

Central NH Regional Planning Commission

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Transportation Advisory Committee

August 11, 2023

Meeting Notes

9:00 A.M.

Attendees	
Alec Bass, City of Concord	Robyn Payson, Town of Hillsborough
Tim Blagden, Town of Warner	Heather Shank, City of Concord
Betsy Bosiak, Town of Epsom	David White, Town of Hopkinton
Stan Brehm, Town of Pembroke	Harry Wright, Town of Bradford
Emilio Cancio-Bello, Town of Sutton	Cindy Yanski, Region 3 Mobility Manager
Carolyn Cronin, Town of Pembroke	Lucy St. John, NHDOT
Karri Makinen, Town of Bow	David Tilton, SNHRPC
Richard Moore, Town of Chichester	Vanessa Parrington, NHDES, Mobile Source Grant Coordinator
Karen Hill, City of Concord	Ricky DiCillo, NHDES
Russel Tatrow, Town of Webster	

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

Vincent Pagano, Matt Taylor, Joyce Sawicki

1. Introductions

The meeting began at 9:00 AM, called to order by Chair, Betsy Bosiak. All TAC members and guests present, both in person and virtually, introduced themselves.

2. Review and Approve Minutes of the March 24, 2023, TAC Meeting Minutes

Minutes could not be approved because there was no quorum of in person attendees. Betsy encouraged for anyone that had comments about the March meeting to send those comments to Craig.

3. Status Updates on CNHRPC Regional Priorities in the Ten-Year Plan

Craig refreshed the committee with reminding members of one of their core jobs- that is to solicit, to seek and rank regional transportation projects. Craig provided a recap from this round (2025-2034 TYP update). The following 3 projects are expected to be in our next Ten-Year Plan draft: Concord-McKee Square, Intersection Improvement which is Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) project, Hopkinton- Fountain Square NH

103/NH127 Intersection, and Hillsborough-NH9/NH31, Intersection Improvement. There wasn't enough money in our current allocation to fully fund Hillsborough project, so the Hillsborough project will be funded in part from our next allocation.

Then Craig reviewed the NHDOT Ten Year Plan (TYP) CNHRPC Regional Priority Projects. The top ranked projects were discussed in order of furthest from completion. They are as follows:

Allenstown, Complete Streets Improvement to Main Street, expected to be completed in 2032; no project manager yet- there is a lot of state of repair related, drainage activities and issues. In the northern part of Allenstown is the China Mill restoration/revitalization project.

The top ranked project was Dunbarton Pages Corner (NH77 NH13, Jewett Rd), which is an odd unclear three way stop in the center of Dunbarton. There have been a lot of crashes and is a safety issues remain. Mike Tardiff added that there is a lot of support for this project in the community and also at CNHRPC.

The next project discussed was Concord US 3 (Manchester Street), this project involves adding a center turn lane, shoulders including bike lanes and sidewalks. Currently there are no sidewalks, and there are many places of employment on this street, with people that walk to work, as well as workforce housing. Since this is a primary corridor from Pembroke to Allenstown from I 93, it scored very highly. Mike clarified for context that that previously a project like this could not be brought into the Ten-Year Plan because it is within the City's Urban Compact. However, since there has been a policy change at NHDOT, and there is a federal component of match funding, CNHRPC can now add this type urban compact type of project to our regional plan. Steve (CNHRPC) added that it took many years to get this project in our TYP. Richard Moore (Chichester) asked about whether right of way (ROW's) on this street from Unitil have been acquired and whether the utilities along this corridor have been considered. Richard formerly worked for the phone company and is familiar with how long it takes to acquire utility access via ROW. Heather Shank (City of Concord) indicated that a lot of the ROW's have been acquired and clarified the ROW policy of City of Concord. Betsy (Chair) formerly worked at NHDOT also added that the car dealerships on Manchester Street act as if the ROW belonged to them, in order for the drivers who drive by to see vehicles for sale. Heather added that even after historical ROW's were acquired; a compromise has since been made between the city and the car dealerships- the dealerships were allowed to utilize the ROW until construction takes place. Craig discussed the unique funding of this project- and said that this project will be managed by the City of Concord, as an LPA local managed project, and will have a 20% match, because it is in the urban compact. Craig added how we are looking forward to working on this one.

Craig then reviewed Boscawen, multimodal and safety improvements to King Street -known as the project "between the Y's", a classic New England intersection. King Street is a Main Street for Boscawen, cross walks and sidewalks have been considered and CNHRPC did some planning engineering on this project to identify a pedestrian refuge island and some other enhancements. Currently the thinking is that the southerly Y intersection will most likely remain the same, and a roundabout is being considered for the high-speed northerly Y intersection. Mike added at this point we believe the southerly intersection will stay the same. Mike added that there are other components to this project, such as some proposed zoning changes, and a new village zone, as well as removal of underlying concrete, which has the support of CNRPC and NHDOT.

