



SWRPC

Southwest Region
Planning Commission

37 Ashuelot Street
Keene, NH 03431
Phone: (603) 357-0557
Fax: (603) 357-7550
www.swrpc.org

Transportation Advisory Committee

Transportation Advisory Committee

June 2, 2025
2:00 p.m.

Southwest Region Planning Commission
37 Ashuelot Street, Keene, NH

Kendall Lane, Chair
Keene

Frank Sterling, Vice Chair
Jaffrey

Susan Ashworth
HCS Community Services

Brian Barden
Dublin

Michael Kowalczyk
*Monadnock Region Rail
Trails Collaborative*

Alfred "Gus" Lerandeau
Swanzey

Don Lussier
Keene

Leandra MacDonald
Peterborough

Cheryl Mayberry
Walpole

Karey Miner
Winchester

Mary Day Mordecai
Harrisville

Ed Smith
Hinsdale

Ruth Ward
Stoddard

with

Frank Linnenbringer
NHDOT District 4

and

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

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Minutes of April 7, 2025
- III. Transportation Program Updates
- IV. Presentation: NHDOT Resilience Improvement Plan
- V. Presentation: SWRPC Vulnerability Assessment
- VI. Other Matters
- VII. Next Meeting: September 8, 2025
- VIII. Adjourn

Southwest Region Planning Commission

Transportation Advisory Committee

Draft Minutes

April 7, 2025

Present: Kendall Lane, Chair, *City of Keene*; Frank Sterling, Vice Chair, *Town of Jaffrey*; Brian Barden, *Town of Dublin*; Alfred “Gus” Lerandean, *Town of Swanzey*; Frank Linnenbringer, *NHDOT District 4, ex-officio*; Leandra MacDonald, *Town of Peterborough*; Cheryl Mayberry, *Town of Walpole*; Karey Miner, *Town of Winchester*; Lucy St. John, *NHDOT Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance, ex-officio*.

Staff Members Present: Jack Ahern, *Associate Planner*; Todd Horner, *Executive Director*; J. B. Mack, *Assistant Director*.

Guests: Shannon Aiton, *NHDOT Title VI Coordinator*; Terry Clark, *Cheshire County and SWRPC Commissioner*; Allan Gillis, *Community Volunteer Transportation Company*; Chuck Redfern, *Pathways for Keene*.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Kendall Lane called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance.

II. Minutes of March 3, 2025

Motion: To approve the minutes of March 3, 2025, as presented.

Motion by Gus Lerandean, seconded by Leandra MacDonald. Karey Miner elected to abstain due to absence from that meeting. Approved by unanimous vote, less one abstention.

III. Final Recommendation for Transportation Alternatives Program Application Ranking

J. B. Mack reviewed the TAP project proposal scoring methodology and criteria for the TAC, which was based on the goals and objectives of the *Southwest Connects Long Range Transportation Plan*. He presented the scores of each project which were scored by eight TAC members, with Kendall Lane recusing himself from scoring the Keene application. The preliminary homework derived scores were as follows:

1. City of Keene, Transportation Heritage Trail – 66 points.
2. Town of Antrim, Sidewalk and Crossings Improvements on US 202/Main Street – 65.88 points.
3. Town of Alstead, Sidewalk Improvements on NH 12A/Mechanic Street/High Street – 64.88 points.

J. B. Mack gave a brief review of each project:

- Town of Alstead – construction of sidewalks on NH Route 12A/Mechanic Street connecting the existing sidewalk in front of the Shedd-Porter Memorial Library to the Alstead Primary and Vilas Middle Schools, and from the Post Office on NH 12A/High Street to the bridge over the Cold River.

Approximately 2,200 feet of concrete sidewalk in total, as well as the installation of two RRFBs at existing crossings on NH 12A. \$678,000 requested.

- Town of Antrim – improve select crossings on US Route 202/Main Street by installing lighting, curb extensions, and RRFBs, repair approximately 200 feet of sidewalk on the east side of US 202 near the intersection with Aiken Street, and the construction of approximately 1,000 feet of new sidewalk on US 202/Concord Street extending northeast from the intersection with NH Route 31. \$1.29 million requested.
- City of Keene – implementation of phase 2 of the Transportation Heritage Trail, which includes extending the existing Cheshire Rail Trail along the existing right-of-way to where it intersects with NH Route 101, installation of a historic bridge over NH 101, and safety improvements to the existing Stone Arch Bridge over the Branch River. This would complete the connection of the Cheshire Rail Trail to Swanzey. \$2 million requested.

