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Congratulations Rita!

Rita Seto is receiving an Excellence in Regional Transportation Award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO).

See page 3 for more details.

efficiency upgrades, promotion of renewable energy sources, and more.

As one of the UVEC Roundtable organizers, TRORC is trying to boost attendance of town residents that do not have an Energy Committee or Coordinator. To the best of our knowledge, the following towns fall into this category: Bethel, Braintree, Bridgewater, Granville, Pittsfield, Plymouth, Royalton, and Stockbridge. If you live in one of these towns and are passionate about reducing energy use and costs, please join us!

The UVEC Roundtable is free and open to everyone. Please contact Emma Zavez at ezavez@trorc.org.

EAST CENTRAL VERMONT SUSTAINABILITY CONSORTIUM HOLDS FIRST MEETING

Regional Sustainability Plan begins in White River Junction

Representatives of more than 20 organizations, including the towns of Hartford and Springfield, met with TRORC on March 28th to begin a three-year process to develop a Regional Sustainability Plan for East Central Vermont (ECV). TRORC was the lead applicant to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for this effort, and was awarded grant funds earlier this year. TRORC has committed over \$100,000 in matching funds

to this project. Other partners committing matching funds include: Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission (SWCRPC), Vermont Law

School's Land Use Clinic, Vital Communities, Vermont Natural Resources Council, Sustainable Energy Resource Group, and Champlain College.

The Regional Sustainability Plan will focus on the forty towns in the east central Vermont region; TRORC's thirty member municipalities, and SWCRPC's ten communities. This planning effort is meant to coordinate and strengthen the disparate efforts of towns and organizations that work on planning and implementation. Ultimately, this project will make the collective impact of these organizations' efforts more effective.

The eight main areas the project will focus on are housing, water supply, climate adaptation, economic development, habitat, transportation, energy, and health and society.

At this first meeting, members of what will be called the ECV Sustainability Consortium came to an agreement on the governance structure for the project. A formal Consortium Agreement is expected to be signed soon by all of the members, after which various workgroups will be formed to begin work on the eight areas of focus. Housing will be the first issue to be addressed. We welcome your input.

To learn more about this effort, please contact Kevin Geiger (kgeiger@trorc.org) or Loralee Morrow (lmorrow@trorc.org).

TRORC BEGINS UPDATING THE REGIONAL PLAN

Amendments have been proposed for the Energy Chapter and a new Economic Development section

Every eight years, Regional Planning Commissions are required by 24 V.S.A. Section 4348 to update their Regional Plan. This year, it's TRORC turn to begin this intensive undertaking. So far, TRORC's staff has drafted an update to the Energy Chapter which includes new energy efficiency data. The staff has also incorporated information from the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) into the Economic Development Element of the Regional Plan. Finally, changes have been proposed to the Introduction, Plan Implementation, and Relationship to the Regional Plan sections.

The proposed amendments are scheduled for review at public hearings. The first will be held at 7 PM on May 2nd at Gifford Medical Center in Randolph. The second will be held at 7 PM on June 11th at the Sharon Congregational Church in Sharon. Anyone is welcome to attend.

For more information on the proposed amendments or public hearings, please e-mail Dee Gish (dgish@trorc.org).

FLOODED PROPERTY BUYOUTS MOVE FORWARD

Flooded properties slated for purchase in the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Region

TRORC has been working for months with landowners, municipalities, and the state to obtain grants through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for towns to purchase properties with major flood damage. As of mid-April 2012, grants for the purchase of fifty-four properties have been approved at the state level in Bethel (5), Braintree (1), Bridgewater (5), Granville (3), Hartford (6), Pittsfield (5), Plymouth (3), Rochester (4), Royalton (4), Sharon (3), Stockbridge (14) and Woodstock (1). After being 'bought out,' these sites will remain development free in the future to ensure that people and property are never again affected by flooding.

While site selections have been approved, the HMGP funding awards will not become available until late Spring 2012, after FEMA clearance has been secured. HMGP funding was made available by the Federal Government after Vermonters experienced four federally declared disasters in 2011, including Tropical Storm Irene in late August.

Additional funding will be provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). Ideally, the HMGP and CDBG grants will cover the entire cost to towns of purchasing these sites, removing all structures and stabilizing the landscape, with money leftover to pay landowners' pre-flood property value minus insurance and other benefits.

TRORC BEGINS ENHANCED CONSULTATIONS WITH MEMBER MUNICIPALITIES

TRORC to visit 4 towns between now and June 30th

In a renewed push to ensure that municipal plans not only meet, but also further state planning goals, TRORC is conducting enhanced consultations with planning commissions and selectboards in towns across the region.

Enhanced consultations are intended to provide a qualitative review of a town's municipal plan, including how the document furthers statewide goals, and where improvements can be made. The consultation also involves identifying important local and regional issues, and any training needs for municipal boards.

TRORC asks, "In which areas do we believe the municipal plan needs work to advance statewide planning goals?"

This periodic review is a requirement of 24 V.S.A. Section 4350. So far, enhanced consultations have taken place in Bethel, Chelsea, Hartland, Pomfret, Rochester, and Stockbridge.

TRORC'S HIGHWAY TIMESHEET PROGRAM WINS NATIONAL AWARD

Rita Seto to accept the award in late April

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) is honoring TRORC with an Excellence in Regional Transportation Award for our Rural Highway Department Management Program (better known as 'the Highway Timesheet Program').

This award is intended to showcase rural and small metropolitan planning organizations that are engaged in noteworthy practices and projects. Currently, twelve towns in TRORC are using the Highway Timesheet Program to help manage activities, staff hours, materials and equipment use. While this tool is used every day by towns, it was especially useful in developing project worksheets for emergency management projects after Tropical Storm Irene. Rita Seto, TRORC's lead transportation planner, will present the program and accept the award at the NADO Rural Transportation Conference at the end of April 2012.

NADO promotes programs and policies that strengthen local governments, communities, and economies. To learn more about NADO or the Highway Timesheet Program, please contact Rita at rseto@trorc.org.



Photograph courtesy of Rosalie Geiger