

# Meeting Notice: NRPC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

Thursday October 12, 2023 - 6:30-8:00 PM

**NRPC Conference Room, 75 Fairfield Street, St. Albans VT 05478**

Hybrid Meeting Format (remote details below)

## 1. Adjustments to the Agenda

## 2. Welcome, Introductions, Opening Remarks

## 3. Opportunity for Public Comment

## 4. Planning for Bi-Annual Regional Transportation Roundtable with Local Legislators:

- Every other year, legislators have been invited to a TAC meeting to discuss priority and/or emerging regional issues. The TAC will confirm the date of the roundtable this year, and will identify a list of topics for discussion. Attached is a list of proposed topics for discussion, along with a list of previously discussed topics from past roundtable events.

## 5. Minutes of the September 14, 2023 Meeting (*enclosed*)

## 6. TAC Member and Staff Updates

- STP FPAV(66) Fairfax paving project (VT 104); updated to include the creation of an additional exit turning lane at I-89 N, Exit 19.

## 7. Other Business

***If you cannot attend the meeting, please notify Kyle Grenier at [kgrenier@nrpcvt.com](mailto:kgrenier@nrpcvt.com) or 802-524-5958, ext. 23.***  
*In accordance with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the NRPC will ensure public meeting sites are accessible to all people or provide an opportunity for individuals to request special accommodations. Requests for free interpretive or translation services, assistive devices, or other requested accommodations should be made to Amy Adams, NRPC Title VI Coordinator, at 802-524-5958 or [aadams@nrpcvt.com](mailto:aadams@nrpcvt.com), no later than 3 business days prior to the meeting for which services are requested.*

### **Information on how to attend the meeting remotely:**

- By computer, smartphone, tablet, or other device: Click on the Zoom meeting invite- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82541157068> You may be prompted to enter a meeting ID: **825 4115 7068**
- By telephone: Dial + 1 646 558 8656. When prompted enter the meeting ID: **825 4115 7068**. Regular toll call/cell phone charges may apply.
- If you have difficulty accessing the meeting, please email [kgrenier@nrpcvt.com](mailto:kgrenier@nrpcvt.com).

# Regional Transportation Roundtable with TAC Members and Local Legislators

## Potential Topics for 2023 Roundtable

1. Discussion surrounding Electronic Vehicles (EV)
  - a. What are some priorities for EV infrastructure on a regional and statewide scale?
  - b. Are there budgetary concerns for fewer gasoline tax dollars statewide?
2. Review project priorities as outlined in the Regional Plan
  - a. What priorities and concerns are the legislators hearing about?
3. Speed & safety concerns throughout the region – using the VT 105 RSAR as example
  - a. How does this information impact decisions that are made at the statehouse?

## Topics from Previous Roundtables

### 2/10/2022 Roundtable

1. Local legislators were invited to the TAC meeting to discuss priority or emerging transportation issues. During the meeting introductions, each participant shared their top transportation issue for the region. Transportation issues identified either through the introductions or during the roundtable session included:
  - Shortage of housing in the region and lack of transportation options connecting to housing.
  - General concern for roadway/pavement conditions. Concern that some VTrans projects are only treating surface issues and not mitigating the underlying draining/road base issues. VT 120 in Sheldon and Franklin was given as an example.
  - General concern for bridges both on the state and town highways. Bridges B6 in Swanton Village on VT 78 and B10 in Sheldon on Kane Road were highlighted.
  - There is a need/desire to bring micro-transit to the region and a great need to expand public transit within the region in general, especially in Grand Isle County.
  - Need to increase resiliency in our transportation network.
  - It is becoming even harder to get a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) which is a concern because there is already a shortage of workers with a CDL.
  - Culvert prices have increased dramatically in the last year and there is concern about the increase of construction materials in the future.

### 12/2019 Roundtable

- **Making our roadways safer**
  - Stricter enforcement of interstate speed limits.
  - Expanding work zone protections/fines to municipal roadways.
  - Opportunities to minimize vehicle/bicycle/pedestrian conflicts.
- **Managing our roadways and public facilities to keep our waters clean**
  - The "Three Acre General Permit" (Stormwater General Permit 3-9050)
  - Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) and the Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program
- **Ensuring our towns have the tools they need to maintain a safe and cost effect transportation network**
  - Challenges of hiring and retaining CDL drivers.
  - Difficulty purchasing good quality salt and stone.

