

Southwest Region Planning Commission
37 Ashuelot Street, Keene, NH 03431 603-357-0557 Voice 603-357-7440 Fax

**Transportation
Advisory Committee**

Kendall Lane, Chair
Keene

Frank Sterling, Vice Chair
Jaffrey

Susan Ashworth
HCS Community Services

Brian Barden
Dublin

Sara Carbonneau
Winchester

Leslie Casey
Sullivan

Michael Kowalczyk
*Monadnock Region Rail
Trails Collaborative*

Alfred "Gus" Lerandeau
Swanzey

Leandra MacDonald
Peterborough

Cheryl Mayberry
Walpole

Jesse Rounds
Keene

Ed Smith
Hinsdale

Ruth Ward
Stoddard

with

John Kallfelz
NHDOT District 4

and

Lucy St. John
*NHDOT Bureau of
Planning & Community
Assistance*

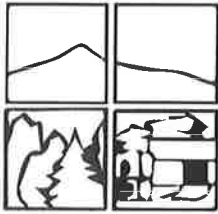
Transportation Advisory Committee

**April 3, 2023
2:00 p.m.**

**Southwest Region Planning Commission
37 Ashuelot Street, Keene, NH**

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Minutes of March 6, 2023
- III. *Southwest Connects* Long Range Transportation Plan Update
- IV. Other Matters
- V. Next Meeting: June 5, 2023
- VI. Adjourn



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Transportation Advisory Committee

Minutes

March 6, 2023

Present: Frank Sterling, Vice Chair, *Town of Jaffrey*; Susan Ashworth, *Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services*; Brian Barden, *Town of Dublin*; Sara Carbonneau, *Town of Winchester* (remote); Leslie Casey, *Town of Sullivan*; Mike Kowalczyk, *Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative*; Gus Lerandeanu, *Town of Swanzey*; Ed Smith, *Town of Hinsdale*; Ruth Ward, *Town of Stoddard*; John Kallfelz (ex officio), *NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT)*.

Staff members present: Tim Murphy, *Executive Director*; J. B. Mack, *Assistant Director*; Becky Baldwin, *Office Manager*.

Guests present: Kim Rummo, *NHDOT*.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Vice Chair Sterling called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m., welcomed those in attendance, and asked for introductions from attendees. He acknowledged that a quorum of the membership was attending in-person with one attending remotely and that all votes would be taken by roll call.

II. Minutes of February 6, 2023

Motion: To approve the minutes of February 6, 2023 as presented.

Motion by Gus Lerandeanu, seconded by Susan Ashworth. Approved by unanimous roll call vote.

III. Ten Year Plan Priority Project Recommendations

J. B. Mack reported that the purpose of today's meeting is to finalize a recommendation regarding submission of projects for inclusion in the 2025-2034 Ten Year Plan Update (TYP) to the SWRPC Board of Directors for consideration at their March 21, 2023 meeting. Final recommendations need to be submitted to NHDOT by March 31, 2023.

J. B. Mack reviewed the process that has taken place to-date in identifying priority projects for the TYP. He noted that \$4,996,384 has been allocated to the Region for distribution. In November the TAC submitted their top three ranked projects to NHDOT for preliminary review and comment. NHDOT has provided feedback on each of the projects. NHDOT's most significant comments were around cost estimates. Based on recent data, NHDOT increased the annual inflation rate used for each project's cost estimates. In addition, base unit costs were adjusted based on recent NHDOT's experience with similar projects.

TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964

J. B. Mack provided a summary review of each of the projects noting the estimated cost to complete them as follows:

NH Route 10 - Swanzey: This project would provide access management, traffic calming, intersection improvements, and complete streets improvements to enhance non-motorized activity and safety on NH Route 10 from South Winchester Street to North Winchester Street. The total cost of this project is \$6,771,720.

Base Hill Road - Keene: This project would improve the alignment, width, drainage and safety of Base Hill Road, between NH Route 9 south to the Keene/Swanzey town line. The project's purpose is to address increased traffic and heavier loads on Base Hill Road. The total projected cost of this project which represents the Keene portion of Base Hill Road is \$7,367,465. Keene would contribute \$1,473,493 to the project which would reduce the federal share to \$5,893,972.

NH Route 12/32 - Keene: This project would address safety and efficiency at the intersection of NH Route 32 (Old Homestead Highway) with Route 12 (Main Street). The total projected cost of this project is \$3,908,446.

Ed Smith asked if Swanzey would be contributing to be able to complete their portion of the Base Hill Road project. J. B. Mack said that this is not likely. J. B. Mack reminded members that NHDOT is in the process of assessing whether the Swanzey portion of Base Hill Road should be upgraded to a major collector like the Keene portion of the road. Until then, the Swanzey section of the road is not eligible for federal funding.

Gus Lerandau pointed out that only the NH Route 12/32 project is completely within the TYP budget allocated to our region. Vice Chair Sterling pointed out that the NH Route 10 project was TAC's first choice when ranking was done in November and we should stick with that ranking. He added that since federal funding is only available to the Keene portion the Base Hill Road project, it may rank higher in future years if the road is reclassified to include the Swanzey portion.

