



TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE REGIONAL COMMISSION

3117 Rose Hill, The King Farm, Woodstock, VT 05091
Tel: 802-457-3188 Fax: 802-457-4728 www.trorc.org

November 2010

New Sign Retroreflectivity and Lettering Size Requirements

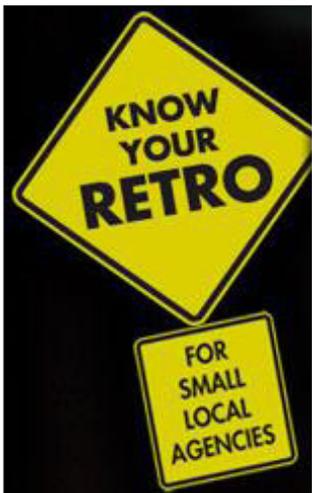
New signage regulations have resulted from the change in the driving environment (more aging drivers, altered headlamp performances, and vehicle sizes), but mostly because the US Census reports that by 2020 about 1 in 5 drivers will be over 65 years old. These aging drivers will have declining sensory, cognitive and motor physical functions.

As a result, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has implemented requirements in the retro reflectivity, size and lettering height in signs. These new requirements are outlined in the 2009

edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and have been adopted as Vermont State Law. All signs along public roads must meet the new retroreflectivity sign standards, which increase the amount of light bouncing off of the signs making them easier to read at night. These changes apply to NEW signs only. Signs with Type 3 sheeting or greater but still have all uppercase lettering and 8" blanks, it can remain untouched until it requires replacement. If your signs do

not meet the retroreflectivity, then you must replace everything. Sign posts are now designed to "breakaway" when hit by a vehicle.

Since retroreflective sign materials degrade over time, local governments will also be required to regularly update their inventory and upgrade signs in order to maintain compliance.



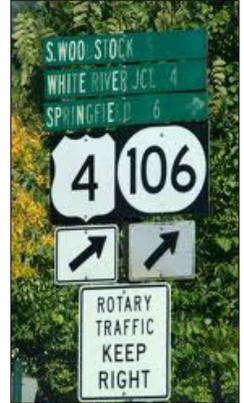
Vermont Local Roads (VLR) sent each town a FHWA Sign Reflectivity Guidebook and the new 2009 MUTCD edition. A guidebook is available online to address the new FHWA rule: http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/roadway_dept/night_visib/retrotoolkit/.



VLR is hosting future workshops on the MUTCD changes for local highway department personnel in the winter.

Key Compliance Dates:

By **January 9, 2012**, all street name signs require 6" lettering height for upper case, 4.5" lettering height for lower case (no longer all upper case letters), on 12" aluminum stock of High Intensity Prismatic sheeting grade, although the sheeting grade does not have to be compliant until **January 22, 2018**. They have changed the lettering from all caps to mixed case finding that it is more legible.



By **January 22, 2012**, all local governments must inventory their signs, assess sign retroreflectivity and establish a process to upgrade existing sub-standard signs.

By **January 22, 2015**, all local governments must ensure that all regulatory, warning and ground-mounted guide signs comply with the new MUTCD rules.

By **January 22, 2018**, all local governments must ensure that all street name and overhead guide signs comply with the new MUTCD rules.

This is all going towards promoting greater visibility and safer driving conditions (reduced crash rates particularly at night time) for all drivers but especially for aging drivers.



TRORC has been working with VTrans, VLR, TRORC Transportation Advisory Committee and the Orange/Windsor County Road Foreman group on how to best assist towns in meeting these new requirements.

Please contact Rita Seto at rseto@trorc.org for any questions.

Vermont Takes Important Step to Protect Rivers

With the Passage of Act 110, Vermont has taken another important step toward protecting river corridors and riparian buffers and creating an environmentally and economically sustainable relationship with its rivers and streams. Act 110 took effect on July 1, 2010. Municipal zoning bylaws now can have specific provisions relating to river corridors and buffers which are defined in statute now as:

- “River corridor” means the land area adjacent to a river that is required to accommodate the slope, dimensions, planform, and buffer of the naturally stable channel, and necessary to maintain or restore fluvial equilibrium conditions and minimize fluvial erosion hazards, as delineated by the agency of natural resources in accordance with river corridor protection procedures.