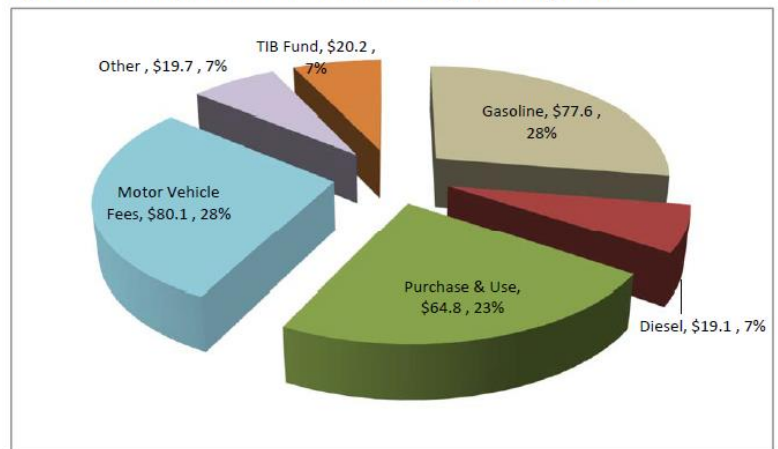
- Reclassifying sections of state highways as class 1 town highways.
- **Closing the public transit funding gap**
  - Addressing the need for and capacity for local match.
  - Decreasing barriers to coordination of services.
  - Regional transportation forum to share options and ideas for rural transit.
- **Report out from legislators on past roundtable topics and recent legislative achievements from the past two years. The 2017 roundtable discussion topics included:** the state gas tax, public transit gaps in the region, opportunities/impacts of bicycling for communities, challenges of purchasing salt and stone for municipalities

## 11/2017 Roundtable

### The State Gas Tax

- *Highlights from Act 40 Section 10 Transportation Funding Study, 2016*  
<http://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/Sec-10-Funding-Study-Report-final.pdf>
  - The operation and maintenance of Vermont’s transportation system is funded [primarily] using a combination: federal transportation funds (SFY2016 58%) and the State Transportation Fund, also called the T-Fund (SFY 2016 38%) (p. 7).
  - Gasoline consumption in Vermont has declined consistently since State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2005 (p. 1).
  - Current VT gas tax= 13.1 cents-per-gallon (Includes 1 cent-per-gallon petroleum cleanup fee. Additional 2% TIB Assessment levied to retail price of gas, and a T-Fund assessment of 4%) (p. 10).
  - Prior to SFY 2013 VT gas tax= 20 cents-per-gallon (Included 1 cent-per-gallon petroleum cleanup fee. 2% TIB Assessment levied on the retail price of gas (p. 10).
  - The report outlines options for raising additional revenue for transportation but does not make specific recommendations. Options include (but are not limited to): increase existing fees, increase Purchase & Use taxes/reduction in P&U allocation to education fund and Department of Public Safety; tax auto insurance premiums; establish bicycle registration fees; create electric vehicle fees; create vehicle miles traveled fee; allocate money from the General Fund.
- **What are the funding options do you think the legislature should pursue in order to address decreasing gas tax revenues?**
- **What strategies should the legislature not pursue?**

Figure 3: State Transportation Fund Revenues Sources (in \$ million), SFY 2016



Source: VTrans Budget & Fiscal Management Section

## Public Transit Gaps in the Region

- The Green Mountain Transit Agency (GMTA) is the public transportation provider for Franklin and Grand Isle Counties.

*Right: Summary of existing fixed-route, deviated fixed routes in the region from the GMT NextGen planning effort: <http://ridegmt.com/service-improvement-scenarios/>*

- GMT Elderly and Disabled services include transportation to senior meal sites, shopping and medical services to permit elders to live independently. Services are provided through volunteer drivers, bus service, van service or taxi cabs. GMT also serves as the fiscal agent for its partner agency, C.I.D.E.R. (Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources). C.I.D.E.R. provides transportation to elderly and disabled residents of Grand Isle County (NRPC 2015 Regional Plan, p. 66).

ROUTE	EXISTING
Price Chopper Shopping Shuttle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekday 10 AM – 1:35 PM   4 trips</li> <li>• Saturday: no service</li> <li>• Sunday: no service</li> </ul>
St. Albans Downtown Shuttle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local route that serves shopping, neighborhoods, downtown St. Albans, and the industrial park Weekday: 5:45 AM – 6:40 PM   60 all day</li> <li>• Saturday: 9:45 AM – 3:30 PM   60 all day</li> <li>• Sunday: no service</li> </ul>
Alburgh / Georgia Commuter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commuter route between Alburgh and Georgia via Swanton and St. Albans</li> <li>• Weekday PM : 3:15 PM – 5:15 PM   1 outbound trip</li> <li>• Weekday PM : 3:15 PM – 5:15 PM   1 outbound trip</li> <li>• Saturday: no service</li> <li>• Sunday: no service</li> </ul>
Richford / St. Albans Commuter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekday PM : 4:15 PM – 5:15 PM   1 outbound trip</li> <li>• Saturday: no service</li> <li>• Sunday: no service</li> </ul>
St Albans Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekday AM : 5:40 AM – 8:40 AM   2 inbound trips, 2 outbound trips</li> <li>• Weekday PM : 4:30 PM – 7:20 PM   4 trips</li> <li>• Saturday: no service</li> <li>• Sunday: no service</li> </ul>

