



CNHRPC Full Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 31, 2021
7:00pm
Zoom Meeting

Commission Attendees: Diane Adinolfo, Town of Allenstown
Michael O'Meara, Town of Allenstown
Barbara Randall, Town of Boscawen
Fred Reagan, Town of Boscawen
Steve Buckley, Town of Bow
Harry Wright, Town of Bradford
Jim Bibbo, Town of Bradford
Tyson Miller, Town of Canterbury
Stan Brehm, Town of Chichester
Richard Bouchard, Town of Chichester
Erle Pierce, City of Concord
Meredith Hatfield, City of Concord
Matthew Hicks, City of Concord
Betsy Bosiak, Town of Epsom
Nancy Egner, Town of Hillsborough
Gary Sparks, Town of Hillsborough
Susanne White, Town of Hillsborough
Clarke Kidder, Town of Hopkinton
Stephen Caine, Town of Loudon
Emilio Cancio-Bello, Town of Sutton
Ken Milender, Town of Warner
Ben Inman, Town of Warner
Sue Rauth, Town of Webster

CNHRPC Staff: Steph Alexander, Senior Planner
Matt Baronas, Intern
Katie Nelson, Principal Planner
Matt Monahan, Senior Planner
Michael Tardiff, Executive Director
Craig Tufts, Principal GIS/Transportation Planner
Dean Williams, Principal Transportation Planner

The meeting began at 7:05 PM, called to order by CNHRPC Chair, Matt Hicks (Concord). Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, Matt Hicks read the following statement that authorizes the CNHRPC Full

Commission to meet electronically: “Due to the State of Emergency declared by Governor Sununu, and in response to Emergency Orders #12 and #23 of Executive Order 2020-04, the Central NH Regional Planning Commission is authorized to meet electronically. There is no physical location in which to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting. We will be utilizing Zoom.us for an electronic meeting. All CNHRPC Commissioners have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting; the public has access to listen contemporaneously and if necessary, to participate in this meeting. Dial phone number (301) 715-8592, Webinar ID: 853 9914 2652, Password: 7886 or go to the following website address: <https://zoom.us> click “Join a Meeting” and enter Webinar ID: 853 9914 2652, Password: 7886. If you are not able to access the meeting by calling the number provided above please call 603-226-6020. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting by phone, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.”

CNHRPC FY 2023-2032 Regional Transportation Improvement Program Public Hearing/ Consideration of Approval

Mike Tardiff introduced the topic of the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Public Hearing, noting that New Hampshire’s Ten-Year Plan process started in the mid-1980s, and the state’s Regional Planning Commissions have been participating in the process since shortly after that. The regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is updated every two years, and hopefully leads to projects being added to years nine or ten of the Ten-Year Plan. He noted that the purpose of tonight’s meeting was to receive comments on the proposed regional TIP, and then consider the TIP for adoption. If adopted, the TIP will be forwarded to NHDOT for inclusion in the State Ten-Year Plan.

Katie Nelson outlined the Zoom webinar and chat features for attendees to utilize during the public hearing.

Dean Williams presented an overview of the CNHRPC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) update, a process that began in August and previously reviewed with the Full Commission in January. Since that time, NHDOT had reviewed the cost estimates for the projects and provided input. He reviewed the overall TIP document, including those projects in the region that were already included in the Ten-Year Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-30 and considered funded. He then reviewed the regional projects that were evaluated for inclusion in the draft FY 2023-32 Ten-Year Plan as recommended by the CNHRPC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). The only change in recommended project priority from the January presentation to the Full Commission was that the NH Route 9 and NH 31 intersection Improvements project in Hillsborough (ranked 3rd) and the US 202 and Exit 4 intersection improvements in Hopkinton (ranked 4th) switch positions in the ranking following the TAC discussion and prioritization process. The TAC felt that while the two projects scored very closely to each other, due to the overall projected cost of the Exit 4 intersection project the NH9/NH31 project should move up in the ranking. He also noted that a Road Safety Audit had recently been applied for to examine issues at the NH 28/Kelleys Corner intersection.