- “Buffer” means an undisturbed area consisting of trees, shrubs, ground cover plants, duff layer, and generally uneven ground surface that extends a specified distance horizontally across the surface of the land from the mean water level of an adjacent lake or from the top of the bank of an adjacent river or stream, as determined by the secretary of natural resources.

Act 110 also eliminated the small stream crossing exemption for stream alteration permits (on crossings in watersheds under 10 square miles). The Rivers Management Program is developing a general permit to address this increase in permits. Additionally, the template for town road and bridge standards is being revised to include reconstructed gravel roads to have a minimum amount of gravel subbase.



Act 110 calls on for the establishment of a River Corridor Management Program to produce:

1. River Corridor Protection Procedures to include a priority schedule for providing river corridor and buffer maps;
2. Best Management Practices for river corridors and buffers;
3. Municipal Incentives (for the adoption of river corridor and buffer protection bylaws) and Minimum Standards for Municipal Eligibility.

Act 110 also calls for a set of corollary actions with respect to lake shoreland protection, and the Rivers Program will work collaboratively with the Lakes and Pond Section’s Shoreland Management Program to develop a holistic set of procedures, practices, and incentives.

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Program Update



The TRORC Energy Efficiency and Conservation program continues to move forward. This past quarter staff participated in and sponsored the well attended (200+ people!) Bradford Local Energy Alternatives Festival (LEAF) and continued their outreach efforts region-wide.

Energy audits in Orange and Windsor Counties are moving forward and should be completed at the end of December. Following the completion of the audits, TRORC will be helping communities with the purchase of some energy efficiency upgrades such as LED lights, programmable thermostats and “smart strips”.

During this quarter the towns of Randolph and Bradford were both offered technical assistance by TRORC for conducting streetlight inventories. Randolph’s inventory will be completed in November of 2010, while Bradford’s may wait until spring depending on weather conditions. It is anticipated that the resulting inventories will provide these communities ways to reduce their yearly lighting expenses and energy use at the same time.



Staff continues to request data releases from communities for the regional baseline energy inventory. This data will be used to help guide regional and local energy policy in planning and zoning. If your community has not responded to the baseline inventory data requests, please contact Chris Sargent at TRORC. There is no cost to participate in this program.

TRORC Project Updates

Transportation Projects

Transportation Board Public Hearing - Tues. Nov. 16, 2010 - 7pm - Stagecoach Offices, Randolph, VT.

The Vermont Transportation Board is having its annual hearing which allows the public to discuss transportation issues. These public comments will be compiled into a report and sent to Legislators for review. We encourage you to come out and join us.

Vermont Scenic Byway Efforts

TRORC have been involved with simultaneous efforts to establish two Scenic Byway designations in the region. The Route 4 Scenic Byway Committee is composed of town representatives of all US4 towns from West Rutland to Hartford, Chambers of Commerce, and RPCs. The Route 100 Scenic Byway Committee is composed of town representatives from Pittsfield, Killington, Bridgewater, Plymouth, Ludlow and Andover; Chambers of Commerce, and RPCs.



Both Committees are finalizing their Corridor Management Plans that inventory and assess the resources along each Byway route. These Plans also include a vision for the future of the Byway and strategies to improve and enhance the resources and destinations along the way. Contact Rita Seto for more information.

All TRORC Towns in National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

Vershire has joined the NFIP completing the participation of all 30 towns in TRORC region. TRORC staff worked with local officials to adopt a compliant Flood Hazard Bylaw that was adopted by the Town. TRORC also assisted in the NFIP application development.



TRORC continues to provide assistance to towns on flood hazard area regulations. TRORC has just completed four outreach workshops on what are floodplains and how they are mapped and regulated in towns. We will be holding additional workshops this coming year so that all communities and residents understand their flood risk and ways to minimize it. For more information or assistance on floodplain management issues contact Pete Fellows at pfellows@trorc.org or Kevin Geiger at kgeiger@trorc.org.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Report Update

TRORC is working in 2010 to update the CEDS with our partners, the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission and the two regional development corporations. Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation and Springfield Regional Development Corporation. TRORC just received a draft of an analysis of the economic characteristics of our region from the firm Kavet, Rockler & Associates.