The next project was the Loudon-Canterbury NH 106 Widening (Phase 3) which did not come through the CNHRPC regional planning process; however, was added in the Ten-Year Plan by the state legislature. Craig discussed Phase 1 (completed intersection widening near Staniels Road) and Phase 2 (adding in a center turn lane for a portion of 106), of this project. Phase 3 will involve adding center turn lines in the middle portion of the corridor, and 23 million dollars has been allocated to this project. Mike added that we (CNHRPC) tried to tie in the intersection related work on 106 with these improvements. but we have been unable to so.

The next project was Henniker-Hopkinton US 202, NH9, NH127. Craig brought up that the public meeting was scheduled for Thursday, August 24. A roundabout has been the preferred option. At pas meetings, it appears the Town of Henniker selectboard would rather see an overpass. Mike explained that the amount of land taking for that option includes that of the Dunkin Donuts which pushes this into the 30 million-dollar range, out of the scope of typical regional transportation planning projects. Mike clarified that we have been able to successfully push this project forward because of safety concerns, and we have been able to hold the place of this project in our Ten-Year Plan. Now we are focused on the roundabout and/or putting in lights at the classic rural highway and the Dunkin Donuts location is very popular. Hopkinton has had a land swap for commercial development and is invested in this project. CNHRPC is continuing our discussion with the Town of Henniker and we are hearing that there is a push for a larger scope project that is supported in Henniker and we hope that we can focus on the safety issues that remain. CNHRPC would like the TAC committee to continue to discuss this project.

Tim Blagdon, Warner asked why this project would be considered as a regional project and be regionally funded. Mike clarified that typically, the allocation of funding of our projects are locally driven. Mike wants to keep the TAC informed of our support for the safety improvements associated with this project. The ranking of this project and the differences between local and state ranking processes were discussed. Heather asked what the rationale for the overpass would be. Mike could not speak to the actual concerns but indicated it may have to do with discomfort with roundabouts and slowing traffic may be two concerns. There are issues associated with an overpass engineering design. Betsy asked if educational outreach about roundabouts is being conducted by NHDOT. Mike continued sharing with the committee the conversations that are taking place about this project. Tim asked about the opportunity for a re vote since the project may have changed in scope and Betsy asked how it may affect the funding of the other projects. Our next TIP is to be voted upon next Spring. Betsy asked about future funding for this project.

Mike indicated we would continue to support this project be funded by the regional allocation. There was further discussion about this project, including the type of vehicles traveling along 202/9, and what construction vehicles and logging truck drivers require. Mike refreshed the committee of the outcome of formerly held public meetings. There were many truckers who supported a light in the past. Steve added that we may want to talk about in the next public meeting, is the actual “delay” experienced; would that be worth the 30 million for the quantify a 30 second delay that truckers would experience. Tim added that due to commercial development planned in Hopkinton for the future and thought that this will likely increase the traffic turning off at 127 at this intersection.

Richard asked if we may be looking at the wrong intersection, depending on what kind of traffic we are looking at and what the speeds of the trucks are, and perhaps we should be looking at closer to an intersection in Keene. Betsy added that not only are there a large number of local Redimix trucks in Henniker, there are others. Mike added that there is a remarkable number of logging trucks coming out of Contoocook utilizing this route. CNHRPC is happy that the planning process is continuing on this project and we look forward to future conversations.

Loudon NH 106 and South Village Road was discussed next. Phase III of 106 happens just north of this intersection. Mike added that CNHRPC attends many meetings in Loudon, and when you are trying to turn left into the Town office, the opposite traffic blocks the view and is off angle. Over the past year this project has been delayed a year apparently due in part to staffing issues, and CNHRPC would like to see this project move forward by 2026. Richard concurred that this is a high priority.

Chichester Main Street and NH 28 Intersection was discussed next. This project is still on schedule. The village country store is a busy spot. Craig continued with a discussion how Chichester Main Street is the cut through to avoid Route 4 and the Epsom traffic circle. Craig furthered the discussion by stating that there are trails and historic site with potential demand for pedestrians to cross 28. A traffic signal could include a pedestrian push button crossing. Issues that may come up are access management to the country store and a maintenance agreement for any sidewalk will have to be signed by the Town. A sidewalk may be necessary with a crosswalk and signal in order to cross the busy highway. Betsy mentioned the cemetery off the side of Route 28 and how people park along the side of the road. Richard said that some signage about parking that is available in the cemetery might be helpful. The design discussed might address the truck traffic on Main Street. Betsy repeated that she is in favor of this project.