The projects were presented in order of proposed ranking:

1. Pages Corner NH Route 77 (Concord Stage Rd) and NH Route 13 (Clinton St and Stark Highway North) - Dunbarton
2. Allentown Main Street Complete Streets
3. NH Route 9 and NH 31 Intersection improvements - Hillsborough
4. US 202 and Exit 4 intersection improvements - Hopkinton
5. Salisbury Crossroads (US 4 and NH 127)
6. NH 28 and Kelleys Corner Turn Lanes – Chichester

The public hearing was opened with comments from Derike Goodine, Allenstown Town Administrator. Mr. Goodine noted his support for the Allenstown Main Street Complete Streets project. There were no other comments from the public.

Matt Hicks then asked for comments from the Commissioners. Emilio Cancio-Bello asked if it was appropriate at this time to offer a motion to adopt the TIP with the proposed project ranking. Mike Tardiff said that it would be appropriate at this time, and in addition the staff had been directed by the TAC to ask the Full Commission to include in any motion to approve the TIP that the motion include a request to add the region's top two projects to the 2023-32 Ten-Year Plan.

Upon a motion by Emilio Cancio-Bello and a second by Betsy Bosiak, a motion to approve the CNHRPC FY 2023-2032 Regional Transportation Improvement Program and request that the region's top two projects be included in the FY2023-32 Ten-Year Plan was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Speakers - Terri Paige, CAPBMCI Transportation Services Transportation Director, and Cindy Yanski, Region 3 Mobility Manager - Mid-State Region Public Transportation Update

Cindy Yanski opened the presentation with an overview of the Mid-State Regional Coordinating Council (RCC). The RCC covers Belknap and Merrimack counties as well as Deering, Hillsborough and Windsor, and has 22 member organizations. She noted that the RCC is interested in recruiting new members and is interested in new town representatives. She then described how CAPBMCI is the lead agency for the RCC, responsible for funding oversight and compliance for the use of FTA Section 5310 funding. Current CAPBMCI transportation services includes Concord Area Transit, the Rural Transportation Service, the Volunteer Driver Program, the taxi voucher program, and the region's Mobility Manager.

Ms. Yanski then provided a summary of the three CAT routes: Penacook, Heights and Crosstown. The three routes are currently fare-free due to Covid-19 and it is expected to continue that way until at least the end of June. She noted that Craig Tufts had uploaded the CAT system to Google Maps so you could plan out your route through the CAT website. She then provided an overview of the ADA paratransit system that serves riders that are not able to access the CAT routes due to a disability. It operates up to ¾ of a mile on either side of any fixed route, and requires an application process for riders to access.

The presentation continued with a review of the CAPBMCI travel training program for those who are unsure of how to use the CAT system and an overview of the Senior Transit program that offers door to door demand response service to those 60 years and older. The service operates Monday through Friday from 8am to 3pm. This service covers the greater Concord area.

Ms. Yanski then discussed the Rural Transportation Service that covers the entire RCC area and provides door to door transportation for seniors 60 years and older from 8am to 3pm. There are five different buses that serve the program. She highlighted the Bradford area bus service that alternates serving the Market Basket in Warner and locations in Concord, and the Pittsfield service that serves Concord on a daily basis. Ms. Yanski then concluded her overview of the CAPBMCI transportation program with a summary of the volunteer driver program that serves those 60 years and older and people with disabilities. The program essentially serves as a safety net for medical trips or other essential trips for someone who needs a ride to a place not served by the other transportation programs. The program serves the entire RCC area with volunteer drivers using their own vehicles while receiving mileage reimbursement to provide rides. She noted that she is always seeking to recruit new drivers for the volunteer driver program.