Each project's score under each of the four criteria was displayed, as well as minimum, maximum, average, and median scores. J. B. Mack explained that the regional scores of the projects are one component of a larger application score that involves additional criteria determined by scoring by NHDOT staff, criteria associated with the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment and scoring by the Statewide Transportation Alternatives Program Committee. The regional score will make up to twenty points towards the total 100-scale score.

J. B. Mack noted that the scores among the three projects were extremely close. He stated that the TAC should now discuss whether the homework derived scores should be used as the final ranking or if any individual project merits moving up or down the ranking.

Motion: To submit the City of Keene proposal as the top ranked project by the TAC.

Motion by Frank Sterling, seconded by Gus Lerandeau. Approved by unanimous vote.

Discussion on which proposal to submit as the second ranked project took place. Frank Sterling stated that he had scored the Alstead project higher than Antrim because it would have a higher impact with concern to safety. It consists of the construction of new sidewalks where none currently exist, whereas only a small portion of the Antrim project includes new sidewalk construction. He noted there is a higher need in Alstead for pedestrian infrastructure. Gus Lerandeau asked if traffic counts had been conducted in both project areas. J. B. Mack responded that traffic counts are available and that there was a higher traffic volume in Antrim on US 202. Kendall Lane stated he had ranked the Antrim project higher due to that reason. Leandra MacDonald observed that she uses US 202 and doesn't see a need for so many crossings. She added that the proposed curb bump-outs would diminish parking availability and cause traffic to slow. J. B. Mack noted that part of the reasoning for the curb extensions is to calm traffic and that traffic counts demonstrated speeding above the posted speed limit in the area. Brian Barden stated that slowing traffic would likely have a positive impact.

J.B. Mack noted that there had been a recorded pedestrian crash at the intersection of US 202 and NH 31 in Antrim. Frank Linnenbringer stated that he had scored the Alstead project highest due to the anticipated high impact on safety regarding routes to school for children walking. There is currently no sidewalk, very limited shoulder space, and children walking cannot do so safely. The Alstead project adds more linear feet of new sidewalk where there is currently none than the Antrim project does and would not include the maintenance issues associated with curb bump-outs. Antrim's mid-block crossings on US 202 are too numerous to meet NHDOT standards as is. Cheryl Mayberry stated that the Alstead project addresses critical safety issues, especially pertaining to children walking to school.

Kendall Lane asked if there would be right-of-way issues or land taking needed for the Alstead project. Frank Linnenbringer responded that they were confident that they would not encounter problems or require any taking.

Motion: To submit the Town of Alstead proposal as the second ranked project by the TAC.

Motion by Frank Sterling, seconded by Leandre MacDonald. Approved by unanimous vote.

The Antrim project will be submitted as the third ranked project by default.

IV. Other Matters

J. B. Mack asked the TAC if they were familiar with New Hampshire House Bill 649, which proposes to eliminate annual vehicle safety inspections on passenger vehicles. Kendall Lane stated his disapproval of the proposal, adding that inspections are usually when motorists are informed of needed repairs and maintenance on their vehicles that they would otherwise not know of. He added that the house bill is likely irrelevant because the same proposal had been added as a trailer bill to the State's operating budget bill in a separate bid to get it passed. Frank Sterling stated he believes it is a necessary requirement to maintain safety and emissions standards.

J. B. Mack informed the TAC that only 11 states currently require safety inspections by law. Leandra MacDonald said that she believes it is necessary in states like New Hampshire that deal with salted roads and high levels of precipitation and moisture. She also made note of the likely impact on business for mechanics and repair shops that perform inspections. Kendall Lane mentioned the impact it would have on insurance rates, stating that they would likely rise sharply and so would the number of uninsured drivers.

