

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

**Transportation
Advisory Committee**

Transportation Advisory Committee

Kendall Lane, Chair
Keene

**September 9, 2024
2:00 p.m.**

Frank Sterling, Vice Chair
Jaffrey

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

Susan Ashworth
HCS Community Services

Brian Barden
Dublin

Agenda

Sara Carbonneau
Winchester

Michael Kowalczyk
*Monadnock Region Rail
Trails Collaborative*

Alfred "Gus" Lerandeau
Swanzy

Leandra MacDonald
Peterborough

Cheryl Mayberry
Walpole

Jesse Rounds
Keene

Ed Smith
Hinsdale

Ruth Ward
Stoddard

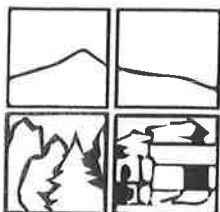
with

John Kallfelz
NHDOT District 4

and

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

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Minutes of May 6, 2024
- III. Transportation Program Updates
- IV. Presentation: Creating a "Next Generation" Public Transportation System for the Monadnock Region
- V. Other Matters
- VI. Next Meeting: October 7, 2024
- VII. Adjourn



Southwest Region Planning Commission

Transportation Advisory Committee

Minutes

May 6, 2024

Present: Kendall Lane, Chair, *City of Keene*; Frank Sterling, Vice Chair, *Town of Jaffrey*; Susan Ashworth, *HCS Community Services*; Brian Barden, *Town of Dublin*; Michael Kowalczyk, *Monadnock Region Rail Trails Collaborative*; John Kallfelz, *New Hampshire Department of Transportation District 4 (NHDOT)*; Alfred “Gus” Lerandean, *Town of Swanzey*; Leandra MacDonald, *Town of Peterborough*; Ed Smith, *Town of Hinsdale*.

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

Guests: Jessica Wilcox, Jennifer Galbraith, and Jack Wade, *NH Department of Environmental Services*; William Rose, *NHDOT (remote)*; Ned Hulbert, Mary Day Mordecai, *Town of Harrisville*.

I. Welcome and Introductions

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

II. Minutes of March 4, 2024

Motion: To approve the minutes of March 4, 2024 as presented.

Motion by Brian Barden, seconded by Ed Smith. Approved by unanimous vote.

III. Transportation Program Updates

Chairman Lane asked if TAC members had any questions about the transportation program updates memo in the meeting packet. There were no questions.

IV. New Hampshire Priority Climate Action Plan Debrief

J.B. Mack introduced Jennifer Galbraith, Climate and Energy Program Manager from the NH Department of Environment Services (NH DES) Air Resources Division who provided a presentation on NH DES efforts to apply for US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Protection Reduction Grant (CPRG) funds for the State of NH. The CPRG was designed by EPA to address three major objectives including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, seeking input from communities overburdened by the effects of pollution and climate change and aid in the reduction of harmful air pollution where people live, work, play and attend school. The CRPG is broken into two separate grants, a four-year planning grant and

a 5-year implementation grant. The two grants have separate timelines, with different milestones, lengths and deliverables. One NH DES team is working on both grants. Jennifer Galbraith reviewed the requirements and deliverables associated with each of the grants. The NH DES team developed a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) that due to the compressed timeframe was used as the pre-requisite for the Implementation Grant application. It will be announced in July if the Implementation Planning Grant is awarded and if it is NH would have until October 2029 to complete the requirements of the grant. Comprehensive Climate Action Plans must be completed by August 2025. Jennifer Galbraith noted that EPA is expected to award more Planning Grants than Implementation Grants. NH is applying for a \$50 million Implementation Grant that will address weatherization, EV charging infrastructure, expansion of public transportation options, wastewater and drinking water systems, waste material management, and workforce development. Frank Sterling asked if Jaffrey would be able to apply for funding for their wastewater treatment plant and Jennifer Galbraith cautioned that this question is premature since funding has not been announced or awarded yet.

Jennifer Galbraith noted that NH DES has applied for \$500 million as part of a five-state coalition including Connecticut, who is taking the lead, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. Jennifer Galbraith explained that Vermont is not a part of this coalition since they applied for funding on their own. NH DES joined a second coalition for \$500 million New England Heat Pump Accelerator Program that is comprised of fifteen states including Hawaii, who is taking the lead, Arizona, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin. If awarded each of the participating states would receive funding in the amount of \$30 million.

Mike Kowalczyk asked if there is a required match funding amount involved with the two grants and Jennifer Galbraith responded that a match is not required. She encouraged members to visit the [NH DES CRPG](#) webpage or the [UNH NH Listens CPRG](#) webpage for additional information.

