

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**TO:** File

**FROM:** Christopher R. Bean, P.E.

**DATE:** January 29, 2001

**RE:** VTrans  
Brandon Bypass Scoping Studies  
NH 019-3(49)SC  
CLD Reference No. 00-0216

**SUBJECT:** Brandon Bypass Steering Committee Meeting

**LOCATION:** Brandon Fire Station

**ATTENDEES:** **Bypass Steering Committee Members and other officials:**

Lynn Saunders	Brandon Selectboard	BBSC	PBSC
Richard Baker	Brandon Citizen	BBSC	
Peg Flory	Pittsford Selectboard	BBSC	PBSC
Dolores Furnari	Brandon Chamber of Commerce	BBSC	
Mike Bach	Brandon Town Manager	BBSC	
Dan Peterson	VTrans Project Manager	BBSC	PBSC
Chris Bean	CLD Engineers Project Manager	BBSC	PBSC
Greg Riley	VTrans, Regional Planning		
Duncan Wilkie	VTrans Archeologist		
Chris Borstel	Louis Berger Group Archeologist		
Mark Blucher	Rutland Regional Planning Commission		
Judith Kmileck	Rutland Regional Planning Commission		
Roy Newton	<i>Brandon/Pittsford Reporter</i>		
Jason Stone	CLD Engineers Envir. Specialist		

**BBSC - Brandon Bypass Steering Committee Member**  
**PBSC – Pittsford Bypass Steering Committee Member**

**Citizens:**

Gordon Halliday	Brandon	John S. Malewicki, Jr.	Brandon
Dan McDonough	Brandon	Chris Eddy	Brandon
Sherry Humiston	Brandon	Sara Eddy	Brandon
Bernard Humiston	Brandon	Merla Center	Brandon
Elaine Mumford	Brandon	Linda K. Cummings	Brandon
Gerry Racette	Brandon	Phil Sutherland	Brandon
David Martin	Brandon	Ronald D. Eddy, Jr.	Brandon

## **MEETING NOTES**

### 1. **Introductions**

Chris Bean made general introductions of those present.

### 2. **VTrans Project Manager**

Dan Peterson indicated that there has been no change in the project manager status. He is still acting in this capacity and will continue until a replacement is named.

### 3. **Hill and Hollow Alliance**

A group of concerned citizens known as the "Hill and Hollow Alliance" has formed. The members reside primarily in the area referred to as Sugar Hollow, along Birch Hill Road, in the Towns of Pittsford and Brandon. A resolution was submitted to the Selectboards of Pittsford and Brandon. The group requested an opportunity to summarize their concerns relative to the Bypasses. The following concerns were expressed:

- David Martin: The group is concerned that westerly bypass alternatives will not be fully considered. The group recognizes that US Route 7 has problems and supports the upgrade projects and the study of "mini-bypasses" around the villages. The group opposes long bypass alternatives, especially those that would impact the Sugar Hollow area. A petition stating the group's concerns and position has been signed by approximately 300 people, and continues to be circulated.
- Ron Eddy, Jr.: Does not believe a bypass will solve the problem with US Route 7. Ron Eddy thinks the problem would only be moved to another location and that environmental impacts associated with a long bypass are not worth benefits gained.
- Chris Eddy: The Sugar Hollow area is valuable black bear habitat, as well as wintering habitat for deer. Chris Eddy cited noise, pollution, and accidents (animal-vehicle) as reasons that a bypass should not be considered in Sugar Hollow.
- Phil Southerland: The Sugar Hollow area is a valuable resource enjoyed by many for its scenic beauty and natural resources. A bypass should not be constructed there. Mini-bypasses are acceptable; a large bypass to the east of US Route 7 would be strongly opposed.

### 4. **Project Purpose and Need Statement**

Prior to the meeting, the draft Purpose and Need Statement developed for this project was provided to the Steering Committee for review. Chris Bean asked those present for comments.

Dan Peterson felt that in order for the resource agencies to be convinced a bypass is necessary, the Purpose and Need Statement must describe to some extent how the existing facility is

deficient, and how a bypass would benefit through traffic. As it stands, the Purpose and Need Statement focuses on local access issues and side street level of service. Others agreed with Dan. Chris explained that quantifying deficiencies using such standard indicators as highway capacity or level of service is difficult. The project area does not lend itself to the standard methods of measuring highway performance. The absence of signals at intersections gives through traffic the right of way, resulting in delays for those accessing US Route 7 from local streets and business and residential drives. However, the volumes of local movements are not high enough in any one location to warrant signalization.

