

**Mount Ascutney Regional
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Meeting Minutes of October 26, 2022

A meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was held via Zoom and at the MARC offices at 6:00 pm.

Attendance

TAC members present: Kristi Morris, Springfield; John Saydek, Cavendish; Sharon Bixby, Ludlow; Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore; Gordy Eastman, Reading; Diane Foulds, Windsor; Eric & Barbara Bye, at-large

Others present: Otis Munroe, MARC; Christine Howe, SEVT; John Haffner, Vital Communities; Anna Guenther, Vital Communities

Kristi Morris opened the unofficial meeting at 6:00 pm.

1. Welcome and Introductions

All present members of the TAC and guests introduced themselves.

2. Changes to the Agenda

No Changes.

3. Approval of Minutes

Wayne Wheelock made a motion to approve the August 24th minutes and September 28th notes. Second by Gordy Eastman. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Active Transportation Plan and E-Bikes

John gave a presentation on planning for e-bikes. John began by reviewing e-bikes including the three classes they fall into and how e-bikes are regulated in Vermont. In Vermont, e-bikes are not considered motorized vehicles but are governed as bicycles and their operators as vulnerable users. Municipalities are allowed to set speed limits. Burlington has set speed limits and limits the speeds of e-bikes in their bikeshare program. Federally funded projects must allow e-bikes but have a 20mph speed limit. Experiences on shared use paths suggest that setting a culture of shared facilities and courtesy is more effective than enforcement. Safety concerns unique to e-bikes are battery and electronic component failure, a malfunctioning throttle, and increased weight. Overall, safety concerns are very similar to conventional bicycles. The overall message was that complete streets and other bicycle-friendly infrastructure are also good for e-bikes.

Diane asked if any communities have made efforts to make commuting by e-bike easier such as installing bike racks. John mentioned that Advance Transit has put racks on their buses that are easier to accommodate e-bikes. For the most part, good bike infrastructure also benefits e-bikers.

Barbara asked about public charging for e-bikes. John replied that it's mostly an issue for bike-share programs. The removable batteries are chargeable at any wall outlet. Anna added that e-bikes require extra storage and maintenance considerations during the winter due to the battery and electronics.

Gordy asked about estimates for growth in e-bike use. Anna reported that local shops currently have a 1 to 2 year wait, this is likely related to both supply chain issues and demand. The Vermont e-bike rebate program was used up very quickly.

Otis asked about the experience of sharing the road as a e-bicyclist. Education helps, especially those who haven't ridden in many years. Many borrowers didn't use the bikes in the winter not due to weather but comfort of sharing less road. The speed and size does help to feel safer, especially when navigating hills. Diane reported that one user took

advantage of the electric assist to tackle hills easier while another used the added speed to find alternative if longer routes. Anna noted how important e-bikes are from an equity perspective as providing a form of transportation for those who are unable to drive a car for various reasons.

Eric asked whether local bike shops are able to maintain e-bikes. Anna shared a list of local shops that Vital Communities works with.

There was a brief discussion of the new e-bike lending library in Springfield at the Edgar May Center.

4. Active Transportation Plan (ATP)

Otis gave an update on the Regional Transportation Plan adoption process and an overview of the Active Transportation Plan. Diane had reviewed the ATP and will be forwarding along her written revisions to the TAC. Diane also offered to reach out to contacts at Vital Communities about attending the October TAC meeting. There was a conversation around deadlines and potentially tying the ATP into the upcoming TPI bicycle planning task. It was decided to bring in a guest and focus on updating the ATP with language around e-bikes, commuting, and sharing the road at the October TAC meeting.

6. Updates and Announcements

Otis shared information on the Transportation Alternatives Program grant.

Kristi asked about the Emergency Management Roundtable on mutual aid agreements. Otis will check and report back.

7. Future agenda items & next meeting date

- a. Next meeting: November 30, 2022.
- b. Topic: Gordy Eastman on the 1-91 bridges by exit-8 in Weathersfield. GMP EVs will be pushed to the January meeting.

9. Adjourn

Sharons Bixby made a motion to adjourn. Second by Gordy Eastman. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.