

**From:** Sue Minter [sue@sueminter.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 19, 2010 11:32 PM  
**To:** Bill Lofy; MacLean, Alex  
**CC:** Liz Bankowski; Brian Searles; Minter, Sue  
**Subject:** Inaugural ideas for transportation  
**Attachments:** Transportation Transition memo.doc; ATT00002..htm

Hi Bill et al

I am sure you have already begun the inaugural address, but wanted to throw out a few ideas that Brian & I have discussed which might be worth considering including about transportation.

**1) Expand the Vermonter Rail line to Montreal**

Service to Montreal was suspended in the mid- 1990's; the train now ends in St. Albans. Re-establishing the link to Montreal is critical to connecting with Quebec tourism and key to increasing ridership and thereby reducing the state subsidy to Amtrak. We have been told by several staff people that this work, which has been underway for the last 2 years, is close to fruition, and would be likely to be accomplished in the next year. It is part of a concerted federal push to re-establish the northern New England high speed rail network.

**2) Re-establish the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program within VTrans.**

For the past 3-4 years, Vtrans stopped dedicating T-funds specifically toward a bicycle and pedestrian program. During that time some (few) projects toward that purpose were initiated through the transportation enhancements and Safe Routes to School programs. However, it would be appropriate (and hugely appreciated) if we would re-establish the bicycle and pedestrian program with funding allocated specifically for that purpose. (Without knowing budget figures I can not suggest how much to allocate at this point, but hope to have a clearer sense of that soon.)

**3) Partner with Green Mountain Power to develop Electric Vehicle charging stations**

GMP is poised to announce its commitment to developing charging stations in key areas along the interstate. They are looking to the state to partner. I have meetings with GMP this week to further assess how Vtrans ,might assist.

**4) Bridges to the Future: Ensuring Safety and Longevity of Our State Assets**

An unacceptable number of Vermont's bridges are deemed structurally deficient by federal standards. Emergency closures of bridges is becoming far too common, with communities and local businesses ravaged by the closures. We need to commit to improving performance and reducing this number & percentage of structurally deficient bridges and emergency closures. The legislature passed a Transportation Infrastructure Bond fund which should be utilized to improve performance in our state and interstate bridge program.

5) Please see attached ideas (written previously) on the larger transportation/ transformation agenda...

**6) Thoughts on Language: "Prosperity".**

I have thought a lot about how Douglas used -- very effectively -- the word "affordability". The perceived "affordability" problem infected our political culture and has become central to political discourse. By contrast, the governor-elect brings a positive image of our state and our future which is critically important. He can transform the "affordability" problem into something different. Indeed he/we must. I believe the word/concept of *prosperity* can become an antidote to the (cranky) "affordability" notion/language. Prosperity is not simply about cost and money. It includes a much larger sense of "success" beyond just money and including quality of life and community, (definition: a successful, flourishing or thriving condition, esp. in financial respects; good fortune). I believe it is time to help Vermonters recognize their prosperity.

Thanks for your consideration of my thoughts. If you want us to follow up on further details for any of the ideas above, let us know.

Best,  
Sue

**TO:** Shumlin Transition Team  
**FROM:** Sue Minter  
**DATE:** December, 2010

The Vermont Agency of Transportation needs visionary leadership to take it into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and leverage forward-thinking investment into Vermont. In crisis—our failing infrastructure, faltering economy, and climate change—create opportunities for Vermont in the transportation world. As with other areas of state government, Vermont can be a model for next-generation economic development and environmental stewardship in this era of tight budget constraints. We can keep Vermont great, one bridge, one bus, one business, and one thriving downtown at a time.

### **Transportation and Community Development**

#### **Vision:**

- *Transforming government for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:* We need to transform the Vtrans from a public works department that has failed to maintain critical infrastructure, into an effective and efficient engine that fuels economic development into planned growth areas through strategic infrastructure investments.
- *Mobility, Sustainability & Livability:* As oil becomes more scarce and price rises, compact development will become more economical and desirable. Vermont needs to increase options for telecommuting (including broadband access), build housing close to jobs, and link communities with new models for rural public transit. The Obama Administration has initiated the Sustainable Communities program to bring funding streams together between HUD, EPA & Transportation. While the Douglas administration has largely ignored this opportunity, Vermont is poised to benefit from this new federal agenda due to policies already in place. State agencies need to collaborate, integrate priorities, and access these new federal funds to build upon the ideas of this program.
- *Reducing carbon footprint:* The transportation sector is responsible for 46% of Vermont's carbon emissions. Vermont should become a leader in the regional transportation climate initiative (REGGI) to establish emission reduction targets and strategies. This will involve new technologies (which could come from Vermont), alternative (bio) fuels, travel reduction strategies, investments in transit and ride sharing, and smart growth strategies to reduce auto-dependency and increase community vitality.
- *Bridges to the Future:* 30% of Vermont's bridges are either structurally deficient, functionally obsolete, or both. Vermont needs an expedited bridge inspection, rehabilitation & preventive maintenance program that will both improve deficiency ratings and save money. The legislature passed the TIB fund, but this investment has not been given a specific focus. It should be directed toward bridges, and our progress/performance should be measured to build the public's confidence in government's ability to perform this basic responsibility

