

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" Lerandean
Swanzy

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*

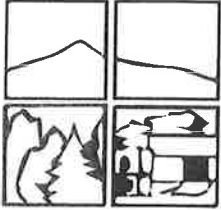
Transportation Advisory Committee

**August 28, 2023
2:00 p.m.**

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

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Minutes of June 5, 2023
- III. Transportation Program Updates
- IV. FY 2025-2034 Ten Year Plan Update
- V. Presentation: Planning for Electric Vehicle Charging
- VI. Other Matters
- VII. Next Meeting: November 6, 2023 "or as needed"
- VIII. Adjourn



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

Existing

Goal 1: The transport system will be managed to support and enhance the regional economy.

Objective 1A: It will be managed to foster a reliable business climate for existing and new businesses.

Objective 1B: It will be managed to leverage, attract and stimulate new investment.

Objective 1C: It will be managed to nurture and support regional economic diversity.

Objective 1D: It will provide transportation efficiency solutions for households, businesses, and taxpayers and free up scarce resources for personal, business and community investments.

Goal 2: The transport system will be managed to help preserve and enhance natural, cultural and historic resources.

Objective 2A: It will be managed to ensure high quality water, soil and air.

Objective 2B: It will be managed to reduce greenhouse gases from transportation emissions.

Objective 2C: It will be managed to support existing flora and fauna and their habitat.

Objective 2D: It will be managed to preserve the sense of place of its villages, downtowns, parks and other unique cultural and historic destinations.

Proposed

Goal 1: The transportation system will support and enhance the regional economy.

Objective 1A: It will foster a reliable business climate for existing and new businesses.

Objective 1B: It will leverage, attract and stimulate new investment.

Objective 1C: It will nurture and support regional economic diversity.

Objective 1D: It will provide cost-effective transportation solutions for households, businesses and communities freeing up scarce resources for other personal, business and community investments.

Goal 2: The transportation system will preserve and enhance natural, cultural and historic resources.

Objective 2A: It will ensure high quality water, soil and air.

Objective 2B: It will reduce greenhouse gases from transportation emissions.

Objective 2C: It will support existing flora and fauna and their habitat.

Objective 2D: It will preserve the sense of place of its villages, downtowns, parks and other unique cultural and historic destinations.

Existing

Goal 3: The transport system will provide people of all ages and abilities timely access to goods, services, recreation, entertainment and companionship.

Objective 3A: It will preserve mobility on all backbone arterial highways identified in all 8 corridors of the SOUTHWEST CONNECTS Plan.

Objective 3B: It will maintain public access of existing public infrastructure that currently causes or is expected to cause unreasonable detours.

Objective 3C: It will improve mode of transport choices as well as the quality of existing alternative choices inside the region and with outside destinations.

Objective 3D: It will support and encourage local efforts to improve street, sidewalk, bicycle path and virtual connectivity as well as land use practices that reduce overreliance on building transportation capacity or requirements for long-distance transportation solutions.

Proposed

Goal 3: The transport system will provide timely access to goods, services, recreation, entertainment and companionship to people of all ages, abilities and income levels.

Objective 3A: It will preserve mobility and reliability on backbone arterial highways.

Objective 3B: It will maintain access to pathways, roads, bridges, and railways by addressing causes of unreasonable delays and detours due to asset condition, design, failure or other restrictions.

Objective 3C: It will offer convenient alternatives to driving to destinations inside and outside of the Region.

Objective 3D: It will support local efforts to improve street, sidewalk, bicycle path and virtual connectivity as well as land use practices that reduce overreliance on building transportation capacity or requirements for long-distance transportation solutions.

Goal 4: The transport system will be designed and managed to eliminate fatalities and injuries as well as provide reassurance to the traveling public that they are safe.

Objective 4A: It will be designed and managed to address the unique safety challenges of special populations including but not limited to senior citizens, the disabled and the youth.

Objective 4B: It will eliminate safety risks associated with poor transportation asset conditions.