V. 2027-2036 Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan

J. B. Mack explained that it is the responsibility of the TAC to advise SWRPC staff and the SWRPC Board of Directors on regional project priorities for the NH Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TYP) which is updated every two years. Even though the 2025-2034 TYP is not anticipated to be signed into law until June 2024, it is time to begin the process for the 2027-2036 TYP.

SWRPC staff began the 2027-2036 TYP process in March of 2024 by soliciting all municipalities in the Region for project nominations, requesting that applications be submitted by May 17, 2024. J. B. Mack reviewed the various timelines and deadlines for the TYP that are anticipated to be similar to those provided by NHDOT for the 2025-2034 cycle. RPC's will also be asked to confirm continued support for existing TYP projects.

SWRPC staff used various forms of outreach to get the word out about the TYP process including SWRPC's *Highlights* newsletter and SWRPC *Happenings* electronic newsletter, blog and website postings about the process, and announcements about available technical assistance utilizing on-call engineering services.

RPC's are required to use uniform criteria for project ranking but can develop their own weighting system for the criteria. It was noted that Safety and Economic Development traditionally rank the highest in our region. J. B. Mack offered to meet individually or as a group with new TAC members to explain the ranking process.

It is anticipated that the September TAC meeting will include a report from our environmental consultant to discuss the findings and cost estimates for the projects they evaluated. By the end of September it is

hoped that SWRPC staff will complete project profiles that will be used by TAC to assist them with project scoring.

J. B. Mack noted that to date we have received one TYP application for sidewalks in Swanzey and are anticipating additional ones from Keene and Marlborough.

Ed Smith, Chairman Lane and Frank Sterling noted that the criteria developed by the RPC's and NHDOT last year worked well.

Motion: Unless NHDOT announces major changes to the TYP process or TYP criteria, adopt the criteria weights used for the 2025-2034 TYP for the 2027-2036 TYP.

Motion by Ed Smith, seconded by Frank Sterling. Approved by unanimous vote.

Leandra MacDonald asked if any of our guests at today's meeting had any questions. None were asked and Mary Day Mordecai noted that the contingent from Harrisville were attending to gain more knowledge about the TYP process.

VI. Other Matters

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

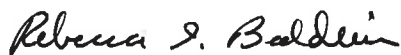
VII. Next Meeting: July 1, 2024

J.B. Mack announced that the next meeting of the TAC is tentatively scheduled for July 1, 2024 should one be needed.

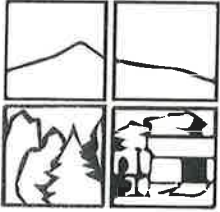
VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Rebecca I. Baldwin
Office Manager



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

Agenda Item III

Date: September 9, 2024
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 September 9th meeting.

- a. Draft Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TYP), 2027-2036: SWRPC received four TYP regional priority project nominations from Hinsdale, Keene, Marlborough and Swanzey for the 2027-2036 TYP. SWRPC is working with Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) to develop project concepts and cost estimates for the three communities that do not have a professional engineer on municipal staff (Hinsdale, Marlborough and Swanzey). At the time of writing, SWRPC is awaiting guidance from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT). NHDOT is expected to provide directions to regional planning commissions (RPCs) regarding evaluations of regional priority projects including final criteria, timelines, budgets, etc. SWRPC staff plan to dedicate the October 7th TAC meeting to the 2027-2036 TYP project evaluation process.
- b. Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TYP), 2025-2034: Governor Chris Sununu signed and approved the TYP on August 9, 2024 which is available online at <https://www.dot.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt811/files/inline-documents/typ-2025-2034-complete-book-approved-scenario-1e.8-9-2024.pdf>. Other than the removal of Surry Project #41470, which involved rehabilitating the Route 12 bridge over the Cheshire Rail Trail, no other projects in the Region were removed from the final plan. A list of all TYP changes associated with the TYP is available online at <https://www.dot.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt811/files/inline-documents/2025-2034-draft-tyt-project-changes-and-updates-8.21.2024.pdf>.
- c. Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST): At its July 17th Steering Committee meeting, attendees discussed fundraising strategies, complete streets implementation and developed an Annual Meeting agenda (tentatively scheduled for January 15th and focused on road safety strategies for municipalities). The Steering Committee also solicited individuals interested in joining the organization's eleven-member Steering Committee. MAST continued to promote their annual Complete Streets Implementation Grant opportunity through mailed and electronic announcements throughout the region. Two virtual information sessions were also offered. The program offers a total of \$100,000 for funding for complete streets projects (planning, engineering, construction) and has a deadline of September 27th. For more information go to mastnh.org/2024-complete-streets-grant.

