

Central NH Regional Planning Commission

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Transportation Advisory Committee

May 27, 2022

Minutes

9:00 A.M.

Attendees	
Harry Wright, Town of Bradford	Stan Brehm, Town of Chichester
Richard Moore, Town of Chichester	Karen Hill, City of Concord
Sam Durfee, City of Concord	Betsy Bosiak, Town of Epsom
Anna Wells, Town of Hopkinton	Carolyn Cronin, Town of Pembroke
Emilio Cancio-Bello, Town of Sutton	Tim Blagden, Town of Warner
Cindy Yanski, Mid State Mobility Manager, CAPBMCI	Lucy St. John, NHDOT
Bill Watson, NHDOT	Leigh Levine, FHWA

Commission Staff: Craig Tufts, Matt Baronas, Mike Tardiff, Stephanie Alexander, Steve Henninger

Introductions

The meeting began at 9:02 AM, called to order by Chair, Betsy Bosiak. All TAC members and guests present, both in person and virtually, introduced themselves.

Review and Approve Minutes of the March 4th, 2022, TAC Meeting

Upon a motion by Tim Blagden and a second from Karen Hill, the March 4th Minutes were approved unanimously.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Overview of Highway Provisions

Leigh Levine thanked the group for having him and introduced himself as working for the Federal Highway Administration New Hampshire Division Office. Leigh shared that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is extensive so his presentation would cover only what is new.

Leigh introduced the BIL as a once-in-a-generation investment in infrastructure that goes beyond transportation, including promoting the U.S. economy to become more sustainable, resilient, and equitable. The BIL encapsulates around \$550 billion in investments, New Hampshire received around \$1.4 billion over five years in formula funds for highways and bridges alone.

Leigh noted some high points of the BIL highway provisions including that it funds highway programs for five years (FY 22-26), there was \$350.8 billion for highway programs, there is a focus on safety, bridges, climate change, resilience and project delivery, there are more opportunities for local governments and non-traditional entities, some funds were transferred into the HTF Highway Account to keep it solvent, and that more than twelve new highway programs were created. Leigh explained that the new programs are both formula funds which is funding that is dispersed based on a set of established characteristics and are administered by state DOT's and discretionary funds which are competitive grants for which communities are eligible to apply for directly.

Next, Leigh provided an overview of funding program examples specifically emphasizing how they are available to a range of recipients including not just State agencies but also Local, MPO, Tribe, Territory, FLMA, and special purpose districts.

The eight apportioned contract authority (CA) programs were described including two new programs. Leigh provided a short overview of each program including the amount of funding received. National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) received \$148 billion in funding that directed to the National Highway System. Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) received \$64.8 billion for broad federal aid category that can even support planning activities \$7.2 billion of which goes to transportation alternatives. Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) received \$15.6 billion for safety improvements with \$1.2 billion going to the Railway-Highway Crossing Program. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program received \$13.2 billion for projects that reduce congestion with the goal of improving air quality. MPO's received \$2.3 billion for planning projects (PL). \$7.2 billion in funding was assigned to freight formula funds (NHFP). A new program the Carbon Reduction received \$6.4 billion in funding. The last program, which is also new, the PROTECT (formula) program focused on resiliency received \$7.3 billion in funding.

Leigh highlighted changes made to the Transportation Alternatives (TA) including its increases in funding, updates in eligible projects and entities, as well as the federal share. There was an increase in funding setting the TA funding as 10% of the total STBG funds. Safe routes to school projects were reaffirmed as eligible for funding and activities related to vulnerable road user safety assessments also became eligible. MPOs representing a population of greater than 200,000 are now eligible. Leigh also explained that a federal share up to 100% is provided, HSIP funds are allowed to be used toward the non-federal share, and non-federal share requirements can be met on an aggregate basis instead of by project.

Changes to the CMAQ program were also described by Leigh. Additional eligibilities were added including shared micromobility (bikeshare, scooters, etc.), purchase of diesel replacements, purchase of larger zero emission vehicles and charging equipment, and rehabilitation of a lock and dam or marine highway corridor, connector, or crossing (under certain criteria). Leigh also shared that CMAQ funds may be used for rail or transit operating assistance without a time limitation.

Leigh then focused on safety including new safety programs and provisions. The new Safe Streets and Roads for All program is a discretionary funding program with the purpose of preventing transportation-related death and serious injury, with a "Zero Deaths" initiative. MPOs, political subdivisions, and tribal governments are all eligible for these planning grants and reconstruction activities such as safety action plans and project

development. An additional new safety program is the Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program. This discretionary funding project has the purpose of supporting projects that seek to reduce the number of collisions between wildlife and vehicles which will in turn improve habitat connectivity. Leigh then defined two safety related provisions one designed to increase safe and accessible transportation options through planning activities related to complete streets or multimodal travel and another that is a manual on uniform traffic control devices (MUTCD).

