

FHWA PEER EXCHANGE

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Vermont Agency of Transportation

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DOT Context

In recent years, the Highway Division in Vermont has been reorganized so all aspects of managing highway assets are in the same organizational structure. The bureaus are Asset Management, Highway Safety, Project Delivery, Construction and Materials, Maintenance and Operations, and Municipal Assistance. The Highway Division is centralized in Montpelier with the exception of maintenance and construction personnel, who reside in four regions around the state. Given the size of Vermont, even the decentralized employees can be at the central office within 2.5 hours.

The Asset Management Bureau estimates that the Highway Division is currently funded at 66 percent of the total needed to maintain the network's existing condition. The Vermont highway system consists of two general types of highways: historic farm-to-market roads that have been toggled together over the centuries and are not necessarily designed to accommodate today's volumes and loads, and engineered roads, such as the interstate system. Twenty five percent of the state's bridge network is almost 100 years old, having been built after the historic flood of 1927, and an additional 25 percent of the network was built in the interstate era. Both of these bridge populations have deteriorated to the point where they currently require, or will require, repair or replacement in the near future. With approximately only two-thirds of the funding necessary to maintain critical assets in good repair, the funding challenge is real, now and into the future.



About Jonathan

Jonathan Griffin, P.E., graduated from the University of Vermont in 2010 with a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering. He began in Structures as a design engineer and worked in project development for five years. In 2015, Jonathan moved to the Project Initiation and Innovation Team within the Structures program to serve as one of two engineers responsible for project scoping. During his two years in that role, he became increasingly curious about project selection, programming and budgeting, and moved to the Asset Management team, where for the last year he has worked in the Programming and Budgeting Section.

DOT Public Outreach Highlights

- In the late 1990s, based on strong public opinion and legislative direction, VTrans drafted the Vermont State Design Standards, which emphasized significant public input into every stage of project development.
- Engaging the public at the very beginning of a project with a “Community Questionnaire” to try and gather feedback from the community about a variety of topics that may impact the scope of work or the constructability of a project.
- Identifying as many stakeholders or interest groups as possible and invite them to the Public Informational Meeting.
- Incorporating feedback from the Public Informational Meeting into the recommended alternative.

Biggest Public Engagement Challenges

Depending on the scope of the project, the scale, the location and the impact to the community, it can be a real challenge to determine the level of Public Engagement required. It is also difficult to determine the magnitude of the project impacts. An example would be a bridge closure. In the rural parts of the state the detour may be up to 60 miles long and pass through several other communities. Determining who the stakeholders are and what the appropriate level of public engagement is can be a challenge.

Contact

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