

*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

Leslie Casey  
Sullivan

William Faulkner  
Pathways for Keene

Dale Gray  
Winchester

Leandra MacDonald  
Peterborough

Cheryl Mayberry  
Walpole

Ed Smith  
Hinsdale

Bruce Tatro  
Swanzey

Ruth Ward  
Stoddard

with

John Kallfelz  
NHDOT District 4

and

Lucy St. John  
NHDOT Bureau of  
Planning & Community  
Assistance

**Transportation Advisory Committee**

**April 4, 2022  
2:00 p.m.**

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

**Attendees may also attend the meeting online:**

<https://bit.ly/Apr4TAC22>

**Meeting ID: 815 9515 6826**

**Password: 335206**

**Telephone: (646) 558-8656**

**Agenda**

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Minutes of February 7, 2022
- III. Transportation Program Updates
- IV. Presentation: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
- V. Next Meeting: June 6, 2022
- VI. Adjourn



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**Southwest Region Planning Commission**

**Transportation Advisory Committee**

**Minutes**

**February 7, 2022**

**Present:** Kendall Lane, Chairman, *City of Keene*; Brian Barden, *Town of Dublin*; Leslie Casey, *Town of Sullivan*; William Faulkner, *Pathways for Keene* (remote); Leandra MacDonald, *Town of Peterborough*; Cheryl Mayberry, *Town of Walpole*; Frank Sterling, *Town of Jaffrey*; Bruce Tatro, *Town of Swanzey*; John Kallfelz (ex officio), *NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT)*; Lucy St. John (ex officio) *NHDOT* (remote).

**Staff members present:** Rebecca Baldwin, Office Manager; J. B. Mack, Principal Planner; Todd Horner, Senior Planner.

**Guests present:** Ellen Avery, *Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC)* (remote).

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Lane called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. He acknowledged that a quorum of the membership was attending in-person with two attending remotely. He announced that the meeting was being recorded and that all votes would be taken by roll call.

**II. Minutes of December 6, 2021**

**Motion: To approve the minutes of December 6, 2021 as presented.**

Motion by Cheryl Mayberry, seconded by Leslie Casey. Minutes were approved by unanimous roll call vote with Leandra MacDonald, Frank Sterling and Bruce Tatro abstaining.

**III. Transportation Program Updates**

Chairman Lane referred members to the program update summary that was included in the agenda packet. He encouraged members to contact staff with any questions they might have.

**IV. Presentation: Microtransit in the Monadnock Region - Factors of Feasibility**

J. B. Mack reported that last year SWRPC received Federal Transit Administration funding through the NHDOT to conduct a Microtransit and Volunteer Driver Program Improvement Feasibility Study. He noted that we currently have several volunteer driver programs in the region with the largest being CVTC. Their service evolves around volunteers signing-up to provide rides to individuals for non-emergency medical appointments, shopping and work related activities. The study being conducted by SWRPC will look into ways to improve the current volunteer driver program. This form of transit is inexpensive to operate since

the only compensation received by volunteers is reimbursement of their gas mileage. The other part of the study looks at microtransit which is an innovative way to provide service for the region and is the subject of today's meeting. The Study began in July of 2021 and extends through December of 2022 and is comprised of three phases. Phase I consisted of conducting research on how volunteer driver and microtransit programs can benefit our area. Phase II will look at various scenarios for expanding transportation services beyond what are currently provided. Phase III involves the development of an implementation plan during the last six months of the project.

Todd Horner provided a presentation on the research that has been conducted regarding the microtransit portion of the Study. He encouraged members to visit the SWRPC website for complete details. Microtransit is a new concept that utilizes a combination of ridehailing and public bus elements. There are no set routes or schedules for rides and they are generated on-demand using smart phone technology. The service relies on using a fleet of smaller vehicles to meet ride demand which helps address greenhouse gas concerns as well as parking concerns in downtown areas. Todd Horner explained that there are several types of microtransit services including zone-based, first/last mile, point deviation, and flex route. Several factors need to be taken into account when designing the type of microtransit service that will work best for our region including the intended service area, method for making ride reservations, vehicle selection, pick-up and drop-off locations, and connection to other modes of transit. He reviewed three case studies representing various microtransit operations in Montpelier, VT, Wilson, NC, and Baldwin County, AL.

