

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

**TO:** File

**FROM:** Jason A. Stone

**DATE:** July 23, 2001

**RE:** VTrans  
Brandon Bypass Scoping Study  
NH 019-3(49)SC  
CLD Reference No. 01-0169

**SUBJECT:** **Brandon Bypass Steering Committee Meeting**

**LOCATION:** Brandon Fire Station

**ATTENDEES:**

Peg Flory	Pittsford Selectboard	PBSC, BBSC
Mike Balch	Brandon Town Manager	BBSC
Richard Baker	Brandon Citizen	BBSC
Lynn Saunders	Brandon Selectboard	PBSC, BBSC
Greg Riley	VTrans, Project Manager	PBSC, BBSC
Dan Peterson	VTrans LTF	
Dennis Benjamin	VTrans Environmental Permitting	
Chris Bean	CLD Engineers Project Manager	
Jason Stone	CLD Engineers Environmental Specialist	
Paul Conner	Rutland Regional Planning Commission	
Roy Newton	Reporter	
Ed Barna	Reporter	

**UNABLE TO ATTEND:** Dolores Furnari, BBSC

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

**MEETING NOTES**

1. **Introductions/Purpose of Meeting**

Chris Bean asked those in attendance to introduce themselves, as two attendees were new to the Steering Committee Meeting. Chris then explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss and/or receive input on the following issues:

- Calendar of Events
- US Route 7 Upgrade and Pittsford and Brandon Bypass Studies Project Schedules.
- Update on the status of the Bypass Study Scoping Report.
- Issues Discussed at the May 21 Public Informational Meeting.
- Determine the Date and Location for the Upcoming August Public Informational Meeting.

## 2. Calendar of Events

Chris explained that CLD is investigating options for setting up a Calendar of Events on CLD's website to allow people to check meeting dates, locations, and times. It was suggested, however, that simply e-mailing the Steering Committee Members and regular attendees, with meeting dates locations and times listed in the body of the message (as opposed to in an attachment) would suffice. CLD will hereafter send regular reminders of upcoming meetings, noting times, locations. and dates.

## 3. Update on Project Schedules

### a. US Route 7 Upgrades

A US Route 7 Upgrade Steering Committee Meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 6, at the Brandon Fire Station, from 4 - 7 PM. The final Conceptual Plans Comment Review Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 31, from 9 AM - Noon, at the VTrans headquarters in Montpelier, VT. Mike Balch indicated that he would try to attend this meeting. The issue of fish passage and the related issue of culvert/bridge options will be one of the items discussed at the meeting.

Chris noted that the Upgrade schedule has not changed much since the last meeting. Roy Newton, Richard Baker and others stated that there appears to be too much time slated for the right-of-way process in general. Chris and Dan Peterson explained how this process can drag on, especially when landowners are not willing sellers. Chris also noted the level of plan detail required to determine the exact amount of area required from each property and utility relocation issues contribute to the time needed to prepare Right-of-Way Plans. The Steering Committee expressed the opinion that ways to reduce the time period shown on the schedule need to be investigated. The project schedule should not imply that there is no apparent urgency for the project, or project funding.

Dan Peterson indicated that Brandon Village (Project 6) has the opportunity to be municipally managed. Therefore, the condemning authority would be with the Town, and this could expedite the acquisition process somewhat.

CLD will investigate ways to reduce the overall time shown in the overall project schedule, and also develop a separate schedule for Project 6.

### b. Bypass Scoping Study Schedule

Chris explained that the Draft Scoping Report for the Bypass Studies is being prepared and will be ready for the August 30 Public Informational Meeting. The Report should be ready in time to

provide copies to the Steering Committees for review, prior to the meeting. Chris explained that the report's preliminary recommendation would be in favor of continuing with more detailed study (EIS). To date, no resource impacts or other issues have been identified that would suggest that the study should not go forward.

The disposition of the Final Scoping Report was discussed. It was the consensus that the report should be passed along to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission and the Transportation Advisory Committee. From there, the project's (Environmental Impact Statement) funding priority will be determined. Steering Committee contact with state and regional transportation officials, emphasizing the need and importance of the Bypass Project, will be a crucial element in securing funding, especially given the current limited funding availability. Dan Peterson noted that the current State Transportation Improvement Program is currently underfunded by approximately \$17 million.

#### 4. Issues Discussed at the May 21 Public Informational Meeting

CLD received a number of comments subsequent to the May Public Informational Meeting. These were given the same consideration as comments received at the meeting. Several issues were raised that will be addressed at the August 30, 2001, Public Informational Meeting. They are as follows:

- **Before/After Studies on Bypassed Towns**  
Information on the positive and negative effects of bypasses, especially socioeconomic effects on Village settings, will be discussed. Paul Conner noted that there are studies that involved similar settings as Pittsford and Brandon, and indicated that he would look into the matter further. While Paul did not characterize the effect of Bypasses as entirely positive, he did say that the studies demonstrate Bypasses to be "not as negative" as locals generally anticipated. Dan Peterson also indicated that he would check into such studies.
- **Property Value Implications**  
Based on the opinions of the VT Attorney General transportation liaison attorney, the Bypass Scoping Study is something that realtors need to disclose to potential property buyers/sellers in the area. This is true, even though it is understood that the conceptual bypass corridors are not proposed for construction. It is up to potential sellers and buyers to determine the extent to which the Study influences their decisions to sell or buy property.
- **OMYA Rail Spur Study**  
A rail spur that would allow OMYA to transport raw material from its quarry, north of Brandon, to the Florence Facility is under study. A logical question is, therefore, "Would construction of the spur eliminate the need for a Bypass?" Based on currently available information and considering the current rate of truck volume growth, the reduction in trucks on US Route 7 resulting from the spur would not reduce the overall volume of truck traffic on US Route 7 to a degree that would obviate the need for a bypass. Anticipated truck traffic growth alone would offset OMYA's 115 truck trips per day within 5-6 years.

5. Next Meeting/Next Steps

- A **Joint Public Informational Meeting** has been scheduled for **Thursday, August 30, 2001**. The meeting will begin at 6:00 PM with an informal question & answer session. The formal presentation will begin at 7:00 PM and will run until approximately 7:45 PM. A public input session will follow. The meeting is tentatively slated for the Otter Valley Union High School Auditorium. Mike Balch will confirm the OVUHS availability. The purpose of the meeting is to present the findings documented in the Draft Scoping Report.
- The next **Pittsford Bypass Steering Committee Meeting** will be held at Pittsford Municipal Building, from 5:00 - 6:00 PM. Attendees will then adjourn to the Pittsford Selectboard meeting, and then, time permitting, to the Brandon Selectboard meeting that was rescheduled from July 23, 2001.
- CLD anticipates **completion of the Final Bypass Scoping Study Report** in September, 2001.

JAS:cww

cc: Lynn Saunders	Brandon	John Narowski	VTrans
Peg Flory	Pittsford	Chris Slesar	VTrans
Richard Baker	Brandon	Mark Blucher	RRPC
Jim O’Gorman	Pittsford	Mark Germanowski	RRPC
Mike Balch	Brandon	Susie Leonard	RRPC
Hank Pelkey	Pittsford	Paul Conner	RRPC
C. Baird Morgan	Pittsford	Kathleen Ryan	Landscape Architect
Dolores C. Furnari	Brandon	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 McKinley	Pittsford