This report outlines labor force and unemployment characteristics for our region as well as industry and demographic trends. Pittsfield, Hancock, Granville, Bethel and Stockbridge had unemployment rates more than double the Vermont average in 2010. Only Springfield has experienced net job losses between 1990 and 2010 with Bradford, Braintree, Hancock, and Rochester having no growth. The rest of the region experienced small employment growth rates. These data will allow TRORC and its partners to focus the economic development efforts over the next five years.

Business Continuity Planning

TRORC is looking for small businesses interested in receiving assistance with developing a Business Continuity Plan. A single disaster can destroy a business you have worked hard to build. Several simple steps can help you improve the chances of coming through such an event with the least disruption to you and your customers. Contact Sally Hull at shull@trorc.org. This assistance is free of charge.



Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

The LEPC #12 is always looking for new people, including a new team leader, to join the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). CERT is a national program meant to assist first responders and is easy in which to get involved. If interested, please visit <http://www.lepc12.org/cert.html> or contact Kevin Geiger at kgeiger@trorc.org.





Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission
 3117 Rose Hill, The King Farm
 Woodstock, VT 05091

Staff Members

Peter G. Gregory, AICP - Executive Director
 Liza F. Wilson - Office Manager
 Pete Fellows, CFM - GIS Manager
 Kevin W. Geiger, AICP, CFM - Senior Planner
 Sally M. Hull - Regional Planner
 Chris Sargent, AICP - Senior Planner
 Rita Seto, AICP - Regional Planner

FY 2011 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 - Diane Montie
 Chelsea - Carl Pepperman, Cherylanne Linaris (Alt.)
 Corinth - Frank Roderick
 Fairlee - Larry Gatto
 Granville - No rep
 Hancock - No rep
 Hartford - Lori Hirshfield
 Hartland - No rep
 Newbury - Larry Scott, Scott Labun (Alt.)
 Norwich - Jamie Hess
 Pittsfield - Jerry Drugonis
 Plymouth - Jim Allen
 Pomfret - William Emmons
 Randolph - Joe Voci, 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 - Jim Masland, Donn Downey (Alt.)
 Topsham - Thomas Flannigan
 Tunbridge - Arnold Castagner, Michael Sacca (Alt.)
 Vershire - Bill Baylis
 West Fairlee - Jim Brigham, Nate Pero (Alt.)
 Woodstock - Charles Wilson

Members- - Joan Goldstein (GMEDC)
 At-Large - Christine Walker (UVLSRPC)
 - Jennifer Colby (Agricultural Advisor)

Staff Updates

Congratulations Rita!

Rita Seto passed her American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) exam certification last May. The AICP is part of the American Planning Association and recognizes certified planners for meeting rigorous standards in planning and ethics. Congratulations on your hard work!

Chuck Wise is moving on...

We are sad to see Chuck Wise leave TRORC after 8 years of managing the Transportation Planning Program. Chuck has been a great contributor to the Regional Commission, VTrans, the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park and to our towns. His last project that he got to see come to fruition was the Woodstock Full Circle Electric Trolley that debuted this summer-fall season. He still remains as caretaker at the King Farm. We wish him the very best on his future endeavors. For transportation planning questions, please contact Rita.

News & Upcoming Events

FY11 Municipal Planning Grants

There will be a second round of Municipal Planning Grants this fall. Online applications are now available. If your town is interested in applying and/or requires assistance with this process, please contact us. Visit the program's website at: <http://www.dhca.state.vt.us/Planning/MPG.htm>.

- Nov 16** - Vermont Transportation Board Public Hearing
- Nov 17** - VIT Session: Ethics and Municipal Land Use Officials
- Nov 18** - 2010 Vermont Statewide Housing Conference - Burlington
- Nov 30** - FY11 Municipal Planning Grant applications due
- Dec 8** - Next TRORC Board Meeting
- Dec 16** - Next LEPC12 Meeting

Have safe and happy holidays! ~ TRORC Staff

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



Digital Newsletter Option
 Email us if you prefer
 receiving a digital newsletter.