- The TAC has voiced concern about the lack of public transit routes in along US Route 2 in Grand Isle County and along the VT 36 corridor through Fairfield and Bakersfield.
- Overall funding and matching funds are an impediment to expanding public transit service.
  - Those most in need of transit are not always available to supply the match, and communities through which the route travels are not necessarily the main beneficiaries.
  - The state began to examine the public transit local match issue as part of a larger study on transportation financing but no further action has been taken.
- **Legislators, what are the public transit needs you hear about from your constituents?**

## Opportunities/Impacts of Bicycling for Communities

- In 2012, VTrans initiated a study-- *Economic Impact of Bicycling and Walking in Vermont*: <http://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/highway/documents/ltf/BikePedFinal%20Report%20Econ%20Impact%20Walking%20and%20Biking2012.pdf>
  - The study found that, “the state budget fiscal impact from bicycle and pedestrian activities in 2009 amounted to a net positive of \$1.6 million of tax and fee revenues for the State of Vermont” (p. 4).
- VTrans has completed 2 phases of an On-Road Bike Facility System Assessment: <http://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/bikeplan>

- Categorizes the state roads into high-, moderate- and low-use/priority corridors based on current and potential bicycle use. Will assist VTrans in understanding where to focus limited resources towards bicycle improvements and, allow better integration into Agency projects and activities.
- Corridors identified as **high use/priority** include portions of : US 2/VT 314 in South Hero, Grand Isle and North Hero; US 2/VT 78 in Alburgh; VT 36 in St. Albans City/Town; US 7 in St. Albans City/Town and Georgia; and VT 104A in Georgia and Fairfax.
- Vermont statutes pertaining to bicyclists:
  - SAME RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES AS MOTOR VEHICLES. “Every person riding a bicycle is granted all of the rights and is subject to all of the duties applicable to operators of vehicles, except as to those provisions which by their very nature can have no application.” 23 VSA § 1136(c)
  - TWO ABREAST. “Persons riding bicycles upon a roadway may not ride more than two abreast except on paths or parts of roadways set aside for the exclusive use of bicycles or except as otherwise permitted by the commissioner of public safety in connection with a public sporting event... Persons riding two abreast shall not impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic and, on a laned roadway, shall ride within a single lane.” 23 VSA § 1139(b)
  - RIDE ON THE RIGHT. “A person operating a bicycle upon a roadway shall ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable, exercising due care when passing a standing vehicle or one proceeding in the same direction.” 23 VSA § 1139(a)
  - FINES. Per 23 VSA 1141(a), bicyclists may be subject to fines of \$25 plus fees (total \$55) for bicycle specific laws. Fines are the same as for motorists for general traffic laws: around \$200 for running a red light, for example. Points may be given on your driving license, even if you are riding your bike.
- **TAC members have voiced concerns that bicyclists do not always follow the traffic laws and this can be a safety issue. Are the laws we have pertaining to bicycling strong enough and how can we better enforce the laws we have?**
- **What are the opportunities for improving bicycling safety in the state?**

### **Challenges of Purchasing Salt and Stone for Municipalities**

- Salt: In year’s past, municipalities had to buy salt through the state contract even when there were suppliers that could provide a better price. This year the contractor that was selected did not include municipalities in their bid.
  - The language in the state’s request for salt bids reads, *“At the bidder’s election [,] political subdivisions and independent collects of the state may participate in state contracts at the same prices, term and conditions. Items furnished to political subdivisions and independent colleges will be billed directly to and paid for by the political subdivisions or independent colleges and neither the State nor its Commissioner of Buildings and General Services personally or officially assumes any responsibility for these payments.”*
  - Road foreman have expressed the need for more predictability and transparency in the process.
- Stone: This past field season, towns were having difficulties getting stone after one supplier stopped processing the type road crews need and another supplier had equipment issues.
  - The stone shortage has fostered broader conversations about the mid/long-term supply of stone in the region.