Craig continued with a discussion of the Bow NH 3A Safety Corridor safety improvements. Craig showed the locations that were deemed a high priority to fix and are part of the project. NHDOT has some access management and grade changes that they are working on and this project is moving along. The preliminary engineering (PE) and Right of Way (ROW) analyses are done.

Concord I-89 Exit 2 was discussed and is a priority of the NHDOT because traffic is beginning to back up near the interstate travel lanes, posing a safety hazard. The traffic signal option has been selected, although a roundabout was discussed in the past for both ramps. Craig added construction is taking place at this time. Richard questioned how many lanes would be on the off ramp. One of the constraints that the bridge which is relatively new, is not wide enough to accommodate two lanes.

Craig looked back in the records and reviewed our prior success with 10-year plan regionally planned projects. Route 114 in Sutton was paved, a roundabout in Warner was completed, there's been work on bridges and NHDOT projects for the Salem 93 corridor have been completed. Starting in the next year, the CNHRPC region is set up to have a project or two completed nearly every year for the next 10 years. Betsy added that extra work near Pease AFB in Portsmouth. Mike added that Concord will be the next big focus. Richard mentioned that the CNHRPC deserves kudos for moving these projects up in the queue.

Craig explained that also in the Ten-Year Plan are the following projects: I 93 Bow Concord, State Bridges, Interstate Maintenance, a Warner Sutton Paving project and there are also a few TAP projects such as the Concord Rail Trail Project.

Betsy asked the group including those on line via zoom, if there were any projects. Tim asked about the next step in the Ten-Year Plan. Craig mentioned that there was an early GACIT hearing with the Executive Council. Lucy St. John (NHDOT) said we are hopefully finalizing the Ten-Year Plan GACIT meetings are being scheduled, and public hearings will be held in the fall. Tim asked about the meeting scheduled. Lucy said the kick off meeting is tentatively scheduled in Hampton. Craig added that CNHRPC will pass on communications regarding meetings as soon as we know.

4. Traffic Counting Program Update

Vince Pagano provided a review of the 2023 Traffic Count Program but first shared a historic photo of Walt Sanborn, a life-long resident of Chichester, conducting a traffic count.

Vince reviewed the statistics of our traffic counts, there were 211 total counts, 39 class counts, 3 speed counts, 1 turning movement count. We started on May 8, 2023 and covered approximately 565 square miles. Vince showed the number of traffic counts by Town. Mike added that we purchased some new counters this year. Last year, Vince indicated we had 4 different styles of counters aging in range of 7-20 years old. We are now in the process of streamlining our hardware. We will be using our more effective counters (plastic and newer) in the future. We borrowed some from NHDOT in order to allow us to reach our goal of 20 counts per week. The cost was about \$6,500 and included new software called StarNex. The last software we used for many, many years. Tim mentioned that the Town of Warner bought some speed notice flashing signs and asked if there is coordination with the Towns on location of collection of traffic data. Vince indicated he would love to coordinate with the police departments about where they are working and if it aligns with our work. Richard jumped in with a question about traffic counts but in his experience, he prefers accident data. The Route 4 traffic now uses Route 106 and continues to Route 129 has now caused increased accidents in this rerouted location. Vince added how he spoke to a gentleman who has 3 children on North Pembroke Road indicate that there were recently 3 accidents near his house on that road. Vince reiterated that it is count and class data that we collect, not accident data. Richard said unfortunately accidents have to happen in order for changes take place to prevent them and believes Route 4 is very dangerous. Tim mentioned how we are capturing spot data instead of movement data. Mike added that we have access to movement data, and we are learning how to use it. Movement data via GPS systems categorize flow and movement. Craig and the other Regional Planning Commissions have attended seminars about this software but the products are not yet affordable. Craig mentioned how Lidar technology has been used on the dangerous Pembroke Road/ Borough Road area to detect an impediment in the sight line.

Vince reviewed for the committee that we have 55 total counts remaining, 13 class count and that we are waiting for school to begin to continue more. Vince continued with a discussion of the number and types of counts remaining and that some we are waiting to when schools to be in session to get an accurate count. A table of 2023 Traffic Counts by Community was shared. We collect data for Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Tim asked why we don't focus on the traffic in our state during the Friday, Saturday, and Sundays is

when the peak traffic occurs and where we are spending a lot of dollars. Mike explained we don't do Interstate ramp counting and we do not want to leave counters out during the weekend, to avoid damage and tampering with the counters and possible pedestrian trip accidents. Some residents have complained about counters being in front of their house. Counters are put out on Monday and picked up on Friday. Richard added that historically, road design was for the 30th highest traffic count. Vince added that we have put counters out on the weekend, per Town request, by the Dunkin Donuts in Warner, over the weekend, but because NHDOT has been providing average annualized daily traffic counts, and NHDOT wants the Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday data, therefore we stick with the same schedule with our Town counts.