Ms. Yanski described the measures that CAPBMCI had taken to address Covid-19 including the suspension of fares to avoid money changing hands, the cleaning of all frequently touched surfaces, the installation of safety barriers, and regular cleaning and disinfection of all buses and shelters. She then reviewed the updated branding strategy for CAT (within the Concord area) and Mid-State Transit (MST - outside of the Concord area, but within the Mid-State region). CAPBMCI had recently received a small grant to undertake the re-branding process, and had developed a proposed consistent look to the branding for the two systems, including buses, shelters and the website. She then shared examples of the new branding and graphics for the two system, noting that the new tag line for each system would be *Where will you go today?* Ms. Yanski then concluded her presentation with a summary of the recent and planned improvements at CAT including the re-branding, enhanced training, software updates and rider information tools, and planned route changes.

Terri Paige outlined how the last year had been both a challenge and an opportunity. She noted that CARES act funding had given the staff an opportunity to undertake a process to improve the program's services and be ready for the future.

Emilio Cancio-Bello then asked if there were wheelchair accessible services offered through the volunteer drive program.. Ms. Yanski said that there are wheelchair accessible rides available. Nancy Egner asked about recent number of rides for the volunteer driver program. Ms. Yanski noted that there had been over 4,000 rides provided last year through the volunteer driver program. Terri Paige stated that the ridership numbers are available on the RCC website. She further noted that ridership of the CAT system had rebounded quickly when they re-opened after the pandemic closure, while the RTS service had not rebounded as quickly as the ridership mainly consists of seniors who have been slower to begin using the services following their reopening.

Stan Brehm asked about the Pittsfield service, asking where the service stops on certain days. Ms. Paige noted that the service is a demand response service, so the program picks up riders at the door. Stephen Caine asked how the buses are powered. Ms. Paige said they are a mix of diesel and gas. Mr. Caine asked if there had been a discussion of going electric. Ms. Paige stated that the next procurement process will be in five years or so, and they will explore electric or hybrid vehicles at that time.

Matt Hicks then thanked Ms. Yanski and Ms. Paige for the presentation.

Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves by roll call conducted by the Chair, Matt Hicks.

Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion by Erle Pierce and a second by Emilio Cancio-Bello, the minutes of the January 14, 2021 Full Commission meeting were approved by roll call vote. Nancy Egner, Sue Rauth, Diane Adinolfo, Fred Reagan, Susanne White and Ken Milender abstained from the vote.

Report of the Chair

Matt Hicks expressed his appreciation for the overall TIP update process and the work that goes into preparing the document. He then noted how he had recently been working with Craig Tufts on the Concord Trails Plan, and how pleased he was with the result. He noted that Craig had done a very good job working with the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, City staff and the public on the document and said that he hoped that everyone had the opportunity to review the plan.

CNHRPC Staff Updates

Katie Nelson provided an update on the Spring Commuter Challenge that will take place for the entire month of May. She noted that working from home counts for the challenge – all modes other than driving in a car alone to work can be tracked for the challenge. She said that if anyone is interested in participating in the challenge please reach out to her to have their workplace join the challenge. She also noted that any Commissioner can join the CNHRPC team if they wish. She then provided an update on the soon to be distributed Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a ridesharing software for the state.

Mike Tardiff provided an update on staff activities, noting that Matt Monahan continues to be busy working with a number of communities on economic development issues, planning board circuit rider assistance, and development reviews. Stephanie Alexander has also been busy working on many local hazard mitigation plans as well as the Regional Transportation Plan update.

Craig Tufts then provided a quick update on the Henniker and Hopkinton US 202/NH 9/NH 127 intersection area buildout project that staff are undertaking to get a better understanding of potential future impacts on the intersection due to growth. He noted that the project includes some GIS work and a review of development trends and existing zoning in both Henniker and Hopkinton. The Turkey River buildout is trying to model water pollution in the Turkey River, essentially trying to see how growth could impact future water quality.

Matt Baronas then noted how he had recently been working on some mapping for the Town of Epsom as well as working with the Loudon Trails Committee. Mike Tardiff noted that he had also recently provided assistance to the Mink Hills Study Committee.

Meredith Hatfield then noted that she was moving out of Concord to Hopkinton and would no longer be serving on the City Council or the Commission. Matt Hicks thanked her for her participation in the Commission's activities and meetings.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Emilio Cancio-Bello, and a second by Harry Wright, the meeting adjourned by unanimous vote at 8:32 PM.