Chairman Lane asked if our Study is complete at this time and Todd Horner responded we are at the point of bringing on a consulting team to further investigate our options. Chairman Lane asked if the process will identify someone to run the operation if it is determined to be feasible and Todd Horner noted that input from current transit providers in our region will be incorporated into any recommendations that are made.

Frank Sterling asked how the cost of a fixed route would compare to the use of microtransit. Todd Horner noted it would be based on the specific scenario but microtransit can be more cost effective because smaller vehicles are used for specific destinations and vehicles run only when they are needed.

Chairman Lane asked if a microtransit operation were to be based in Keene would it be cost effective to extend the service to surrounding communities. J. B. Mack explained that we will be working directly with HCS using their City Express route system to make comparisons between what we have now and what a microtransit system could provide. Exploring having sub-regional areas of service such as Marlborough, Swanzey, Keene and Peterborough, Jaffrey, Rindge will be included in the analysis. Chairman Lane observed that organizations in other communities need to actively participate for a microtransit program to succeed. Leandra MacDonald noted that a regional system needs to be created and we also need to identify ways to screen volunteers.

Ellen Avery expressed concern that most pilot transportation projects are based in Keene and need to branch out to include other communities. She added that the need for transportation services is greater in our smaller rural communities. She asked what the range of ride service would be for a microtransit program in our region. Todd Horner responded that we are in the process of identifying what the range of service would be through activities being conducted for the Survey. He noted that the microtransit program service area for Baldwin County, AL is larger than all of Cheshire County.

Ellen Avery questioned why the Friendly Bus service isn't considered as microtransit. Todd Horner explained it isn't considered microtransit because use of the program has age restrictions and requires advance reservations for rides.

Bruce Tatro asked what determined the need for this type of study. Todd Horner explained that the Study is in response to the fact that we have a lack of transportation options within our region. Changing

demographics draw attention to our mobility issues and the need to expand our current options. J. B. Mack pointed out that following housing costs, transportation is the second highest household expense for residents. Chairman Lane observed that we have been looking for alternatives to the one person per car scenario for a number of years.

Cheryl Mayberry pointed-out that school districts statewide struggle to find ways to get children to schools and ensure their safety so it is important to explore all our options.

**V. SWRPC Transportation Engineering Services**

J. B. Mack explained that a new aspect has been added to our NHDOT work program. A modest budget has been provided to obtain on-call engineering services. At a minimum the idea would be to provide assistance to TAC in reviewing Ten Year Plan project proposals that come before them regarding cost estimates. Assistance could also be extended to our communities to provide technical engineering assistance in developing projects such as Transportation Alternatives Program projects. Staff is in the process of developing a RfQ to be sent out to engineering firms and will be asking representatives from TAC to assist in the selection once proposals are received. The selection committee will also be asked to assist in identifying a process by which projects will be identified for engineer review.


**VI. Next Meeting:**

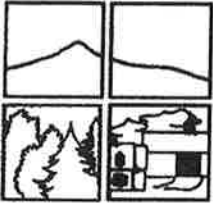
J. B. Mack announced that the next meeting of TAC is scheduled to take place on April 4, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. A presentation will be given by a representative of the Federal Highway Administration on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

**VII. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Rebecca I. Baldwin  
Office Manager



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## Agenda Item III

**Date:** April 4, 2022  
**To:** Transportation Advisory Committee  
**From:** Staff

**RE: Transportation Program Updates**

### Background

Several transportation-related items of interest are summarized below. These items can be discussed further during the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