Vince then shared photos of the cool technology we are now using. The new JAMAR counters that CNHRPC just purchased are GPS enabled and have new software. They are long lasting counters that we don't have to charge often due to the strong batteries. Then Vince explained how we are borrowing a device (Lee Tron Vision Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) counter) with a camera, and windows loaded in it, and a mounting unit that looks down on 4 lanes of traffic and uses machine learning. NYDOT has the most stringent requirements for traffic data collection and these counters are approved for use there. The counters take continuous videos as cars pass by and classifies the information automatically via the NHDOT classification system. We placed one of these on a big problem area- on the east bound Route 4- 393 where data collection is difficult due to the varying speeds resulting in a large number of unclassified counts. We hope to continue borrowing the Lee Tron Vision Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) counter from NHDOT and the SWRPC. Vince explained the difference between our new tube counters (JAMAR) and the one radar counter that we own.

5. GTFS (transit feed) Training for RPC and Transit Agency Partners

Mike briefly about the GTFS training session to be held on August 23 and CNHRPC is leading the charge on this data that is already being utilized in transportation and is accessed by google and apple maps. CNHRPC is trying to make the transition include the transit feed specification for all of our transportation partners, para transit, CAT, buses etc. We have contracted with Trillium to help us with this technology. We already use the Agile Mile software in our Commute Smart program and we want to take that beyond the challenges. Craig was instrumental in keying in the initial data utilized by these transit feeds.

6. Any Other Business

Rick Dicillo (NHDES) explained two grant programs now available, one is called Granite State Clean Fleets- it is a competitive funding program utilizing the Volkswagen settlement money. The proposals are due October 13. This program is open to local government applicants only. There is also another grant program to government entities as well which a lower funding level that also covers heavy diesel use equipment -proposals are due September 15. The contact for this grant is Vanessa Partington (NHDES). Rick hopes that the two programs will help replace older diesel vehicles and obtain cleaner air in our region.

Betsy asked if there are any questions. A question was asked if Public Works departments are getting this grant information via notice. Rick explained that there is an effort to do so, but NHDES' email lists need to be updated due to emails being undeliverable. Craig will forward information like this along, for example, he forwarded this info to Beth who chairs the Energy Environment committee, but did not forward to the City of Concord public works.

Richard asked 1) if the NHDOT shortage of staffing is impacting our Ten-Year Plan, and secondly, if and how the federal Infrastructure bill that was passed a year ago is affecting us. Mike answered the second question that we've been impacted and the funding filtered down-the regional allocation was increased (by 20%, Craig said); a tangible and positive impact-resulting in 3 additional projects being funded (Mike continued). One is the McKee Square Concord project through CMAQ, and two others are expected to be added to the TYP. Craig added that we are working with NHDOT to focus our approach to include the funding of these projects in our new Ten-Year Plan.

Lucy commented that there are many vacancies in NHDOT but we are working to move project forward and there are many consultants that work for the NHDOT. There is an upcoming Federal Highway funding webinar – see the NHDOT web site.

Cindy Yanski shared the exciting news on community transportation- Concord area transit is starting- it is to connect Concord to Laconia via Route 3, tentatively to start on Oct 2, however it is contingent upon staffing drivers and bus assets, we are expecting the service to be run Monday through Friday, with 5-6 runs a day with stops in Boscawen, Belmont, Tilton and Laconia. It is fully funding with FTA for the first year. Secondly, Cindy mentioned the NH Transportation Association is establishing a proclamation to make October NH's Transportation Month, coinciding with our Buses, Bikes and Brooms Commute Smart Fall challenge. Mike added that CNHRPC is very excited about the extension up to Laconia, we've been working on this for years.

Richard asked a question to Lucy if a safety project located on Route 28, Kelly Corner, in Chichester was still happening or has it fell through the cracks. Lucy and Mike will follow-up and get back to Richard.

Another question was about the safe streets grant. Mike answered that we have not yet made a submission, but we are looking at the regional plan process ourselves and we need to reissue an RFP for a new consultant. Craig added that crash and accident studies will help us to identify projects to reach our goals. Mike added that we almost added an "improve access and safety to schools" approach to the planning but the more we looked at it, we realized it requires accident data to implement. Craig added that we would like each municipality to get their share and have an eye towards equity, to try to get each community/town eligible for funding for their project. We will discuss this at an upcoming TAC meeting.

7. Next Meeting Date

The next TAC meeting date was scheduled for Friday, September 29. Craig will follow-up regarding the meeting location.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 AM.