

## **WORK PLAN AND BUDGET**

**July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016**

This work plan covers the period July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. The budget reflects an anticipated level funding by FHWA (\$165,000) and VTrans (\$235,000) for the core program totaling \$400,000. This plan ensures the LTAP meets or exceeds expectations set forth and mandated by FHWA, VTrans and the Vermont Legislature. This work plan is also provided as an overview of intended objectives of the Vermont Local Roads program coupled with ACT 167 of the 2014 legislative session, which includes the following language:

- 1. Offer the same or substantially similar courses as were offered by the Vermont Local Roads Program, as long as demand from municipalities justifies continuing such course offerings;*
- 2. Offer courses in multiple locations throughout the state, to a similar or greater extent than the Vermont Local Roads Program offered courses through the State;*
- 3. Continue providing municipalities the support functions that the Vermont Local Roads Program provided, including facilitating list serves, issuing information newsletters, providing technical assistance consultation, maintain a website, and supporting cooperation and communication among municipal transportation official and employees.*

# Vermont Local Roads FY 16 Work Plan and Budget

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<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
HISTORY AND BACKGROUND.....	3
MISSION AND VISION.....	3
PROGRAM UPDATE (Legislative Language, 2014).....	3
WORKSHOPS.....	5
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.....	6
COMMUNICATIONS.....	6
PARTNERSHIPS.....	9
REPORTS.....	10
ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE.....	10
STAFF.....	11
CONCLUSION.....	11

## **HISTORY AND BACKGROUND**

### LTAP – Federal History

In December, 1982, Congress appropriated \$5 million for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to provide technical assistance to rural agencies with transportation responsibilities under the newly created Rural Assistance Program (RTAP). In 1992, this program became known as the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP).

The objectives of the LTAP program were to (1) establish a system or improve an existing system for transferring technology to local transportation agencies; (2) improve communication about transportation technology among FHWA, state highway agencies, local agencies, and universities; (3) encourage local implementation of effective procedures and technology; and (4) synthesize experiences of the centers to serve as models which could be used in other states.

### LTAP – Vermont Local Roads Program History

In 1982, the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VAOT) became one of the ten demonstration centers in the United States. The UVM Engineering Department could not guarantee they could meet the 2-week application deadline. Edward L. Henry, President of Saint Michael's College, approved proceeding with the application and lent a staff person to help. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission also provided a staff person. Hank Lambert assisted and was subsequently hired as Director. Vermont Local Roads opened its doors on March 10, 1983 contracting between VTrans and Saint Michael's.

In 2014, language was included and subsequently passed in the Transportation Bill (Act 167) that relocated the VT Local Roads Program from Saint Michael's College to the VTrans Training Center (VTTC).

## **MISSION AND VISION**

Mission: To foster a safe, efficient, and environmentally sound surface transportation system by improving skills and increasing knowledge of the transportation workforce and decision makers.

Vision: Improve the quality and safety of the surface transportation system through collaborative partnerships, training and information exchange.

## **PROGRAM UPDATE (Legislative Language, 2014)**

The Vermont Local Roads Program (Vermont LTAP) transitioned from St. Michael's College on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 to the VTrans Training Center (VTTC). This transition, as mandated by Act 167, has allowed for immediate access by municipal transportation staff and officials to currently offered VTTC classes and workshops. This combined effort will allow expanded workshop offerings and improved technical assistance.

# Vermont Local Roads FY 16 Work Plan and Budget

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The Vermont Local Roads program is satisfying the requirements of Act 167 (shown in bold, below) as follows:

**1) Offer the same or substantially similar courses as were offered by the Vermont Local Roads Program, as long as demand from municipalities justifies continuing such course offerings;**

Workshop offerings provided during 2014 were similar in nature to courses that have been offered by Vermont Local Roads in previous years. These included:

- Basics of a Good Road
- Chain Saw Operations and Safety
- Complete Streets
- Pavement Maintenance
- Roads and Rivers
- Winter Maintenance
- Grader Operator
- Road Safety 365
- Stepping up to Supervisor

In addition to the traditional workshop offerings, Vermont Local Roads provided additional trainings that more than 140 participants attended since the transition in September.