Objective 4C: It will address safety concerns of "incomplete streets" and its effect on the traveling public's comfort level while walking, biking or using transit.

Objective 4D: It will proactively mitigate potential dangers associated from severe storm events and other causes of potential hazards.

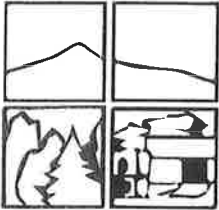
Goal 4: The transportation system will eliminate fatalities and injuries as well as increase all users' comfort and sense of safety.

Objective 4A: It will address the unique safety challenges of special populations including but not limited to older adults, people with disabilities, and youth.

Objective 4B: It will eliminate safety risks associated with poor transportation asset conditions.

Objective 4C: It will feature designs that include effective safety countermeasures and strategies designed for all road users.

Objective 4D: It will proactively mitigate potential dangers associated from severe storm events and other causes of potential hazards.



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603-357-7440 Fax

Agenda Item III

Date: August 28, 2023
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 at the August 28th meeting.

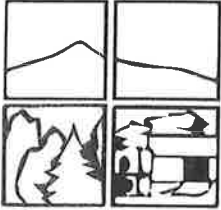
- a. Planning for an Improved Southwest NH Transit System: SWRPC launched a new two-year project in July 2023 to evaluate transit system operating models for the Southwest New Hampshire Region. The project aims to identify an operating model to support a more innovative, coordinated and resilient transportation system for Keene and surrounding communities. The evaluation is being conducted as a follow-up to the recently completed Microtransit and Fixed Route Transit Feasibility Study which yielded a regional transit framework consisting of zones and corridors where expanded transit service is likely to be most effective in the Region. This next effort is to explore transit service models and governance structure and consider what might be best aligned with Southwest NH. Objectives include creating a roadmap that identifies steps, timelines, partners and resources that would be needed to implement the preferred model. Among the prospective models to be examined are a municipally run transit system, county transit system, public-private partnership Mobility as a Service-based system, and non-profit system. Activities over the coming weeks include conducting a literature review, research and interviews with experts familiar with different transit operating and governance structures, formation of an Advisory Task Force to serve as a sounding board for project activities, and release of a Request for Proposals for procuring a consultant to assist SWRPC with the project.
- b. Swanzy Culvert Inventory and Assessment: For the last decade, SWRPC has offered technical assistance in both inventorying and assessing culverts and stream crossings according to standardized guidelines and criteria developed in conjunction with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDT), New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) and other agencies. In early August, SWRPC began work on a project to inventory and assess all locally-maintained culverts and stream crossings in Swanzy. The project is expected to take approximately eight months to complete and is supported by SWRPC's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) with a cost-share from the Town. The results will provide a number of benefits in support of hazard mitigation planning, stream and habitat restoration activities, capital improvements planning, asset management, and in conducting routine maintenance. Notably, the project results will serve as an information source for the Town's ongoing NHDES-supported asset management planning activities focused on their wastewater and stormwater infrastructure as well as an upcoming SWRPC initiative to examine infrastructure resilience. Communities interested in learning more or initiating a project of their own are encouraged to contact SWRPC staff.

