

15 October 2009

Memo to: Transportation Study Committee  
From: Kate Rader, Sonja Schuyler  
Subject: Interview with Gina Campoli, AOT Div. of Planning Outreach and Community Affairs

This was a wide-ranging conversation, covering several topics in a general way, but resulting in valuable leads for further inquiry.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation's (VTrans) vision is a safe, efficient and fully integrated transportation system that promotes Vermont's quality of life and economic well-being.

VTrans' mission is to provide for the movement of people and commerce in a safe, reliable, cost-effective and environmentally responsible manner.

While the vision is for an integrated, multi-modal system, in practice highways get most of the attention. Most of their funding, particularly for construction, comes from the federal government, but operations and maintenance are paid for with state money. The Legislature is often limited to the nuts and bolts of road and bridge maintenance, at the expense of attention to alternative, more energy-saving ways of moving people around.

VTrans funds the transportation planning function of the regional planning commissions. When asked about interregional planning, Campoli said that it deals primarily with roadway planning – projecting future needs and trying to meet them.

There are programs to provide transport to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and the like for qualified Medicaid recipients, the elderly, and military veterans, primarily using volunteer drivers using their own cars. Examples are the NEK Rural Community Transportation that Claudette Sortino reported on earlier, the Green Mountain Transit Agency in central Vermont, and the Chittenden County Transit Agency. Transit authorities were started with money from the Medicaid program and VTrans still receives funds for the authorities through the Human Services budget. VTrans also uses some money from the federal clean air program to fund transit authorities.

Support for more energy-efficient commuter transport is available through Park and Ride lots, and RideShare. *Go Vermont* is a resource for commuters who want to reduce the cost and environmental impact of driving. The program features a free carpool/vanpool matching service, ridesharing tips, and other practical information on getting around by biking, walking, bus, train and ferry. Information can be found at <http://www.connectingcommuters.org/>. One obstacle to expanding the Park and Ride system is often local resistance to construction or expansion of parking lots. Towns apply for Park and Ride lots if they are to be provided by VTrans.

Campoli told us that more specific information about alternatives to single-occupancy autos can be provided by David Pelletier, Public Transit Administrator for AOT. He has been in this position for only a couple of weeks, so we will seek him out later.

She also recommended that we talk with Jim Moulton, of Addison County Transit Resources. As it happens, Kate had an appointment to talk with him and Addison County Regional Planning Commission's transportation planner, Rick Kehne, on October 20.

The Secretary of Transportation has established advisory councils of people outside the agency and two of them deal with public transportation – Rail Council and the Transit Council.