

January 27, 2022 Project Updates

Seacoast Transportation Corridors Vulnerability Analysis (STCVA): RPC is working with the New Hampshire Coastal Program, NHDOT, and other stakeholders to build off the efforts of the Tides to Storms and C-RISE studies, and the Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission to conduct an analysis of the transportation infrastructure in the seacoast anticipated to be impacted by additional flooding due to sea level rise and climate change. The vulnerability analysis is in progress and will form the basis for establishing a long-term adaptation framework to incorporate coastal hazards and prioritize resilience in state and local transportation planning and construction. Most recently, staff has been meeting with individual communities to discuss initial findings and impacts on the transportation network. Discussions have been held with Portsmouth, New Castle, Rye, North Hampton, Hampton, and Seabrook. The full network analysis is being drafted and the UNH research team has completed a draft of the adaptation options for ten of the 25 sites and the site specific analysis for two designated locations. A discussion with NHDOT is planned for next week to cover those topics and get some final input prior to drafting the final report. The project is expected to conclude in March 2022. (Dave Walker dwalker@therpc.org).

NH Seacoast Greenway: – Staff continue working with the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program on three projects related to the Greenway. These include: 1) start-up assistance for the new NH Seacoast Greenway Alliance non-profit group, 2) development of a signage plan for the trail, and 3) planning for community connections. Staff from NHDOT met with Sen. Tom Sherman, officials from North Hampton and RPC staff last month about use of NHDOT's maintenance yard on US1 where it crosses the rail corridor as a trailhead. NHDOT seems amenable to short term use of the northern portion of the parcel, while access to the balance of the parcel will be dependent on expanding storage capacity at the department's other maintenance yard in North Hampton. We also recently learned of a \$24,000 donation through the East Coast Greenway Alliance to support installation of trail signage and amenities along the NHSG corridor. (Scott Bogle – sbogle@therpc.org)

Hampton Falls (29610): This study of the US 1 Corridor through the town center in Hampton Falls is looking in detail at addressing the congestion that occurs in that location. An advisory committee has been formed and has met three times to date. Two public information sessions have been held, and a final public meeting is planned to cover the recommendations. Based on feedback from the community, widening of US 1 through the Hampton Falls village is not desired and other methods to try and address the congestion will be prioritized. The final report is expected in conjunction with the planned public meeting this winter (Dave Walker dwalker@therpc.org).

Seabrook-Hampton Bridge Replacement (15904): The draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project was submitted to FHWA for review and permitting and that process is expected to be completed by April 2022 at which time the design will be finalized. The preferred alternative is a replacement with a fixed bridge that is 48 feet off the water, aligned to the west of the current structure, and would widen the navigational channel to 150 feet. The bridge itself would be 50 feet wide with two travel lanes, 8-foot shoulders, and 6-foot sidewalks with bump outs at some piers. Private property impacts would be minimal although there are some environmental impacts that will likely need to be mitigated. The life-cycle cost of the new structure is estimated at \$71-\$75 million

and the project would take approximately 3 years to construct. The additional funding identified in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will allow this project to proceed more rapidly and without requiring any bonding. The project is anticipated to advertise for construction in September 2023 with construction beginning in 2024. (Dave Walker dwalker@therpc.org).

Age Friendly Communities Initiative: The Regional Steering Committee for the Age Friendly Communities project has met twice thus far, in early December and early January. The focus of the two meetings has been refining the survey instrument that will be used in each of the six assessment communities and also distributed region-wide. The six assessment communities include Exeter, Fremont, Hampstead, Hampton, Portsmouth and Stratham. Local steering committees have been or are currently being assembled. Hampstead's local steering committee held its first meeting on 1/19, Exeter's is scheduled for 1/28 and Fremont's for 2/3. We anticipate Portsmouth, Stratham and Hampton will follow shortly. (Scott Bogle – sbogle@therpc.org)

State Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan Review: Staff are participating in a workgroup for NHDOT reviewing over 600 comments received on the draft NH Ped/Bike Plan produced by Alta Planning & Design in August. The Alta contract lapsed 9/1/21 and NHDOT is working to renew it for the firm to complete the document. The review committee is processing and evaluating comments to streamline Alta's work once they are back on board, which is anticipated for mid/late-February. (Scott Bogle – sbogle@therpc.org)

Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant Application: Staff have been working with UConn Cooperative Extension, the Rails to Trails Conservancy, three other New Hampshire RPCs and partners in the other five New England states on a proposal to the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA). The proposed project would establish a network of permanent bike/ped counting equipment on rail trails around New England, together with a six-state data dashboard and outreach to chambers of commerce and businesses to help them gauge the business development opportunities presented by rail trails. RPC is the subrecipient for New Hampshire on this proposal and, if funded, would work with SNHPC, CNHRPC, UVLSRPC and various volunteer trail groups. (Scott Bogle – sbogle@therpc.org)

Annual List of Obligated Projects: The Annual List of Obligated Projects report lists all transportation projects in the Rockingham Planning Commission region to which federal funds were obligated during federal fiscal year 2021(FY21) between October 1, 2020 and September 30, 2021. FHWA defines "obligated" as the commitment to reimburse an entity (usually the New Hampshire Department of Transportation or a transit agency) the incurred costs for an approved project during the fiscal year. This reimbursement can be for projects that have been initiated in previous years or will not be completed until future years and the final cost of a project may be different from the amount obligated as well. The FY2021 report is available on the RPC website at <https://www.therpc.org/obligatedprojects>. (Dave Walker dwalker@therpc.org).
