

Central NH Regional Planning Commission

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Transportation Advisory Committee

September 9, 2022

Minutes

9:00 A.M.

Attendees	
Harry Wright, Town of Bradford	Carolyn Cronin, Town of Pembroke
Richard Moore, Town of Chichester	Tim Blagden, Town of Warner
Karen Hill, City of Concord	Russell Tatro, Town of Webster
Betsy Bosiak, Town of Epsom	Bill Watson, NHDOT
David White, Town of Hopkinton	Kim Rummo, NHDOT

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

Introductions

The meeting began at 9:01 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 May 27th, 2022, TAC Meeting

Upon a motion by Tim Blagden and a second from Harry Wright, the May 27th Minutes were approved unanimously.

Update on Ten Year Plan Project Solicitations

Bill Watson shared that each of Regional Planning Commissions are going through a similar process noting that the process has begun much sooner than previous rounds to help with project development. Bill noted that a driving question in the process is whether the additional funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) will push more new projects along. In many cases there have been cost increases for projects that could outpace the additional funding available through the BIL.

Craig presented an update on the 2025-2034 Ten Year Plan (TYP) CNHRPC Project Proposals to provide context for both the criteria ratings and the creation of the scoring subcommittee. In the last round the top ranked projects were Dunbarton Pages Corner, Allentown Main Street and both made it into the TYP. Chichester 28 and Kelly Corner scored lower and was not included in the TYP, but later received funding from the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP).

CNHRPC sent a letter to each town to solicit new projects for rating. Five TYP proposals were received including new projects in Concord, Hopkinton, Pembroke, and Salisbury, as well as a project in Hillsborough previously ranked as the third highest priority in the CNHRPC FY 2023-2032 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

In Concord a project at McKee Square (NH 13) was proposed. The intersection of NH 13 Clinton Street with South Street and Broadway experiences a lot of traffic, bicycle, and pedestrian activity. Most traffic comes from I-89 onto Clinton Street and turns left on South Street towards downtown. Broadway also experiences commuter traffic resulting in queuing. Intersecting South Street and Broadway is West Street, a one-way street with a history of a high crash rate. There also are Elementary and Middle Schools south of McKee Square on South Street to consider. There are drafted designs of a roundabout to replace the existing signalized intersection and additional improvements with the intersections of West Street south of McKee Square. Craig shared that there is a plan in place to meet with Concord's on call engineers to update the designs. Karen Hill added that the city is updating the study to consider newer more innovative intersection options. The committee discussed the complications and importance of considering pedestrian crossing in this area.

Ranked third highest in the previous round, intersection improvements in Hillsborough at NH Route 9 and NH Route 31 were proposed again. NH 9 is the primary route from Concord towards Keene and experiences high levels of traffic and speed making turning onto NH 31 difficult. A concept for a roundabout at this location was previously designed and will be updated. Mike Tardiff added that Hillsborough is working with CNHRPC on potential zoning changes and considering their gateway areas that could potentially bring development to the vicinity of this intersection. Craig added that in the future the town may be considering Henniker Street as a project location.

Hopkinton proposed the intersection of NH 103 and 127 at Contoocook Village Fountain Square as a location for an improvement project. This is the main intersection in town with a park, retail locations, restaurants, gas stations, museum, and town services all in the vicinity. Additionally, the Maple Street School, Hopkinton Middle Highschool, and Town Library are close to the intersection. There are multiple concerns at this location related to pedestrians and crossing, access management, drainage, high speed slip ramps, sight lines, and more. The committee discussed the extent of the project, especially whether the Contoocook River Bridge and Pine Street intersection should be included. Craig explained that the current extent only included the Fountain Square intersection but noted that the proposed plan will require careful planning to achieve the wanted effect. David White pointed out that Pine Street leads to Hopkinton's industrial area resulting in many trucks travelling through the focus area. David also pointed out the high number of near misses, especially with pedestrians, at the intersection. Parking on both Main Street and Maple Street can cause tight areas and interrupted sight lines. Additional consideration should include the annual Hopkinton State Fair which draws significantly more traffic for a week every year. Craig shared that CNHRPC would perform bicycle and pedestrian counts at the intersection to help inform the project plan.

Mike Tardiff noted that the Town of Hopkinton and CNHRPC would be performing a demonstration project in west Hopkinton at the intersection of US 202 NH 9 and NH 103 Hopkinton Road. The demonstration will remove the slip lane and create a T-intersection with crosswalks.

In Pembroke, federal aid eligible roadway Glass Street was proposed as a location for improvement. Glass Street is a high-density mixed use and residential area located along the Suncook River which borders between Pembroke and Allenstown. The area requires high consideration of bicycle and pedestrian use as well as culverts, catch basins, and drainage systems. Carolyn Cronin added that the drainage system is a priority for the town as an MS4 community and Glass Street is located within the MS4 area. Craig noted that there is development occurring in the area which will result in higher traffic, including the China Mill redevelopment project.