- Very few towns have their own pits.
  - Half the town's surveyed in 2009 have to travel more than 30 miles round-trip for materials.
  - With the Municipal Roads General Permit taking effect on July 1, 2018, there could be increased demand for stone.
- **What could be done at the state-level to address current and future shortages of materials?**
  - **How can the state's salt bidding process be more predictable for municipalities?**

## **12/2015 Roundtable**

- Stabilizing the transportation funding options besides the gas tax;
- Impact of heavy farm equipment on municipal roads;
- Lack of access to public transit in the Islands;
- Need for public transit connection from Fairfax to Georgia park-and-ride lot;
- Options for public transit for veterans;
- Public transportation for opiate addiction treatment outside of the region diverting resources away from other public transit needs/Need for more local opiate treatment options;
- The poor condition of Cambridge Rd and Fairfield Road in Fletcher; and
- Safety concerns at the intersection of VT 36/North Rd/South Rd.

# NRPC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

Thursday September 14, 2023 at 6:30 PM

Hybrid Meeting Format

## Attendance

Municipality	Rep.	Present	Municipality	Rep.	Present	Municipality	Rep.	Present
Alburgh Town	Vacant		Alburgh Village	Jason Beaulac		Bakersfield	Vacant	
Enosburg Falls	Gary Denton		Enosburg Town	Joey Clark		Fairfax	Shaw Lafountain	
Fairfield	Maurice Jettie Cathy Ainsworth (alt)		Fletcher	Vacant		Franklin	Peter Magnant	X
Georgia	Suzanna Brown	X	Grand Isle	Barclay Morris	O	Highgate	Sharon Bousquet	
Isle La Motte	Vacant		Montgomery	Mark Brouillette		Richford	Wally Steinhour	
Sheldon	Seth Hungerford		South Hero	Bob Buermann	O	St. Albans City	Vacant	
St. Albans Town	David Allerton John Montagne (alt)		Swanton Town	Harold Garrett	X	Swanton Village	Reginald Beliveau	O
GMT (Transit)	Chris Damiani		NECR (Rail)	Charles Hunter		MVRT (Bike/Ped)	Vacant	
Air Rep.	Vacant		Berkshire	Vacant		North Hero	Vacant	

**Other Participants:** Kyle Grenier (NRPC), Matthew Arancio (VTrans), Marlana Valenta (NRPC Guest), Jenn Yandow (GMP Guest). All in person.

X = In person

O = Online

*Chair, Harold Garrett called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM.*

**1. Adjustments to the Agenda – No.**

**2. Welcome, Introductions, Opening Remarks**

**3. Opportunity for Public Comment – None**

**4. Regional Plan Update**

K. Grenier informed the Committee that the 2023-2031 Regional Plan was adopted at the July 26, 2023 NRPC Board of Commissioners Meeting.

**5. Electric Vehicle (EV) Presentation and Discussion with guests:**

Jenn Yandow, Green Mountain Power and Marlana Valenta, NRPC Energy and Climate Planner.

J. Yandow walked the TAC through a PowerPoint presentation covering topics including: current number of EV registrations in Vermont, benefits of strategic electrification and carbon emissions, EV battery life, etc. M. Valenta shared her first-hand experience as an EV driver, and helped to explain

28 some common questions about EV ownership and usage; also, information about the current electrical  
29 grid/capacity in the region and beyond. Both J. Yandow and M. Valenta time answering individual TAC  
30 questions and concerns.  
31

32 **6. Minutes of the July 13, 2023 Meeting**

33 R. Beliveau moved to approve July 13, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. B. Morris seconded. The  
34 motion carried.  
35

36 **7. TAC Member and Staff Updates**

37 B. Morris noted concerns about dirt bikes he witnessed on the MVRT between Sheldon Junction and  
38 the St. Albans trailhead. Concerns about the lack of restroom facilities as a result of the closure of the  
39 store/restaurant at Sheldon Junction, also.

40 K. Grenier shared updates regarding the Franklin VT120 intersection project, Swanton I-89 NB Exit 21  
41 project, Fairfax VT104/VT128 intersection project, Sheldon Gristmill LVRT Scoping Study, NRPC Traffic  
42 & Pedestrian counts.  
43

44 **7. Other Business**

45 Next meeting: Thursday, October 12, 2023. TAC members agreed to invite local legislators to the  
46 November 9, 2023 meeting and will conduct planning session to identify discussion topics at the  
47 October 2023 meeting.  
48

49 P. Magnant motioned to adjourn the meeting. R. Beliveau seconded. The motion carried. The meeting  
50 adjourned at 8:31 PM