



APPROVED MINUTES
WRC Transportation Committee
September 11th, 2023
4:00 p.m.

Members Present: Stephan Chait, Chair, Susan Hammond, Georgianne Mora

Members Absent: Andy Coyne

Staff present: Colin Bratton

Guests: Christine Howe (SEVT)

Meeting convened at 4:03 p.m.

Changes to Agenda: None

Minutes: Motion to accept the minutes of 6/12/23 was made by Commissioner Mora, seconded by Commissioner Chait. Minutes from 6/12/23 meeting are approved unanimously.

Transportation Advisory Committee Bylaws Update: The Windham Regional Commission Executive Board has approved changes to the Transportation Committee Bylaws and Statement of Purpose to reconstitute the Committee officially as a Transportation Advisory Committee, in accordance with Agency of Transportation rules related to the statewide project prioritization process. This change will allow appointments to the Committee beyond the two normal Commissioner appointments afforded to each town in the Windham Region. Towns will now have the ability to appoint an additional, TAC specific commissioner to represent their town on the committee. In addition, special transportation interest groups in the region will have the opportunity to be formally represented on the committee, including but not limited to the Regional Transit Provider (SEVT), transportation advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, among others. This represents a significant change to the constitution of the committee intended to afford towns more equitable representation during the annual VTrans Project Prioritization process as well foster more robust discussion of transportation issues impacting the Windham Region at the committee level.

Windham Regional Plan Transportation Policy Discussion: The Transportation Committee will begin the process of reviewing and updating transportation goals and policies outlined in the Windham Regional Transportation Plan as part of the broader update process to the Windham Regional Plan. Most significant of these is the combining of the now stand-alone Transportation Plan as a section of the larger Windham Regional Plan document. This process will take place over the next several months and will involve extensive input from the Committee.

The Committee began initial discussions on the update by broadly reviewing the existing 2021 Transportation Plan and its policies. Staff summarized the current plan and its policies, including those related to land use, active transportation, public transit, low and no emissions vehicle goals, freight and others. There was conversation related to issues impacting rural communities, including maintenance of unpaved roads during increasingly unpredictable winter months, mud-season and the impact of major storms on our transportation infrastructure.

Review of FY24 Transportation Planning Initiative Agreement with VTrans: The Committee discussed the FY24 Transportation Planning Initiative Agreement between the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Windham Regional Commission. This is an annual agreement which funds much of the transportation planning work done by the Windham Regional Commission as well as serves to implement statewide transportation policies at the local level.

Highlights of this agreement were discussed, including WRC's traffic count program, grant applications and technical assistance on issues such as traffic calming, bicycle and pedestrian safety, corridor management and others. In particular, new provisions for the study of a Connecticut River Valley-Route 5 Bicycle Corridor study will impact the Windham Region.

The FY24 agreement also includes extensive provisions related to vehicle electrification in accordance with the statewide adoption of the 2035 California Emissions standards that will phase out gasoline powered vehicles in Vermont over the next decade. There was significant discussion of the need for expanded vehicle charging infrastructure in rural areas, including at centrally located community sites, as well as the electric infrastructure needed for at home charging.

Next Meeting Scheduled: 4:00 p.m. Monday October 16th, 2023

Meeting adjourned approximately 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Colin Bratton, Staff