



**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**WRC Transportation Committee**  
**June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024**  
**4:00 p.m.**

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*Members Present:* Stephan Chait, Chair, Andy Coyne, Georgianne Mora, Nick Morgan, James Bressor

*Members Absent:* Christine Howe

*Staff present:* Colin Bratton

*Guests:* None

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Meeting convened at 4:01 p.m.

**Changes to Agenda:** The order of the agenda will be changed to allow for the Class 4 Roads discussion to take place before the Windham Regional Commission summer field work agenda item.

**Minutes:** Motion to accept the minutes of 2/12/24 was made by Commissioner Mora, seconded by Commissioner Chait. Minutes from 2/12/24 meeting are approved with Commissioners Morgan and Bressor abstaining.

**Discussion of the update to the Transportation Section of the Windham Regional Plan:** The Committee had a brief discussion related to the most recent draft version of the Transportation Section of the Windham Regional Plan. This primarily concerned changes to the freight section of the chapter, in particular local concerns regarding the impact of increased e-commerce deliveries on town highways. Although little hard data is available on these trends, many towns reported a significant increase in delivery truck traffic during the covid-19 pandemic and this trend has continued past the shutdown. The increase in the number of larger delivery trucks puts a significant, new stress on town highways, in particular Class 2 and Class 3 unpaved roads. The updated transportation section of the Windham Regional Plan will encourage more study, planning and consistent policies to be put in place related to the impact of increased e-commerce deliveries on the region's transportation system. The Committee will reconvene and have the opportunity to make further changes and comment on the online formatting in the coming months.

**Class 4 Town Highways:** The committee discussed issues and policies related to Class 4 Town Highways in the Region. Class 4 Town Highways and legal trails are generally unmaintained Right-of-Ways owned by a town. Sometimes colloquially called ancient roads, these rights of way are generally older roads that fell into disuse when they ceased providing necessary access to a residence. By state law Class 4 Town Highway and Legal Trails must remain accessible only for pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle travel and it is the responsibility of the affected landowner to bring a Class 4 highway up to Class 3 standard should they wish for motor vehicle access. However, policies and enforcement vary

significantly between municipalities and even within towns on a case by case basis. Many towns have no official policies or bylaws related to the use of Class 4 town highways.

Increased development demand as well as the increase in outdoor recreation experienced during the pandemic have put a renewed focus on these little used roads. The Region as seen an increase in housing development on Class 4 highways and with it renewed requests from landowners for Class 4 roads to be brought up to Class 3 standards and be maintained year-round. This can be a significant burden on already stressed town highway budgets and has become a source of conflict in recent years.

The Windham Regional Transportation Advisory Committee supports efforts to educate towns on laws, policies and best practices related to Class 4 Town Highways. This should include organizing a regional forum on Class 4 roads and legal trails, as well as the development of information to be distributed around the region. This topic and next steps will be revisited at a future meeting.

**Windham Regional Field Work:** The Committee received an update from staff on the ongoing Windham Regional Transportation field work season. Windham Regional staff provides a variety of transportation inventory and data collection work to towns, including but not limited to culvert inventories, road erosion inventories, speed studies, bicycle and pedestrian counts, trail counts, and sign inventories. These services are available upon request from the municipality by reaching out to either Transportation Planner Colin Bratton or Senior GIS Planner Jeff Nugent. The field work season runs roughly from May to October.

**Next Meeting Scheduled:** 4:00pm August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Meeting adjourned approximately 5:10 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted, Colin Bratton, Staff*