- a. Transit and Shared Ride Feasibility Study: SWRPC has procured a consultant, Via Mobility, Inc. (Via) to provide technical support to the Transit and Shared Ride Feasibility Study. Via will manage a scope of work that includes conducting an existing conditions analysis, an analysis of transit service alternatives (including an assessment of the feasibility of microtransit, the presentation topic at the February 7<sup>th</sup> TAC meeting), stakeholder and public engagement activities, and the development of an implementation plan, recommendations and a final report. In April, following Via's existing conditions analysis, SWRPC plans to convene a stakeholder working group meeting to discuss project goals, and review existing conditions maps and data prepared by Via. A date has not been set for this meeting at the time of writing.
- b. Request for Qualifications for On-Call Engineering Services: Following SWRPC's call for TAC volunteers to assist staff in evaluating consultant proposals and developing recommendations on how projects would be prioritized, TAC members John Kallfelz, Leandra MacDonald, and Cheryl Mayberry agreed to serve on a subcommittee. The deadline for RfQs was March 25<sup>th</sup>. A total of three proposals were submitted to SWRPC. The subcommittee will be meeting in early April to discuss proposals and next steps.
- c. Monadnock Region Coordinating Council (MRCC): The MRCC has begun the process of reviewing proposals and selecting community transportation improvement projects to be funded through the NH Department of Health and Human Services Rural Transportation Equity Project. Approximately \$390,000 is available through May 2023 to support projects that address disparities during the COVID-19 pandemic particular to populations in the Monadnock Region who have difficulty accessing essential services, testing and vaccinations. Target populations include those who are unable to drive, including but not limited to those without access to personal vehicles, children, individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals, and older adults. Funding recipients will likely include transportation service providers and agencies that serve the target populations. Examples of projects that have been proposed to date include expanding existing shopping shuttle services to improve food access for underserved populations and offering on-demand transportation for low-income children and youth to and/or from daycare and afterschool programs.
- d. Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST): It appears that MAST will sponsor a 2022 round of funding in support of municipally-sponsored complete streets

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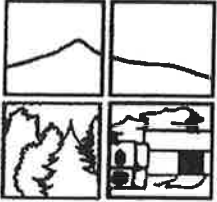
implementation projects. Communities and others interested in promoting biking for transportation are encouraged to begin planning for events or other activities for National Bike Month during the month of May. This year, Bike to Work Week will occur May 16<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup>. During the month, MAST will help to promote the Commute Smart NH Spring Challenge, where individuals and organizations across the state can compete to log the most sustainable trips to work while earning rewards and a shot at raffle prizes. Learn more about the Spring Challenge at <https://commutesmartnh.org/spring-statewide-challenge/>.

- e. **Planning for Electric Vehicles:** With \$17.3 million in funding from the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law earmarked for New Hampshire, SWRPC is working with other New Hampshire regional planning commissions and state agencies to gather useful information to help prepare municipalities for electric vehicle charging. SWRPC staff activities include examining the Federal Highway Administration's recently released report *Charging Forward: A Toolkit for Planning and Funding Rural Electric Mobility Infrastructure* and release of a blog on SWRPC's website. Go to the news section on SWRPC's homepage to review the blog, [www.swrpc.org](http://www.swrpc.org).

In addition to the above, SWRPC staff and TAC members may suggest other transportation related updates during the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Recommendation**

For your information.



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## Agenda Item IV

**Date:** April 4, 2022  
**To:** Transportation Advisory Committee  
**From:** Staff

**RE: Presentation: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law**

### **Background**

Leigh Levine, Planning and Development Manager from the New Hampshire Division Office of the Federal Highway Administration, will be visiting the SWRPC TAC on April 4<sup>th</sup> to deliver a presentation and answer questions about the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The State of New Hampshire is slated to receive over \$2 billion from the BIL, with the vast majority - \$1.56 billion - apportioned by formula towards highway, bridge, electric vehicle charging, public transportation, and airport needs. For more information about the transportation aspects of the BIL, visit <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/>.

### **Recommendation**

For your information.

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