- c. New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Grant Opportunities: NHDES is currently accepting proposals for its Clean Diesel and Granite State Clean Fleets programs. Both grants aim to help replace ageing, highly polluting diesel vehicles and equipment with newer, less polluting diesel replacements, or their electric counterparts. The Clean Diesel program is available for public entities as well as private companies and provides a total of \$800,000 in funding for all projects and the deadline for proposals is September 15, 2023. The Clean Fleets program is available only to local governments and has a total of \$10,000,000 in funding available with a deadline for proposals of October 13, 2023.
- d. Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council (MRCC) and Mobility Management: During the year ending June 30, 2023, MRCC-affiliated community transportation providers logged a total of 12,932 one-way trips for older adults, people with disabilities, underserved youth, and others to medical appointments, grocery shopping, after school programs, and essential services. This represents a 97.5% increase in the number of trips provided from the previous fiscal year. Of these trips, 57.5% were provided by volunteer driver programs, which serve as the backbone of the Region's community transportation system. Factors contributing to the increase include an infusion of new funding for community transportation and mobility management services from the NH Department of Health and Human Services and federal Centers for Disease Control, increased rider enrollments since the end of the pandemic, and enhanced resources for volunteer driver recruitment. Due to efforts of the NH Public Transportation Coalition, approximately \$2 million in funding for transit services was included in the State budget for the two-year biennium beginning July 1, 2023. A portion of these funds will be available to support transit services in Southwest NH. The Select Boards of Jaffrey and Winchester adopted resolutions in support of the increased funding prior to the passage of the State budget in June.
- e. Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST): MAST announced a 2023 Complete Streets Implementation Grant opportunity with up to \$120,000 to support construction projects, engineering and municipal complete streets policy development. The deadline for applications and other supplemental materials is 5:00 p.m. on September 22, 2023. Details are available at the MAST website (mastnh.org/2023-complete-streets-grant) and were announced through SWRPC's newsletters and correspondence to municipal staff. The grant opportunity was promoted through information sessions at MAST's Annual Meeting on July 19th and two virtual opportunities on August 8th and 15th. Communities interested in this opportunity are encouraged to contact SWRPC staff. The MAST Steering Committee has established a Subcommittee to review, score, and rank applications and make funding award recommendations later this year.

In addition to the above, SWRPC staff and TAC members may suggest other transportation-related updates during the August 28th meeting.

Recommendation

For your information.



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Agenda Item IV

Date: August 28, 2023
To: Transportation Advisory Committee
From: Staff

RE: FY 2025-2034 Ten Year Plan Update

Background

The Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) met on June 28th for its kick-off meeting regarding the draft FY 2025-2034 Ten Year Plan (TYP) update. The objective of the meeting was for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to provide an overview of the state of transportation infrastructure in New Hampshire, discuss budgeting assumptions that it plans to use for the next TYP, and to share its approach to prioritizing investments in the TYP. At the meeting, NHDOT announced that it intends to publish a draft TYP in late August 2023 and made initial arrangements with GACIT to schedule TYP public hearings throughout the State during fall 2023. A copy of NHDOT's presentation and other handouts distributed at the kick-off GACIT meeting are available for review at <https://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/typ/index.htm>.

During the August 28th TAC meeting, NHDOT staff plan to provide a brief, high-level overview on the FY 2025-2034 TYP update process and entertain questions. In addition, SWRPC staff plans to set aside some time to engage the TAC in a discussion about talking points for use during the upcoming GACIT hearings.

Recommendation

For your information.



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Agenda Item V

Date: August 28, 2023
To: Transportation Advisory Committee
From: Staff

RE: Presentation: Planning for Electric Vehicle Charging

Background

Electric vehicles (EVs) represent a fast-growing sector of the transportation industry. In New Hampshire the development of charging infrastructure necessary for widespread adoption of the technology lags behind other states. SWRPC has been working with regional and local stakeholders, as well as NHDOT, to address infrastructure needs to better support EVs.

SWRPC staff will present on these efforts at the August 28th TAC meeting. Topics to be discussed include:

- Funding Opportunities made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).
- Municipal technical assistance for EV planning.
- SWRPC activities to date:
 - o Developed Survey to gauge community perception and need surrounding EVs.
 - o Blog posts, including entries titled: *The Value Proposition: Why Install Public Charging Stations*, *A Primer on Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Charging Station Types*, and *New Grant Program to Expand EV Charging Infrastructure*.
 - o Collaboration with partner organizations: including Clean Energy NH and Drive Electric NH (DENH).
 - o In conjunction with DENH, developed a municipal EV toolkit.
 - o Compilation and review of existing resources related to electric vehicles.
 - o Interviews with local stakeholders involved with charging infrastructure development.

Recommendation

For your information.