Workshops included:

- Construction Safety Awareness
- Ethics
- Interviewing and Hiring for success
- Traffic Incident Management
- Writing the Performance Review
- Confined Spaces
- Haz Comm
- Working over Water
- TMOST (Tractor/Mower Operational Safety Training)
- Supervisory Training

**2) Offer courses in multiple locations throughout the state, to a similar or greater extent than the Vermont Local Roads Program offered courses through the State;**

Workshop courses were offered regionally as offered in previous years. Locations included:

- Bennington
- St. Albans
- Rutland
- Westmore
- St. Johnsbury
- Mendon
- Newport
- Dummerston

**3) Continue providing municipalities the support functions that the Vermont Local Roads Program provided, include facilitation list serves, issuing information newsletters, providing technical assistance consultation, maintain a website, and supporting cooperation and communication among municipal transportation official and employees.**

- A listserv was used by Vermont Local Roads without interruption for the entire 2014 calendar year. A new listserv was purchased in December, 2014 to incorporate trending technologies which include HTML text coding, web linking abilities, increased bandwidth for improved volumes as well as the ability to add third-party attachments that had not been offered previously.

# Vermont Local Roads FY 16 Work Plan and Budget

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- A new Vermont Local Roads website was created on August 15, 2014 to replace the existing website hosted by St. Michael's College. Based upon feedback that will be gathered from Stakeholders, additional enhancements to this website are planned for the Spring of 2015.
- A total of 3 Newsletters were published in 2014 and an increase in publication is expected for 2015 to increase the total publications offered previously from bi-annually to quarterly.
- As noted, Service Requests (technical assists) increased during the period of May, 2014 to December, 2014 due to the efforts of 4 part-time temporary Circuit Riders who visited 96 towns at the time of this report, with more visits scheduled. From January 1, 2014 to May 30, 2014 there were a total of 2 recorded Service Requests. From June 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014 there were a total of 121 service requests handled.
- Outreach to municipalities included attending road foreman meetings, local transportation advisory committee (TAC) meetings, transportation related forums and conferences as well as partnership fair days such as VLCT town fair day.
- Much of our outreach is performed through our training workshops. During workshops municipal staff will often have requests for possible trainings. Below is a short list of some of the workshop requests received. These workshop requests have been included in our workshop planning schedule for 2015-2016 and they include:
  - ✓ Traffic signal workshop
  - ✓ Small electrical training
  - ✓ Culvert installation
  - ✓ Welding training
  - ✓ Policy development (roadside maintenance, winter maintenance practices, etc.)
  - ✓ Capital planning and budget development
  - ✓ Infrastructure inventory and management
  - ✓ Basics of a Good Gravel Road (Best Management Practices)
  - ✓ Fundamentals of Pothole Repair

## WORKSHOPS

Workshops will continue to be the foundational means of technology transfer. They will continue to be offered as scheduled and planned through 2015. The VTrans Training Center (VTTC) will also augment workshops with additional appropriate courses. The total number of workshops offered from the previous program will increase from an average of 45-55 annually to upwards of 120 annually.

2016 planned workshops include but not limited to:

- Grader Operator Training
- Road Safety 365
- Construction Math
- Winter Maintenance
- Basics of a Good Road
- Lines/Levels and Layouts
- Culvert Installation
- Ethics
- Trenching and Shoring
- Interviewing & Hiring for Success
- Construction Safety Awareness 55/lite
- Roads and Rivers
- Materials Handling and Rigging
- Forklift

# Vermont Local Roads FY 16 Work Plan and Budget

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- Fire Prevention
- Pavement Roller Training
- Roll-over Protection Structures
- Powered Platform and Manlift
- Hazcomm GHS
- Spill Response

The Roads Scholar Program will continue with appropriate recognition given to Scholars completing various levels.

Workshop evaluations and knowledge transfer surveys will be used to ensure quality training has been provided and learning has occurred. Pre/post quizzes will also be used when appropriate.

Attention will be given to the FHWA Focus Areas recognizing the special emphasis that FHWA has placed on highway safety.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

In 2015, circuit riders and the branch manager will continue to visit municipalities as well as attend regional road foreman meetings. Along with the branch manager, circuit riders will assume responsibilities such as workshop development, curriculum development, technical assistance at town locations (outreach), occasional instructing, provide information for newsletters and post workshop activities.

In conjunction with VTrans District Technicians, technical assistance will be provided to the municipalities to best utilize existing and qualified resources to further assist municipalities. This relationship will be strengthened by including them in communications about technical assistance requests received directly by VT Local Roads.