- d. SWRPC contributes to statewide EV Planning Efforts: In March, NHDOT and the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) informed RPCs that they were exploring the submittal of a joint proposal for Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) funding made available by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Up until recently, NH's efforts in applying for federal funding for electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE, i.e. EV chargers) have focused on alternative fuel corridors only, including Routes 9 and 101 in the Monadnock Region. However, if CFI funding is awarded, the grant would help provide funding for the development of charging infrastructure in the many communities not served by these alternative fuel corridors. To strengthen their funding proposal, NHDOT and NHDES requested that the RPCs develop a list of sites and potential number of chargers that could be installed with the CFI program funding. Over the past several months, SWRPC has worked with NHDES to identify priority sites for implementation. Criteria which were used to identify these sites were those with willing hosts, sufficient power grid capacity, a favorable location, and the capacity to provide matching funds for federal funding.

Additionally, over the past year, SWRPC has worked with Drive Electric New Hampshire (DENH), a statewide coalition coordinated by Clean Energy New Hampshire, to help finalize a publication called the *New Hampshire Municipal EV Toolkit*. The guide includes a breadth of information ranging from the basics of electric vehicles to technical details regarding the siting of chargers, the economics between investment in the technology for municipal fleets, local policies and ordinances to promote charger development, and more. While DENH will be publishing the guide to their website shortly, it is now available for reference on SWRPC's website.

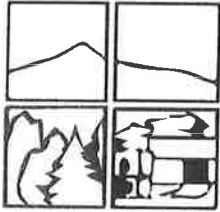
- e. Town of Antrim Road Surface Management System and Pedestrian Infrastructure Inventory: In August, SWRPC entered into an agreement with the Town of Antrim to provide Road Surface Management System (RSMS) technical assistance and a Pedestrian Infrastructure Inventory. RSMS is a data-driven process for managing paved roads that incorporates pavement-preservation principles into planning for pavement maintenance. SWRPC will also complete a field inventory and assessment of all pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks, crosswalks and curb ramps. Antrim will use this information for capital improvement planning purposes. Data collection is slated to take place in August and September 2024. A comprehensive Pavement Preservation Plan will be developed and made available to the Town in early 2025.
- f. SWRPC Timber for Transit Project: SWRPC recently received over \$1,000,000 to start a program that will source local timber products for regional transportation infrastructure projects including bridges. This Timber for Transit grant was awarded by the Northern Border Regional Commission, which was founded by Congress in 2008 to provide community and economic development assistance to distressed counties in the states of New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, and New York. Timber for Transit will help municipalities purchase local timber products for local transit projects and highlight the value of enhanced timber products. Benefits of local sourcing include bolstering community economic independence, easing product transportation costs, and reducing the output of fossil fuel emissions. The Northern Border is prime territory for valuable timber species such as eastern hemlock, sugar maple, and eastern white pine. Though the industry declined through the 20th century, forestry still provides employment for over 7,000 workers in New Hampshire alone. A recent uptick in forest-based recreation has also helped the industry expand its reach. The Timber for Transit program has a three-year grant period.

- g. Engineering Assistance for Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP): NHDOT recently announced that it anticipates starting a new Transportation Alternatives funding round in late fall of 2024. The goal of the federally funded TAP is to provide choices for non-motorized users that are safe, reliable, and convenient. Typically TAP funds pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects including sidewalks, bike lanes, multi-use paths, signage, signalization and more. While more details about the upcoming round have yet to be announced, during the last TAP round up to \$1.25 million in federal funding was made available for individual projects, with a requirement of a 20% municipal match. For SWRPC member municipalities that don't have access to a NH licensed engineer, SWRPC recently announced that it would make engineering services available through a cost share arrangement on a first come, first served basis following the completion of a screening process.

In addition to the above, SWRPC staff and TAC members may suggest other transportation-related updates during the September 9th meeting.

Recommendation

For your information.



Southwest Region Planning Commission

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Agenda Item IV

Date: September 9, 2024
To: Transportation Advisory Committee
From: Staff

RE: Creating a "Next Generation" Public Transportation System for the Monadnock Region

Background

The Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council (MRCC) has worked tirelessly over the years to deliver coordinated public transportation services to high transit-need populations, including older adults, people with disabilities, youth, and low-income individuals. The MRCC has also aspired to expand services to new areas of the Region where public transportation options are unavailable or extremely limited. With an infusion of resources in the wake of the COVID pandemic, including additional funding and full-time mobility management services, the MRCC demonstrated that it is possible to expand public transportation services in a rural Region. In this presentation, MRCC mobility manager, Terry Johnson, will highlight the MRCC's successes over the past few years, as well as progress on a SWRPC project that aims to identify a transit system managing/sponsoring entity to expand services to new parts of the Region.

Recommendation

For your information.