Terry Clark asked if support for the bill came from consumers or service providers. J. B. Mack responded that service providers have generally pushed back against the bill. He added that testimony from a former State Police investigator had found that less than 1% of accidents could be attributed to poorly maintained vehicles. Allan Gillis stated that he was curious to see how it would affect volunteer driving service providers. They use vehicle inspections to vet volunteers' vehicles for the safety of their clients. Frank Sterling reiterated Leandra's previous point regarding the climate of New England, stating that salt and moisture levels cause rust more rapidly than in other regions of the county.

On a separate matter, Frank Sterling announced to the TAC that digging had commenced for the new bridge abutments for the Jaffrey dog-leg project.

V. Next Meeting: June 2, 2025

J. B. Mack announced that the next meeting of the TAC is scheduled for June 2, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Ahern
Associate Planner



Agenda Item III

Date: June 2, 2025
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 June 2nd meeting.

- a. **Draft Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TYP), 2027-2036:** SWRPC staff submitted recommendations to the NH Department of Transportation for the draft 2027-2036 TYP on March 31, 2025 which showed support for all regional projects in the current 2025-2034 TYP and recommended adding a new project in Marlborough on NH Route 124 to address stormwater and pedestrian infrastructure deficiencies near the Town's Frost Free Library. NHDOT is currently preparing a draft TYP which will be published in the summer. Early indications from NHDOT staff are that the combination of anticipated flat state revenue and drops in federal revenue combined with higher than anticipated inflation and potential increases from tariffs may result in tough choices to ensure a financially constrained TYP.
- b. **"Next Generation" Transit System:** The transit project, with its primary focus on selecting a governance model and identifying a "Next Generation" Transit System operator, is scheduled to wrap up at the end of June. During the past four months, the service concept was refined to include a microtransit service covering a zone that includes the urbanized areas of Keene, Swanzey and Marlborough and a regionwide critical medical care ride service. The projected annual cost to operate the services is approximately \$1.1 million and will require nearly \$500,000 in local match funding. Meetings were held with City of Keene leadership, and Swanzey and Marlborough Selectboards to gauge their willingness to support the system and the responses were favorable. Meetings also occurred with Cheshire County Commissioners, the Vermont-based MOOver transit service board, and Southwestern Community Services (SWCS) leadership to gauge their interest in operating the system. The MOOver and SWCS both expressed interest. SWRPC secured an additional Section 5305(e) grant to conduct implementation planning and start up activities and help the eventual system operator to stand up the system.
- c. **Antrim Road Surface Management System and Pedestrian Inventory:** In August 2024, SWRPC contracted with the Town of Antrim to provide Road Surface Management System (RSMS) technical assistance, a Pedestrian Infrastructure Inventory, and a comprehensive Pavement Preservation Plan. RSMS is a data-driven process for managing paved roads that incorporates pavement-preservation principles into planning for pavement maintenance. The field data collection and inventory deliverables are completed, and draft repair scenarios have been shared with the Town and revised to match planned treatments for 2025. The Pavement

Preservation Plan is expected to be completed and made available to the Town in June 2025. SWRPC is currently accepting requests from municipalities for our next project.