Salisbury proposed the intersection of US 4 Old Turnpike Road and Whittemore Road. The location is a Y-shaped intersection with a hill up Whittemore Road, causing a challenging turn and limited sight lines. The type of intersection and topography is particularly dangerous during winter. An important consideration at this location is the Salisbury elementary school located near to the intersection just North on Whittemore road.

Craig then outlined the next steps in the process including the scoring criteria weights and the creation of a subcommittee for project scoring during the TAC meeting. Then CNHRPC and its On-Call Engineer will review each proposed location to develop a plan. These plans will then be scored and ranked by the subcommittee which will lastly be reviewed by the CNHRPC TAC at the next meeting in late October to establish a final priority ranking. Craig also provided an outline of NHDOT's 2025-2034 TYP schedule which includes project priority submittal by November 10, discussions between the RPCs and NHDOT throughout the winter about the results of NHDOT's project reviews, which will lead to the TAC finalizing its formal submittal for the TYP in March of 2023. Then the process will restart again in the summer of 2023.

Ten Year Plan Project Review Criteria and Weights

Craig shared that the nine RPCs settled on a shared set of criteria with categories and subcategories that all projects would be scored on. The eight categories include mobility, network significance, safety, state of repair, support, economic development, equity, environmental justice, and accessibility, and natural hazard resiliency. Craig noted that two years ago during the previous TYP round the CNHRPC TAC developed weightings for each category. There was a lot of work that went into the decision at that time. The TAC reviewed the weightings of each subcategory to establish a combined weight for the eight categories that will be used in scoring each project. The categories were each weighted somewhat evenly with the highest being mobility at 14.8%, safety at 14.2%, and equity, environmental justice, and accessibility at 14.2%.

David highlighted the economic development category weighted at 13.4% as a category that could be emphasized more but the group could not find other categories from which it was willing to reallocate weights. Tim Blagden asked if proper weight was being given to electrical vehicle charging as well as bicycling and walking projects. Mike shared that CNHRPC is committed to emphasizing both active transportation and electrical vehicles with a variety of project funding sources including discretionary funding, especially if it cannot be fit directly into a single category of scoring. Craig shared that when scoring is done, each category should be considered from the perspective of motor vehicle users, as well as pedestrians, bicyclists, and users of other modes such as transit.

Create Scoring Subcommittee for TY Project Submissions

The TAC established a scoring subcommittee made up of TAC members and CNHRPC staff. The TAC members include Karen Hill, David White, Betsy Bosiak, Carolyn Cronin, and Craig plans to ask Robyn Payson the Hillsborough TAC representative to join who was unable to attend. This grouping of TAC members ensures there is a representative from each of the towns that a project was proposed. Tim Blagden will serve as an alternate member if needed. Three or four CNHRPC staff members will also provide scoring.

CommuteSmart NH Update

Matt Baronas provided an update on the CommuteSmart NH program. Starting with an announcement that the annual fall challenge will run during the month of October. Matt also shared about the program's new partnership with the mobility managers throughout the state who are participating in the group's meetings and mission. CSNH has continued to work with GTFS and GTFS Flex data and may look to develop a training program and bring the data management skills statewide. Lastly, Matt shared an overview of the membership statistics for the program after nearly a year of utilizing AgileMile. He noted that usership and trip logging peaks during challenges and slowly decreases in the months following before peaking again at the next challenge, however ridesharing inquiries do not seem to be affected by challenge months and remain random from month to month.

Mink Hills Warner Class VI Roads Project Update

Craig provided an update on the Mink Hills project in Warner that CNHRPC has been supporting. The Mink Hills is a large area of open space crossed by Class VI roads. The goal of the project is to determine an appropriate way to manage the area and its trails and class VI roads. Craig explained the challenges associated with managing the area including balancing recreational use, conservation, and property owner's desires. CNHRPC assisted the Mink Hills Committee with a Public Input Meeting to gather information about how residents use the area and what they hope to see for the Mink Hills in the future. Craig expressed that the meeting was a great success, and attendees found more in common with each other than they may have expected. Developing recommendations based on the input will be the next challenge going forward. Tim Blagden shared that the area has potential for mountain biking trails, as does the State Park and Mount Kearsarge that could make the town more of a draw to bicyclists.

Next Meeting Date

The next TAC meeting was set for Friday October 28 at 9:00 AM following a meeting from the scoring subcommittee in mid-October.

Any Other Business

Karen Hill asked if there was any update on regional grant efforts. Craig shared that CNHRPC is putting together a project that would develop a safety action plan for the whole region, which is required to acquire Safe Streets for All grant funding. This approach would ensure that all the region's towns would be eligible for funding. Craig also shared that there are many other grants available that CNHRPC will target with the hope of backfilling more funding for projects that may not make the Ten Year Plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:46 AM.