Mike Balch suggested there might be other communities, if not in Vermont then in another state such as Massachusetts, with current traffic volumes that approach the volumes predicted for the project area. If an appropriate example were found, the traffic problems associated with the high volumes may lend support to the need for a bypass.

Dan Peterson felt that a reasonable approach might be to assume that with current and anticipated growth in traffic, safety hazards related to the existing unsignalized intersections would at some point lead to signalization. Once signals are installed, the level of service of the main line would be at "F" or failure. Dan felt it could be argued that since widening would not be permitted through the villages, this would help justify bypasses.

Richard Baker requested and it was agreed that separate Purpose and Need Statements should be developed for Pittsford and Brandon. He stated that there are too many intersections and sources of side-friction to signalize. He also noted that any accident that causes one-way alternating traffic on US Route 7 results in the "failure" of the main line.

#### 5. Project Schedule/Progress Report

Chris Bean updated the project schedule. Phase I is essentially complete, though a meeting with the Resource Agencies will be added, to make the agencies aware of the project and to present the Purpose and Need Statement for discussion. This meeting is scheduled for February 7, 2001. Peg Flory and Lynn Saunders will attend. David Martin indicated that a representative of the Hill and Hollow Alliance would also attend. The Phase II schedule has been adjusted. The **next Individual Town Steering Committee Meetings are targeted for March 8, 2001**, at the Otter Valley Union High School. The Brandon Bypass Steering Committee Meeting will be from 4:00 - 5:30 PM, and the Pittsford Bypass Steering Committee Meeting will be from 6:00 - 7:30 PM. A second Resource Agency meeting is slated for early April, 2001, to discuss conceptual corridors, followed by a third round of Individual Town Steering Committee Meetings, in early to mid-April. A second Joint Public Informational Meeting is slated for late April, bringing the project back on schedule.

#### 6. Update on Archeology

VTrans and its consultant, Louis Berger and Associates (LBA), have created a Predictive Model for predicting the location of archeologically sensitive areas. To the extent practicable, such areas should be considered as constraints in the development of conceptual corridors. The Predictive Model developed to date consists of a compilation of known archeological site

information for sites within the project area, as well as other sites in Vermont. Information such as a site's relationship to key environmental parameters is used to predict the likelihood of archeological deposits existing in a given area. For prehistoric sites, the key parameters are proximity to a water source, the presence of well-drained soils, and terrain with low to gradual slopes. For historic sites, the key parameter is an area's proximity to historic roads.

LBA has applied the Predictive Model to the project area. Areas of predicted prehistoric and historic archeological resource sensitivity have been mapped. LBA will work to provide this information to CLD in ArcView format, for incorporation into the environmental constraints maps.

7. **Environmental Constraints Maps**

Jason Stone presented the constraints maps developed to date. The information contained in the maps was provided by the Vermont Center for Geographic Information and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. Several maps were shown that group "like" resources. A portion of a map depicting all constraints was shown, to demonstrate that there is no possible way to design a bypass to avoid all resources. Conceptual corridors will be developed to minimize resource impacts to the extent practicable.

8. **Next Meeting**

The **next Individual Town Steering Committee Meetings are targeted for March 8, 2001**, at the Otter Valley Union High School. The Brandon Bypass Steering Committee Meeting will be from 4:00 - 5:30 PM, and the Pittsford Bypass Steering Committee Meeting will be from 6:00 - 7:30 PM.

CRB:cww

Attachment: Hill and Hollow Alliance Resolution

cc: Lynn Saunders	Brandon	Mark Blucher	RRPC
Peg Flory	Pittsford	Mark Germanowski	RRPC
Richard Baker	Brandon	Susie Leonard	RRPC
Jim O'Gorman	Pittsford	Judith Kmileck	RRPC
Mike Balch	Brandon	Kathleen Ryan	Landscape Architect
Hank Pelkey	Pittsford	Gary A. Klinefelter	VSE
Dan Peterson	VTrans	Virginia Russell	State Transportation Board
Alan Neveau	VTrans	Jon Satz	Store Owner, Brandon
Scott Newman	VTrans	Sen. Gerry Gossens	State Senator
Duncan Wilkie	VTrans	Roy Newton	<i>Brandon-Pittsford Reporter</i>
Chris Borstel	Louis Berger Group	Ed Barna	<i>Rutland Herald</i>
Greg Riley	VTrans	Frank Farnsworth	<i>Otter Valley Press</i>
Dennis Benjamin	VTrans	Harry McKinlay	Pittsford
John Narowski	VTrans	Lynne White	Pittsford