



SWRPC

Southwest Region
Planning Commission

NH Route 12 South Corridor Virtual Meeting

Held to inform SWRPC's update to the *Southwest Connects Long Range Transportation Plan*

Monday November 21, 2022 6:30pm

Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) held a virtual meeting on Monday, November 21, 2022 at 6:30 pm focused on the NH Route 12 South Corridor. This corridor runs from Keene to Fitzwilliam and also includes the Towns of Swanzey, Marlborough, Troy, and Richmond. The corridor is one of eight major transportation corridors in the Southwest NH Region as depicted in the *Southwest Connects Long Range Transportation Plan*. This was the fifth meeting in a series of eight that SWRPC is holding over the next several months in 2022 and 2023. Each meeting will focus on one of the regional transportation corridors. The purpose of this meeting (and future meetings) is to share information about the corridor with local communities and to collect public input for the *Southwest Connects Long Range Transportation Plan*.

The following people attended the meeting: Bill Hutwelker (Select Board Chair, Swanzey), Julius Peel (Land Use Coordinator, Swanzey), Lori Nolan (Land Use Coordinator, Fitzwilliam), Joseph Gonsalves (Police Chief, Swanzey), Carol Ann Rocheleau (Health Officer, Fitzwilliam), Andrew Smeltz (SWRPC), and Lisa Murphy (SWRPC). Other individuals, present in the room with Lori Nolan, provided input but did not provide their names.

The following information was covered and discussed (more detailed information is available by viewing the presentation at: <https://youtu.be/IToQoRAflA4>)

- The Route 12 South Corridor is one of eight major transportation corridors in the Southwest NH Region, facilitating north-south traffic movements between Keene and Fitzwilliam. In addition to Route 12, this Corridor also includes Route 32, parts of Route 119 and the Cheshire Rail Trail, and non-numbered routes in Keene, Swanzey, Marlborough, Troy, Richmond and Fitzwilliam – the six Towns identified as part of the Corridor. It is a highly trafficked corridor that is important for commuting, tourism, commerce, and other reasons.
- Between 2011-2020, there were 27 vehicle crashes on the Route 12 South Corridor. Nineteen crashes involved a serious injury, four involved a fatality, and four involved a non-motorized fatality or serious injury.
- Keene, Swanzey and Troy have municipal complete streets policies and design guidelines to guide safety improvements for the benefit of all road users. The Town of Marlborough is currently working with SWRPC to develop a complete streets policy.
- Two new roundabouts were recently constructed on this corridor. One is located in Keene on Route 12 near the Swanzey Town line, and one is located in Swanzey on Route 32 near the Mount

Caesar Elementary School and Monadnock Regional Middle High School. Roundabouts improve safety by lowering vehicle speeds.

- The Town of Troy received funding from the Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST) in 2020 to create a pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Monadnock Street and Route 12. The project is currently underway.
- The Town of Fitzwilliam received funding from the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) for road safety improvements at the intersection of Routes 12 and 119. Improvements, which included lane reconfiguration, a deflection median and turning lanes, were designed to improve safety by slowing and calming traffic. Improvements were completed in 2019.
- Between 2012 and 2019, significant increases in traffic occurred on the Route 12 South Corridor. The most significant increase in traffic volume occurred on Route 12 at the Massachusetts State Line where there was a 32.6% increase in traffic. Other notable increases in traffic volume on the corridor occurred in Fitzwilliam on Route 12 over Scott Brook (30.3%) and in Keene on Main Street south of Appleton Street (26.5%).
- Approximately 10,599 commuters per day enter the corridor from outside towns. 9,292 people live and work on this corridor. In addition, 8,756 people live on this corridor and commute to outside towns. The top commuting destinations for residents of the Route 12 South Corridor are: Keene, Jaffrey, Swanzey and Rindge.
- Although limited, this corridor contains some transportation alternatives to the personal automobile. These alternative transportation options include: transit services offered by Home Healthcare Hospice & Community Service (HCS); sidewalks, bike lanes and other pedestrian infrastructure; the Cheshire Rail Trail; and a volunteer driver program operated by Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC).
- The Cheshire Branch of the Cheshire Rail Trail runs parallel to Route 12 along this corridor.
- The population of the corridor decreased 2.1% between 2010 and 2019. Population projections predict that the Corridor population will increase 3% by 2040.

The following safety concerns and suggestions were shared by participants at the meeting:

- Lori Nolan, Land Use Administrator for the Town of Fitzwilliam identified the intersection of Route 12 and Route 119 in Fitzwilliam as a dangerous intersection. Ms. Nolan believes the intersection is dangerous because the two roads are not at a 90° angle and because the intersection is very busy due to businesses located at the intersection and through traffic on Routes 12 and 119. Ms. Nolan believes that safety improvements, completed by NH Department of Transportation (NH DOT) in 2019, made this intersection more dangerous. It was also noted that turn lanes at this intersection are ambiguous, making it unclear where to stop, and that high vehicle speed on Route 12 is a compounding factor. Due the shape of the existing right-of-way at this intersection, a peanut-shaped roundabout was proposed previously as a safety mitigation measure. However, the roundabout project was not implemented, and instead the traffic calming measures described above were implemented.
- An attendee from the Town of Fitzwilliam in the room with Lori Nolan suggested rumble strips and speed bumps as possible ways to slow vehicle traffic on Route 12 and the intersection Routes 12 and 119.

- The intersection of Route 12 and Route 32 in Keene was identified as a dangerous intersection. This intersection is not at a 90° angle, making it dangerous to turn. The City of Keene has proposed improvements to this intersection as part of NH DOT's 2025-2034 Ten Year Plan nomination process. Proposed improvements to the intersection include reconfiguring the intersection to a 90° angle or a roundabout. As part of the analysis of a 90° angle intersection, a traffic analysis will also be conducted to determine whether a traffic signal is needed. Given, the high traffic volumes at this intersection, it is likely that traffic controls will be included as part of this improvement.
- Chief Joseph Gonsalves of the Swanzey Police identified a dangerous area on Route 12 in Swanzey north of Stafford Road. Heading northbound on Route 12, there is a speed reduction as vehicles approach the car dealerships and other businesses on Route 12. There is a dip in the road in this area that reduces visibility. When vehicles fail to slow down in this area, or if a vehicle is turning while another is approaching at speed, there is a risk of a rear-end collision. A possible solution to this problem is to eliminate the dip and improve visibility.
- The Cheshire Rail Trail, which runs parallel to Route 12 for the length of this corridor, crosses Route 101 in south Keene. This crossing has been identified as hazardous. At a later date, the City of Keene plans to install a bridge crossing at this location to improve safety as part of their Transportation Heritage Trail project.
- The intersection of Route 12 and Flat Roof Mill Road in Swanzey was identified as a dangerous intersection because the roads are not at a 90° angle and because of the elevation change on Flat Roof Mill Road. A possible solution is the reconfiguration of the intersection.

No concerns and suggestions were shared by participants at the meeting about natural disasters and human-caused hazards on the corridor.

The following concerns and suggestions were shared by participants at the meeting about transportation options in the corridor.

- Chief Gonsalves noted that adding and improving sidewalks, bike lanes and other forms of pedestrian infrastructure will improve safety for walking and bicycling. These improvements are especially needed near existing residential areas and new housing construction on Stafford Road.

The following concerns and suggestions were shared by participants at the meeting about transportation infrastructure in the corridor.

- Julius Peel, Land Use Coordinator for the Town of Swanzey, noted that the Swanzey Energy Commission would like to conduct a study to determine whether there is a local demand for electric vehicle charging stations. The Energy Commission is also working to determine suitable locations for charging stations.