

**Southwest Region Planning Commission**  
**Transportation Advisory Committee**

**Minutes**

**June 5, 2023**

**Present:** Frank Sterling, Vice Chair, *Town of Jaffrey*; Susan Ashworth, *Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services*; Sara Carbonneau, *Town of Winchester*; Leslie Casey, *Town of Sullivan*; Mike Kowalczyk, *Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative*; Gus Lerandean, *Town of Swanzey*; Leandra MacDonald, *Town of Peterborough*; Cheryl Mayberry, *Town of Walpole*; Ed Smith, *Town of Hinsdale*; Lucy St. John (ex officio), *NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT)* (remote).

**Staff members present:** Tim Murphy, *Executive Director*; J. B. Mack, *Assistant Director*; Becky Baldwin, *Office Manager*; Henry Underwood, *GIS Specialist/Planner*; Jason Cooper, *Planner*.

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Vice Chairman Sterling called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m., welcomed those in attendance, and asked for introductions from attendees.

**II. Minutes of April 3, 2023**

**Motion: To approve the minutes of April 3, 2023 as presented.**

Motion by Gus Lerandean, seconded by Ed Smith. Approved by unanimous vote.

**III. Transportation Program Updates**

J. B. Mack referred TAC members to the transportation program update information that was included in the agenda packet. Mike Kowalczyk referred to the update on the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program and asked what the next step would be towards installing a roundabout at the Rt. 9/10/12/101 intersection in Keene. J. B. Mack responded that the Keene Public Works Department has expressed interest in moving forward with this proposed project. He added that this is just the start of the process and will involve nominations and approvals with any accepted project ultimately constructed.

**IV. Southwest Connects Long Range Transportation Plan Update**

J. B. Mack reminded TAC members that this would be a continuation of the discussion that began at the April 3, 2023 meeting regarding proposed modifications to the existing goals and objectives for the *Southwest Connects Long Range Transportation Plan* update. Henry Underwood reviewed comments received regarding softening the language used in Goals 1 through 4 and their respective Objectives. A copy of the proposed changes is attached to these minutes. Performance Measures were also discussed in

April and included changes to bring them in line with State reporting requirements. Staff made sure that each goal had performance measures attached to them. In April suggestions were made to include rail trail usage and to acknowledge employment vacancies. It was determined that our current counting program cannot accommodate trail usage and at this time we cannot quantify the number of open positions in each community. Sara Carbonneau suggested that covered bridges that are functionally obsolete be included. It was also suggested that any wording referring to “ensure” be changed to “strive to” since using ensure sounds like we will guarantee changes. Another possible way of phrasing suggested using the words “work to promote”. It was suggested to allow staff to do any necessary wordsmithing and TAC members present agreed.

**Motion: To update and approve changes to the *Southwest Connects Long Range Transportation Plan* as discussed.**

Motion by Leandra MacDonald, seconded by Leslie Casey. Approved by unanimous vote.

## **V. Proposed Changes to Federal Functional Classification and Urbanized Areas in the Southwest Region Planning District**

J. B. Mack explained that after each decennial census the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations to re-evaluate their highway system’s federal functional classifications and urbanized areas. In New Hampshire, proposed changes are submitted to regional planning commissions for their feedback prior to being sent by NHDOT to FHWA. Boundaries determined by the Census can be modified to be consistent with transportation needs. Any changes need to be approved by the Secretary of Transportation. J. B. Mack noted the guidelines set by FHWA when adjusting the boundaries and noted any change can have implications on federal funding such as Highway Block Grants and the Transportation Alternatives Program.

J. B. Mack presented a series of slides that depict the changes proposed to address “holes” created by the reclassification when comparing the 2010 Census data to the 2020 Census data. These areas include Langdon Place/Keene Country Club, NHDOT District IV, Market Basket, Monadnock Humane Society and The Mountain Corporation location. It was also noted that traffic generators such as the Keene transfer station and Keene State College’s Owl Athletic Complex/Dr. Ron Butcher Field need to be included. Sara Carbonneau suggested also including the area near Hamshaw’s Hardware store. Urban areas outside of the Census urban area to be considered are Marcy Hill Road and Arrowcrest Drive which are high-density residential areas as well as Woodside Ave., Hillside Ave., and Bellevue St. which are adjacent to a neighborhood that is part of the urban area. It is also suggested that Gilsum Rd. and Old Homestead Highway be removed since they are not traffic generators and do not have urban characteristics. Leandra MacDonald questioned why Marlborough was included and J. B. Mack responded because of their density and proximity to Keene. Henry Underwood added that they are also contiguous to the core area.

J. B. Mack reviewed the federal functional classifications noting that, just as the population can generate changes to classifications, so can things such as access and mobility resources. He noted that of the seven federal classifications we do not have interstates, freeways or expressways in the region. NHDOT made recommendations to change three federal functional classifications on roads including:

- 1) Rt. 137 in Bennington from local to a major collector. Mike Kowalczyk asked if changing this classification will increase the travel of large trucks which might be of concern to local residents.

J. B. Mack explained that the major change here will make the road eligible for federal funding. He added that staff agrees with NHDOT's recommendation.

- 2) Change the classification of Base Hill Road from local to major collector. He noted that the Keene portion of this road is already classified as a major collector. This recommendation would need to be agreed to by the NHDOT front office. Mike Kowalczyk asked if making the change would allow additional funding opportunities for this road and J. B. Mack responded that the change would be marginal. He noted that staff agrees with NHDOT's recommendation.
- 3) Change the functional classification on NH 119 east of US 202 from a minor arterial to a major collector. J. B. Mack explained that staff looked at classifications for this road in Massachusetts and Rt. 202 clearly has more traffic than Rt. 119. Staff recommends changing the classification on Rt. 202 but keep the Rt. 119 portion as a minor arterial.

**Motion: To provide feedback to NHDOT regarding proposed changes to federal functional classifications based on staff recommendations.**

Motion by Ed Smith, seconded by Gus Lerandean. Approved by unanimous vote.

#### **VI. Other Matters**

No other matters were brought before the TAC at this time.

#### **VII. Next Meeting:**

Following discussion, TAC members agreed to schedule the next meeting for August 28, 2023.

#### **VIII. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin  
Office Manager