Mike Kowalczyk asked if we were to choose the NH Route 10 project as our number one choice, where would additional funding come from since the project exceeds our regional allocation. J. B. Mack explained that there are a number of ways that the project could get funded. The Town of Swanzey could raise funds or apply for grants to meet the budget shortfall, for example. In addition, SWRPC could recommend additional funds allocated in future TYP rounds to this project since it would not be scheduled for construction until 2033 as proposed. Tim Murphy explained that this practice is not uncommon regarding projects that exceed our regional budget and a lot can happen prior to the out-years.

Mike Kowalczyk asked if there was a process followed to determine what the project rankings were. J. B. Mack explained that the projects were evaluated against 15 scoring criteria last fall. After learning of the ranking process Mike Kowalczyk questioned why TAC would consider changing their ranking at this point. Tim Murphy explained there is always the possibility that information received through the NHDOT review and comment period or information from other sources might cause TAC to reconsider their project ranking. J. B. Mack noted that NHDOT's review of the three projects did not result in any red flags.

Sara Carbonneau suggested that the funding for this region should be allocated to the Base Hill Road project due to safety concerns for pedestrians and bicyclists that use the road. J. B. Mack reminded members that should they change their ranking and choose the Base Hill Road project as their priority project, it would

only apply to the Keene portion of the road. Sara Carbonneau acknowledged that the Keene portion of the road is in worse shape than the Swanzey portion. Mike Kowalczyk shared concerns for bicyclists traveling on Base Hill Road.

Vice Chair Sterling noted that population density will increase on Route 10 as time goes by making the safety improvements related to that project even more important. It was questioned if traffic calming measures could be completed on Route 10 for a reduction to the cost of the overall project.

J. B. Mack noted that from his perspective both the Base Hill Road and Route 12/32 projects deserve more study and analysis. Leslie Casey expressed concern that improvements on Base Hill Road will encourage increased and faster traffic flows. Ed Smith cautioned that any proposed major changes to neighborhoods on Base Hill Road might create opposition that could tie the project up for years. Vice Chair Sterling asked if public opinion was solicited regarding this project by the City of Keene. J. B. Mack replied that public outreach was not conducted but that the City reported in its application that it has received several complaints about the current state of the road. John Kallfelz suggested that the City of Keene be made aware of the lengthy discussion and general support expressed by TAC members that something needs to be done in the future regarding Base Hill Road safety concerns.

Motion: To recommend that the Swanzey NH Route 10 Corridor project be presented to the SWRPC Board of Directors for consideration as TAC's top priority project for inclusion in the 2025-2034 TYP for submittal to NHDOT.

Motion by Gus Lerandeau, seconded by Ruth Ward. Approved by majority roll call vote with 7 voting in favor of the motion and 2 voting against it.

IV. Other Matters

J. B. Mack reminded TAC members of the NHDOT presentation they received at the February 6, 2023 meeting on a proposal to improve the intersection of NH 9/10/12/101 through the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program (CMAQ). Following the presentation TAC voted to support the project proposal. J. B. Mack reported that it is anticipated that this project will receive CMAQ funding if it demonstrates an air quality improvement. NHDOT has decided to put on hold all electric vehicle charging projects in part because the State has other federal funding that could be used to develop those stations. In addition, three other projects were determined ineligible. This appears to leave enough funding to meet all other CMAQ project requests in New Hampshire.

J. B. Mack reported that SWRPC applied for and was granted additional funding from the Federal Transit Administration 5305(e) program to further explore scenarios that were identified in the recently completed *SWRPC Microtransit Feasibility and Fixed Route Transit Service Plan Design Assistance Study*. Work on the continued study, which is anticipated to be a two year project, will begin after the start of SWRPC's 2024 fiscal year. Tim Murphy credited J. B. Mack with preparing the successful proposal in what constitutes a competitive process.

Vice-Chair Sterling announced that the Town of Jaffrey hired a landscaping engineer to develop conceptual ideas for the Jaffrey dog-leg project. He noted that he would share a slide presentation of the results at the conclusion of today's meeting with anyone who might be interested.

V. Next Meeting: April 3, 2023

J. B. Mack announced that the next meeting of TAC is scheduled for April 3, 2023. At that meeting staff will provide a presentation on the update of the *Southwest Connects Long Range Transportation Plan*.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin
Office Manager

Date: April 3, 2023
To: Transportation Advisory Committee
From: Staff

RE: *Southwest Connects* Long Range Transportation Plan Update

Background

SWRPC staff are wrapping up an update to the *Southwest Connects* Long Range Transportation Plan (*Southwest Connects*). At the April 3rd meeting, staff will report on the result of SWRPC's public outreach efforts, including the results of a survey, the results of a crowdsourced reporter mapping tool, and feedback that was collected from stakeholders at eight corridor meetings across the Region.

In addition, staff will solicit feedback from the TAC regarding recommended changes to *Southwest Connects*' existing goals, objectives and performance measures.

Recommendation

For your information.