Richard Moore asked if there was a program designed to support park and rides and bus activities. Leigh responded that while there is not a single program devoted to these activities many of the programs could support these projects. Craig Tufts pointed out the important challenge of matching projects to the right funding program.

Leigh outlined important programs and provisions related to climate and resilience. The new Carbon Reduction Formula Program provides funding to states for projects that reduce transportation emissions or the development of the carbon reduction strategies themselves. Additionally, the new PROTECT Formula Program distributes funding to states for planning, resilience improvements, community resilience and evacuation routes, and at-risk coastal infrastructure. The PROTECT program also has a discretionary grant component with a similar purpose but with a broader list of eligible entities, including local government. Another new discretionary funding opportunity is in the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure program. This program is eligible to a wide range of entities for the deployment of electric vehicle charging and hydrogen, propane, natural gas fueling infrastructure or acquisition and installation of traffic control devices along the designated alternative fuel corridors or in communities. The National Electric Vehicle Formula Program has formula and discretionary funding sources eligible for states. This program is set to help strategically deploy EV charging and establish a network for data collection, access, and reliability. A set of other climate and resilience provisions were also established in relation to standards and reporting for EV charging, alternative fuel infrastructure, and resilience reporting.

An update on new bridge programs was also provided. Leigh began with the new Bridge formula Program which included \$27.5 billion distributed to states, each of which received at least \$45 million for bridge work on public roads. The discretionary Bridge Investment Program is eligible for many entities including local government for the improvement of bridges and culverts and includes \$12.5 billion in total available funding.

Leigh then highlighted a new focus area of funding programs, equity. The first program is a pilot discretionary program, Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program. The goal of the grant is to restore community connectivity through removal, retrofitting, or mitigating highways or other transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity, including to mobility, access, and economic development. Planning grants for many eligible entities are available. The second program, Rural Surface Transportation Grants was another discretionary program. These grants are eligible for a list of entities including local government and regional transportation planning organizations (RTPO) and fund improvements and expansion to surface transportation infrastructure in rural areas.

Another new program, the Local and Regional Project Assistance Program was also covered. This discretionary program provides funding for significant local or regional impact that improve transportation infrastructure for

multiple eligible entities. Also, the new Transportation Access Pilot Program was presented. The pilot funds the development or acquisition of open source accessibility data sets with measures of the level of access to multiple transportation modes in a region as well as the use of that data to help entities improve their transportation planning. The funding requires DOT to fund the pilot program from amounts available for administrative expenses.

Mike Tardiff shared that a focus of the TAC and CNHRPC will be to gain as much information as possible and take a coordinated approach at applying for the appropriate funding opportunities. Bill Watson noted that NHDOT is working internally and with all RPCs to reach the goal of coordinating efforts with the multitude of funding opportunities. Bill also expressed the hope that additional funding be provided to projects that already have achieved status either in a long range plan or public support and planning. Steve Henninger pointed out the opportunity rural towns now have through these newly established programs, citing Bradford's sidewalk project as a great example of the type of project that can hopefully be funded now.

NHDOT FY 2023-2032 Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TYP) Update

Lucy St. John shared that the 2023-2032 TYP update has been sent out for governor signature and that the Ten Year process for the next year has also just started. Lucy also described the importance of the project solicitation process and collaboration between RPCs and NHDOT.

Commute Smart NH (CSNH) Update

Matt Baronas provided an update on the CommuteSmart NH spring commuter challenge which would end in a few days on May 31st. Matt presented a breakdown of the challenge statistics including what organizations totaled the most trips, the total numbers of participants, the total car trips reduced, and much more. There was a high level of participation in the challenge leading to over 3,000 car trips reduced in the month of May.

GTFS and GTFS-Flex Transit Trip Planning Capabilities

Craig Tufts provided a demonstration of what accurate GTFS data can do within mapping software such as google maps and how the CommuteSmart NH trip planner powered by AgileMile incorporates the same data and provides even more information including demand response transit providers. Craig also explained that incorporating GTFS-Flex data will provide users with even more information about demand response transit within the CSNH trip planner. Cindy Yanski shared her success in using the CSNH trip planner as a tool for accessing all the state's transit related information when assisting community members in search of rides.

Regional Trails Overview

Craig noted that there are several regional trails initiatives in the region including progress in bringing the Northern Rail Trail into downtown Concord, multiple projects on the Concord Lake Sunapee Rail Trail, the Town of Allenstown recently purchasing a rail bed near Suncook Village to implement a trail, the Town of Pembroke has acquiring more right of way for eventually establishing a rail trail, several trail projects in the Suncook Valley region, and more. The work on regional trails would also be covered in more depth at CNHRPC's annual full commission meeting on June 9th.

Any Other Business

As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:42am upon a motion from Tim Blagden and Second from Sam Durfee.