Communication with the Better Back Roads Program will become a regular occurrence. Technical assistance is provided by both the Better Back Roads Program and VT Local Roads. More coordination will avoid duplication of efforts, enhance both groups' technical skills and ultimately provide more robust service to municipalities. Better Back Roads will contribute an article in each issue of the newsletter. VT Local Roads will disseminate Better Back Roads grant information, best management practices and conduct trainings on subjects such as "How to Complete Grant Applications."

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### Newsletter

The VT Local Roads Newsletter will continue to be produced. Each issue will include at least one article on each of the four focus areas which include:

- Safety
- Workforce Development
- Infrastructure Management
- Organizational Excellence

# Vermont Local Roads FY 16 Work Plan and Budget

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Each issue will also include news from strategic partners. Continued inclusion of Roads Scholars who have completed scholar levels will also emphasize our commitment to the four focus areas. The newsletter will encourage local municipal staff participation in the creation of articles that address issues at the municipal level.

## Workshop and Promotional Flyers

Workshop flyers provide the base for advertising and promoting larger-scale training workshops for the program. Flyers are hard mailed and emailed to towns throughout the year. In 2015, flyers will be batched together in groups of 2-4 upcoming training topics at a time to further improve communications. The current print mailing list is approximately 1,200 individuals and the email mailing list currently contains 83 addresses. Additionally, flyers are posted as PDFs on the program website. Efforts will be made to further understand the communication needs of the municipalities. Communication approaches will be enhanced as further feedback is received.

## “Tailgate Talks”

“Tailgate Talks” are training safety talks which are posted monthly on the website and are intended to provide brief presentations of information, exercises and opportunities to review important workplace policies and procedures with staff members.

## Calendar

Annually, this valuable calendar will be created and distributed to all Road Foremen in the state as well as other stakeholders. Information on one or more of the four focus areas will be featured.

## Listserv

Our goal is to have all municipalities subscribe to the Listserv. The Listserv is the most efficient way to quickly inform municipalities of training opportunities, highlight municipal equipment for sale as well as state surplus equipment, and advertise municipal employment opportunities. It serves as a discussion forum for subscribers to collaborate with each other. Recent topics included:

- FHWA sign compliance dates
- Private road plowing
- Deep ditch safety
- Overseas equipment sales posting
- Vehicle Leasing options
- Traffic Incident training
- Roadside mowing safety
- VT gas tax information

## E-Newsletter “The Rumbling Strip”

The E-Newsletter will continue to be distributed through our Listserv and shall be published on a monthly basis. The Rumbling Strip provides information to municipalities on an as-needed basis as well as in the event pertinent information needs to be conveyed immediately.

# Vermont Local Roads FY 16 Work Plan and Budget

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## Website

The website will continue to be our primary platform for information sharing and workshop schedule postings. It provides a general overview of program services, contact information, workshop schedule and online registration, municipal classifieds ads, and forms to request services and information.

## Twitter

This was launched in 2012 to explore the use of social media to communicate and share information. @VTLocalRoads currently has 202 followers. The majority of followers are the public. Our e-newsletter, 'The Rumbling Strip' is also shared using a twitter link to the general public, and that tweet is posted on our feed on our website homepage.

## Facebook

Facebook is a popular social media platform for Vermont Local Roads. The Facebook page is configured as an organizational page, which is similar to a personal account. We have linked our twitter account to Facebook, so any tweets or retweets are automatically posted onto the Facebook page. This media is an effective way to share information on a daily/weekly basis. We have increased our Facebook following by 100% in 2014.

## YouTube

The program's YouTube Channel contains some videos. YouTube is an easy way to create and share quick training tips visually. With the advent of mobile technology, while someone is on the road they can record and share a "teachable moment." For example, the wrong signage in place, bad drainage, and also BMPs that are working well. It's accessible and easy to share these videos across online web and social media platforms. In 2015, we will continue to explore the further use of this channel.

## LinkedIn

Vermont Local Roads recently launched a LinkedIn Page for the professional social network. The idea was to create a group page for Vermont public works officials to connect.

## Annual Directory of Municipal Officials

An online Directory of Municipal Officials will be updated in March, 2015 with monthly updates.



# Vermont Local Roads FY 16 Work Plan and Budget

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## **PARTNERSHIPS**

Establishing and maintaining partnerships are high priorities of VLR, FHWA, and NLTAPA. Below is a list of key partners:

### VT Safety Highway Alliance

- VT Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). VLR sits on the Infrastructure Committee and will continue to provide support.
- State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC). VLR Manager will continue to assist the FHWA Division as requested and provide the administrative support for the FHWA sponsored Every Day Counts EDC webinars.
- The Vermont State Transportation Innovation Council (VT STIC) has recently been organized. VLR has been identified as a member. VLR's role as stated and echoed by RPCs at the initial meeting is to communicate best practices to municipalities.

### Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs)

- VLR staff will collaborate with the RPC Transportation Planners with outreach assistance for the Regional Safety Forums; organize road foremen meetings, occasionally providing programs, and frequently attend a variety of foremen meetings. Attend TPI (Transportation Planning Initiative) monthly meetings, when agenda is relevant or when RPCs or VLR have topics to discuss. VLR Manager will maintain and further strengthen relationships with RPCs.

### Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT)

- VLR will exhibit at the Municipal Town Fair and attend the Annual Meeting.
- VLR Manager will maintain and further strengthen their relationship with this key stakeholder. The Manager should also keep abreast of VLCT's legislative agenda.
- In addition, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) in Sec. 318 have been granted the authority to solicit input from the municipalities regarding municipal training needs and to make recommendations "on how to improve the Agency's operation of the LTAP..." Sec. (3)(c) further states that "upon request, the Agency shall provide the Vermont League of Cities and Towns administrative support in soliciting and collecting municipal input and recommendation." VLR will continue to foster this critical relationship.

### Better Back Roads Program (BBR)

In 2015, the relationship between VLR and the Better Back Roads Program will continue to grow in the follow areas:

- VLR to participate in the grant selection committee
- Increased communication between BBR and VLR tech requests
- VLR to provide mailing labels as requested to BBB
- Publish news and grant awards in VLR newsletter
- Co-publish training and best practice materials

# Vermont Local Roads FY 16 Work Plan and Budget

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## VT Municipal Highway Association (VMHA)

- VLR will participate in Annual Field Day and Expo
- VLR will provide administrative assistance for Field Day
- VLR will provide a Grand Prize at the Field Day

Other partners include, but are not limited to:

- UVM Extension Service
- UVM Transportation Research Center (UVM UTC)
- Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
- Vermont Nature Conservancy
- Vermont Emergency Management
- Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- Vermont Composting Association
- Friends of the Winooski River
- American Public Works Association (APWA)
- National Association of County Engineers (NACE)
- American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

## National Local Transportation Assistance Program Association (NLTAPA)

The VLR Manager or designee will attend the Annual Meeting of NLTAPA in the summer of 2016, the mid-year Association Meeting in Washington, DC, and the Region 1 Meeting in Spring 2016, assuming work load and budget allow. VLR staff will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate, learn and/or share best practices with NLTAPA.

## Road Foreman Groups

VLR Manager and circuit riders will continue to attend regional road foreman meetings to solicit needs, respond to technical issues and offer programs such as bridge weight limit signage and others.

## **REPORTS**

### Program Assessment Report (PAR) and Center Assessment Report (CAR)

The reports will be written by the VT Local Roads Program Manager before January 15, 2016.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

### Evaluations

Leverage stakeholder feedback to further identify improvements that can be made to VLR Program. Through continuous process improvement, refine the procedures and policies within the VTrans Training center to further enhance the offerings of the VLR Program.

Assess the staffing structure of Vermont Local Roads to ensure that it is the most efficient and productive use of personnel.

# Vermont Local Roads FY 16 Work Plan and Budget

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## STAFF

Program Manager, 100%  
Program Coordinator, 100%  
Circuit Rider, 100%

## CONCLUSION

Vermont Local Roads continues to enhance the services to its clients by offering similar workshops in a variety of regional locations as well as meeting the needs of municipalities as depicted by our many town meetings, garage visits and stakeholder input.

We will continue to strive for excellence as the program moves into a new and exciting direction by offering more workshops per year than offered in previous years. A wider variety of topics will be offered. With the onboarding of permanent staff, in conjunction with a well-qualified support staff, the program will no doubt be able to meet the growing needs of our customers into the future.

## BUDGET: (7/1/2015 – 6/30/16)

<b>Personnel</b>		
Salaries & benefits	\$	248,897
<b>Operating</b>		
Supplies	\$	3,000
Repair and Maint. Costs		500
Postage		3,500
Telephone		1,500
Travel		12,500
Membership		700
Printing		9,000
Workshops/Training		78,000
Subscriptions/Applications		200
Small equipment		1,500
Professional consultant		15,000
Scholar Program		1,200
Partners		1,000
Vehicle lease (2)		23,112
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$	<b>399,606</b>