- d. **Regional Trail Map:** Beginning last July, SWRPC began coordinating with the Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative (MRRTC), the City of Keene, the Monadnock Conservancy, and other stakeholders to develop a Regional Rail Trail map. The map includes all publicly accessible rail trails in the Monadnock Region, suggested parking locations, trail segment distances, and more. The other side of the map features an enlarged view of the City of Keene's trail network. The project was completed early this year and has been distributed to Keene bike shops, the Greater Monadnock Collaborative and others. Mike Kowalczyk will provide a brief overview and share printed copies with members of TAC at the meeting.
- e. **Hinsdale-Brattleboro Existing Bridges Coordination:** SWRPC and Windham Regional Commission staff met with leadership from Hinsdale and Brattleboro on April 11th to try and reach consensus on moving forward with plans for the Anna Hunt Marsh bridge, Charles Dana bridge and Hinsdale island. The towns tentatively agreed, pending Selectboard concurrence, to move forward with a communication to NHDOT recommending a request for proposals process to lease the bridges and island. NHDOT's request for input on bridge weight load limits, the location and configuration of the multiuse trail and other engineering design matters would be informed by the winning proposal. The groups also agreed to approach NHDOT about gating or restricting access to the area until public safety and maintenance concerns could be resolved.
- f. **Timber for Transit Project:** SWRPC is accepting nominations of transportation-related projects to consider for participation in the Timber for Transit grant program. Awarded by the Northern Border Regional Commission, this grant will fund feasibility studies and preliminary engineering for timber-based transportation infrastructure projects in Cheshire County. Potential projects could include bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, trail kiosks, carpools, and more; nominations could include but are not limited to bridges for motor vehicles. The Timber for Transit program aims to connect local transportation infrastructure needs with the regional forestry economy, so strong nominations should include mass-timber and/or local lumber elements and benefit Cheshire County's transportation network. The project nomination form can be found on SWRPC's website at <https://www.swrpc.org/featured-projects/timber-for-transit/>. Requested information includes contact information, project location, and a description of why the project would be a good fit for this program. Additionally, SWRPC will present the Timber for Transit program at the Vermont Forest Industry Summit as part of a breakout session moderated by UNH Extension titled, "Locally Produced Glulam: A Case Study in Market Development." For more information, please contact Chloe Gross at cgross@swrpc.org.
- g. **Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation (MRCC):** The MRCC submitted its Section 5310 Regional Coordinating Council application to NHDOT in March. The \$304,000 allocated annually to the MRCC will fund transit provider, HCS, to operate the Friendly Bus demand response service as well as the volunteer driver programs operated by the Community Volunteer Transportation Company and Keene Senior Center. SWRPC will be funded to continue providing mobility management services on behalf of the MRCC during fiscal years 2026 and 2027. Cheshire County was reauthorized to serve as lead agency for the NHDOT funds. SWRPC also completed and published the MRCC 2025 Coordinated Community Transportation Plan. The MRCC approved its slate of officers for the next two-year term at its May meeting.

- h. **Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST):** SWRPC staff are currently working with MAST and Cheshire Medical Center to announce the 2025 round of the MAST Complete Streets Implementation Grant. Since 2017, the program has provided over \$600,000 in funding to 20 completed or on-going projects in 12 communities. As in past years, funding will be available to the 14 Monadnock Region communities that have adopted a complete streets policy for infrastructure-related grants as well as non-infrastructure purposes such as planning, preliminary engineering, community education, “pop-up” or temporary projects, demonstration events, and encouragement activities. Municipalities that have not yet adopted a complete streets policy may apply for technical assistance to develop and adopt one. For more information, visit www.mastnh.org/2025-complete-streets-grant in early June.
- i. **Safe Streets For All (SS4A):** SWRPC staff are in the process of developing an application for federal SS4A funds. Funds for the fiscal year (FY) 2025 SS4A grant program are awarded on a competitive basis to support planning, infrastructure, and behavioral and operational initiatives to prevent fatalities and serious injuries on roads and streets involving all roadway users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation, motorists, and commercial vehicle operators. SWRPC plans to apply for funding to conduct a comprehensive safety analysis for the Region resulting in a roadway safety plan that will be used to inform SWRPC’s Long Range Transportation Plan, inform future TYP project nominations, road safety audit candidates and more. SWRPC is also contemplating a request for additional funding to conduct one or more demonstration projects which aim to showcase temporary reconfigurations of streets and intersections to improve safety. The SS4A application must be submitted by June 26, 2025.
- j. **Westmoreland Culvert Inventory and Assessment Project:** To date, Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) has completed hundreds of stream crossing assessments in over a dozen communities throughout Southwest NH. SWRPC staff recently completed project deliverables for a comprehensive inventory and assessment of culverts and stream crossings along the Town of Westmoreland’s approximately 42-mile Class V road network – over 400 assets in total. The deliverables include both printed and electronic versions of collected information, including map books, PDF/printed map posters, Excel table(s) and Geographic Information System-compatible files. In addition to the benefits culvert inventories and assessments have for hazard mitigation planning, municipalities can use project deliverables to inform stream and habitat restoration activities, capital improvement planning, asset management, and routine maintenance. SWRPC’s next townwide inventory in Antrim is expected to begin in July of this year.
- k. **Recreational Trails Program (RTP):** A number of local applicants submitted applications for New Hampshire’s Recreational Trails (RTP) program in May. SWRPC provided letters of support, and/or technical assistance related to mapping and permitting to meet application requirements for the Town of Winchester, City of Keene and Cheshire County for proposed improvements on the Ashuelot and Cheshire rail trails. RTP is a competitive grant program that offers funding for quality public trail projects throughout New Hampshire. The highest priority for the project is maintenance and restoration of existing trails. Eligible projects include purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment, construction of new trails, development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages. Applicants may be non-profit organizations, private groups, educational institutions, or government entities. The application is typically offered each spring and total project costs are limited to \$100,000. Last year, Westmoreland, Marlborough and Peterborough all benefited from awards totaling around \$170,000. Not sure where to start? SWRPC developed plans for portions of the trail network (www.swrpc.org/plan-for-ashuelot-rail-trail, www.swrpc.org/cheshire-rail-trail-south-planning-project). One can also reach out to the Monadnock Region Rail Trail

