



Southwest Region Planning Commission

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March 31, 2023

William Cass, Commissioner
NH Department of Transportation
PO Box 483
Concord, NH 03302

Re: 2025-2034 Ten Year Plan Recommendations

Dear ~~Commissioner~~ ^{Bill} Cass:

The Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) has completed its solicitation for the FY 2025-2034 Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TYP) update. In addition, the SWRPC Board of Directors has unanimously adopted the SWRPC Transportation Advisory Committee's (TAC) recommended ranking of priority projects for the FY 2025-2034 TYP update. This correspondence provides these recommendations and describes the process used in developing them.

TYP Priority Project Development Process

SWRPC followed all guidance provided by NHDOT regarding the TYP update process, including the documents entitled *2025-2034 NH Ten Year Plan Regional Planning Commission Process*, *RPC 2025-2034 Ten Year Plan Approach*, and *Draft Projected Regional Allocations for New Projects in the 2025-2034 NH TYP*. The SWRPC TAC devoted six meetings to discussions around TYP development for this update cycle and took time to review and score projects between meetings. In separate correspondence, the following items will be posted on the NHDOT Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance ftp site documenting more details about SWRPC's TYP project solicitation and project ranking process should you wish to review them:

- Sample TYP solicitation letter;
- SWRPC TAC meeting minutes from June 6, 2022, September 12, 2022, October 3, 2022, October 31, 2022, February 6, 2023 and March 6, 2023 documenting the development of criteria weights and project rankings, as well as the draft SWRPC Board of Directors meeting minutes from March 21, 2023 documenting endorsement of the TAC's recommendations;
- Project information packets submitted to the SWRPC TAC to assist in reviewing and scoring nominated TYP projects; and
- Scoring information related to newly nominated SWRPC TYP projects.

SWRPC's project solicitation process yielded seven municipal project nominations, all of which will be included in SWRPC's package of materials submitted to the NHDOT ftp site.

Re-affirmation of Existing Project Priorities

SWRPC continues to support the following TYP projects that are in the current 2023-2032 TYP and expect that they will remain in the 2025-2034 TYP update.

Table 1: Existing TYP Projects Supported by SWRPC

Town	Project Number	Route / Road	Project Description
Antrim	#42579	NH 31	Address red list bridge (133/132) carrying NH 31 over Steel Pond Brook
Harrisville	#42575	Chesham Road	Address red list bridge (056/058) carrying Chesham Road over Minnewawa Brook
Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT	#12210D	NH 119	Rehabilitation of red list bridges (041/040 & 042/044) carrying NH 119 over Connecticut River
Keene	#40666	NH 10 (Winchester Street)	Reconstruction of Winchester Street from NH 101 to the main entrance of the Market Basket in Swanzey including the replacement of the red list bridge over Ash Swamp Brook (118/051)
Keene	#41590	Swanzey Factory Road / NH 101	Reconstruction of NH 101 from historic Stone Arch Bridge to Branch Road
Keene	#43543	West Street	Corridor improvements from intersection of NH 9/10/12 to School Street
Marlow	#40088	NH 10 / NH 123	Address bridge (116/091) carrying NH 10 & NH 123 over Ashuelot River
Peterborough	#27712	US 202 / NH 123	Replacement of red list bridge (108/116) carrying US 202 and NH 123 over Contoocook River
Surry	#41470	NH 12	Address red list bridge (082/040) carrying NH 12 over NHRR (Abandoned)
Walpole, NH – Rockingham, VT	#41720	Bridge Street	Rehabilitation of red list bridge (062/052) carrying Bridge Street over Connecticut River

Recommendations for 2025-2034 TYP Update

NHDOT guidance for the establishment of regional priorities for the 2025-2034 TYP update indicated a regional allocation of \$4,996,384 available for priority projects to be ranked in the SWRPC planning district. With this information, SWRPC developed the following ranking for NHDOT’s consideration.

Table 2: SWRPC TYP Project Ranking for \$4,996,384 Regional Budget

Rank	Town	Route / Road	Project Description	Recommended Allocation
1	Swanzey	NH 10	Corridor Improvements from North Winchester Street to South Winchester Street	\$4,996,384
2	Keene	Base Hill Road	Reconstruction of Keene Portion of the Road	-
3	Keene	NH 12	Improvements to NH 12 and NH 32 Intersection	-

More information regarding these recommendations follows:

Swanzey: NH Route 10 (West Swanzey Road) Corridor Improvements

The scope of the top ranked project involves improvements to NH Route 10 from the intersection of North Winchester Street to South Winchester Street. The project seeks to improve safety for all users of the corridor and accommodate growing pedestrian and bicycle demand due to the residential and commercial growth that continues to occur in the project area. The NHDOT Review Committee's estimated cost for this project is \$6,771,720 assuming construction to begin in 2033. SWRPC's investment of its entire 2025-2034 regional budget, leaves a balance of \$1,775,336 remaining to fully fund the project. SWRPC has discussed several options for addressing the budget shortfall in the coming years with NHDOT and the Town of Swanzey. The project scope includes:

- The removal of the existing two-way left turn lane and the reduction of the roadway cross section to include two 11' travel lanes, 3' shoulders, and a 10' shared use path.
- A 7' vegetated swale on the west side of the road from Forest Avenue to Cobble Hill Road.
- Ten-foot-wide left turn pockets at the intersections of California Street, West Street, Perry Lane and Cobble Hill Road with ADA compliant high visibility pedestrian crossings including 5' wide raised pedestrian median islands, an upgraded retroreflective sign package and rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB).
- Five foot wide sidewalks on the east side of the roadway from California Street connecting to the existing sidewalk at West Street and from Cobble Hill Road connecting to the existing sidewalk at South Winchester Street.

This project is the result of a recommendation from a NH 10 Route Corridor Study that was conducted by SWRPC in 2021 in conjunction with the Town of Swanzey which included public engagement activities that indicated community-wide support for the proposed changes. The project is also consistent with the Town of Swanzey's Complete Streets Policy, which discusses working in partnership with NHDOT to develop and implement Complete Streets elements and considerations on certain sections of State Routes within the Town.

Keene: Base Hill Road Reconstruction of Keene Portion of the Road

The scope of this proposed project includes reconstruction of the section of Base Hill Road from the NH Route 9 intersection south to the Swanzey town line. The project's purpose is to address the changing character of traffic on the road, which the City of Keene contends is experiencing more regional traffic (including an increased presence of trucks) due to its availability as an attractive "cut-thru" detour from NH Route 9 to NH Route 10. City of Keene staff report that the road is deteriorating more frequently, and believes that the road was not constructed using adequate fill or proper drainage. The NHDOT Review Committee's estimated cost for this project is \$7,367,465 (Keene would contribute \$1,473,493 to that amount) for a construction scenario that would start in 2034. The project scope includes:

- Improvement or replacement of the existing road base. Design alternatives would include an evaluation of imported virgin material, full depth reclamation with soil amendment and/or the use of reinforcement geotextiles.
- Widening of the travel way to a consistent 32' including 12' lanes and 4' shoulders on each side.
- Improvements to roadside drainage ditches and culverts to prevent saturation of the road's base material.

Please note that this project was originally proposed for the entirety of Base Hill Road including the Swanzey portion which intersects further south with NH Route 10, but NHDOT's Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance indicated that the Swanzey portion of the road is not eligible for federal funds at this time. It is SWRPC's understanding that NHDOT is reviewing the federal functional classification status of the Swanzey portion of the road for possible change to a major collector (like the Keene portion of the road). We ask

NHDOT to keep SWRPC informed regarding the results of NHDOT's federal functional classification review process, as it may impact the future direction of this project proposal.

Keene: Improvements to NH 12 and NH 32 Intersection

This project, nominated by the City of Keene, would involve reconfiguring the NH Route 12 and Route 32 intersection. The junction of the two Routes is currently configured as a "Y", with an angle of approximately 45° and the proposal is to determine if the installation of a signalized intersection and/or a redesign of the intersection to a different configuration such as a roundabout would improve overall efficiency and safety. The NHDOT Review Committee's estimated cost for the project is \$3,908,446 for a scenario that would construct the intersection improvement in 2033.

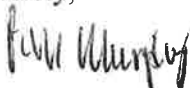
Additional Feedback

SWRPC continues to value our partnership with NHDOT to address New Hampshire's most urgent transportation needs by developing a draft TYP for the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) hearings scheduled for later this year. However, like NHDOT, we are concerned at the continued insufficiency of revenues for adequately addressing transportation infrastructure needs. This is the fourth TYP cycle in a row in which SWRPC lacks a regional budget allocation sufficient to complete its top-ranked priority project.

Finally, we would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge NHDOT for responding to the input from SWRPC and others through letters and GACIT hearing testimony about the need for additional investment in transit in New Hampshire. More specifically we are encouraged by the decision to make continued use of underutilized Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program funds to address transit needs. Our expectation is that all of the funding that has been made available to our region will be used rapidly and efficiently to meet the needs of our growing, aging transit dependent population.

As previously stated, SWRPC will submit its scoring and evaluation materials to the Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance, including project information forms and supporting documentation for each of the new projects considered for the 2025-2034 TYP update. We look forward to working collaboratively with you and your staff in the process to develop the draft 2025-2034 TYP update for consideration by the GACIT and beyond. Please feel free to contact me or J. B. Mack if you have any questions about this correspondence.

Sincerely,



Tim Murphy
Executive Director

- cc: Honorable David Wheeler, NH Executive Council (email)
Honorable Cinde Warmington, NH Executive Council (email)
NH Senators, SWRPC Region (email)
NH Representatives, SWRPC Region (email)
Bill Watson, NHDOT Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance (email)
James Marshall, NHDOT Bureau of Highway Design (email)
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