Collaborative for other assistance and to coordinate on project development (<https://monadnockrailtrails.org/>).

- I. **Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP):** In April, SWRPC staff participated in Road Safety Audits of NH 12 at Whitcomb's Mill Road in Keene and NH 124 at Milliken Road in Jaffrey. Both audits were awarded assistance through NHDOT's HSIP after each community applied to the program with help from SWRPC. Applications are now reviewed quarterly as opposed to annually. During an audit, a multi-disciplinary team reviews the area of concern, crash data and other information to develop a report with a variety of safety improvement projects – short, medium and long term. The projects are accompanied by conceptual designs, cost estimates and cost-benefit analyses based on expected crash reductions associated with the improvements. The projects themselves can be implemented by a variety of local, state, or federal funding sources (including HSIP and the Ten Year Plan). Please contact SWRPC staff for help to determine whether an area of concern would be a good candidate for the program and to schedule the necessary traffic data collection. SWRPC continues to participate in monthly HSIP Committee meetings which include consideration of new projects around the State as well as information sharing about a variety of projects that will work to reduce and eliminate traffic deaths and injuries.

In addition to the above, SWRPC staff and TAC members may suggest other transportation-related updates during the June 2nd meeting.

Recommendation

For your information.



Agenda Item IV

Date: June 2, 2025

To: Transportation Advisory Committee

From: Staff

RE: Presentation: NHDOT Resilience Improvement Plan

Background

According to the National Climate Assessment, New Hampshire is expected to experience an increase in both the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, along with ongoing sea level rise and flooding. These challenges may lead to significant damage to infrastructure, increasing repair and maintenance costs and disrupting the everyday functionality of transportation systems throughout the state. As an incentive to states to plan for resilience, federal funding was made available by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to create State Resilience Improvement Plans, a voluntary, risk-based assessment of vulnerable transportation assets in immediate and long-term transportation planning that demonstrates a systemic approach to surface transportation system resilience.

A Resilience Improvement Plan can reduce non-federal match by up to 10% for both PROTECT Formula and Discretionary Grant projects. Although PROTECT discretionary grants have been paused for review by the current administration, PROTECT formula grants currently remain available. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's 5-year allocation of PROTECT formula funds to New Hampshire was approximately \$30.3 million. A copy of the NHDOT Resilience Improvement Plan is available at <https://mm.nh.gov/files/uploads/dot/remote-docs/nhdot-resilience-improvement-plan.pdf>. At the June 2nd meeting, NHDOT staff will provide an overview of the NHDOT Resilience Improvement Plan and answer any questions from the TAC.

Recommendation

For your information.



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Agenda Item V

Date: June 2, 2025

To: Transportation Advisory Committee

From: Staff

RE: Presentation: SWRPC Vulnerability Assessment

Background

SWRPC is currently working to finalize the Region's first ever transportation infrastructure vulnerability assessment. The assessment focuses on precipitation-related impacts to 2,262 publicly owned bridges and culverts. A major objective of the project is to provide a resource to identify and prioritize locations vulnerable to extreme precipitation events, including its potential use for the Ten Year Plan nomination process. The project utilizes the Federal Highway Administration's Vulnerability Assessment Scoring Tool to organize and weigh many factors including asset condition, age, flood history and probability of being overtopped.

SWRPC staff will provide a brief presentation on the project and methodology as well as an update on the project results.

Recommendation

For your information.