

MINUTES
Rockingham Planning Commission
Transportation Advisory Committee
February 25, 2021

Virtual Meeting via Zoom & Public Input

Per RSA 91-A:2, III(b) the RPC Chair has declared the COVID 19 Outbreak an emergency and has waived the requirement that a quorum be physically present at the meeting.

Members Present: R. McDermott, chairman (Hampton Falls); R. Nichols (COAST); D. Seiglie (Rye); B. Landman (North Hampton); L. St. John (NHDOT); J. Walker (Portsmouth); M. Scruton (Greenland); T. White (NHDES); P. Coffin (Kingston); K. Latchaw (Newington); M. Connors (Stratham); T. Moore (Plaistow); C. Jacobs (Hampton); B. Cray (UNH Transit); L. Levine & P. Maloney (FHWA -non voting)

Staff: D. Walker (Assistant Director/Transp Mgr); S. Bogle (Sr. Transportation Planner); C. Matthews (GIS/Transportation Analyst); T. Roache (Executive Director); A. Pettengill (Business Manager)

- 1. Chairman McDermott convened the meeting at 9:04 a.m. and introductions and Zoom etiquette was reviewed.**
- 2. Minutes of January 8, 2021**

*Latchaw moved to approve the Minutes of January 8, 2021 as presented; Nichols seconded. Roll Call vote was taken. 3 abstentions. **SO VOTED.***

- 3. 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program & Updated Long Range Transportation Plan 2045- D. Walker**

Walker explained that both these documents are in a 30 day comment period and a public hearing would be held on March 10, 2021 at the MPO meeting. Once all the MPO TIPS are approved the State TIP is submitted for federal approval. Walker reviewed both the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Ten Year Plan & STIP/TIP process for updates and prioritization and the RPC's role. He explained that the 2021-24 TIP builds off the approved Ten Year Plan and includes both projects already underway and new entries from the Ten Year Plan. He also noted the status of those projects already underway and how their timing may have changed. Discussion followed regarding the reasons involved in why some projects are delayed. Walker continued by reviewing the regional and statewide projects in the TIP and various funding sources involved. He also reviewed the RPC projects within the Statewide program. He noted no comments were received during the public comment period.

Walker explained the Long Range Transportation Plan as a big picture document of goals and visions for the future, which outlines what priorities the MPO puts forward for the State Ten Year Plan and ultimately get constructed via the RPC TIP. The fiscal constraint assumptions were

reviewed as well as the process timeline and as well as a brief overview of the next update cycle targeted adoption date for Spring of 2023. Walker noted both the TIP and 2045 Plan are fiscally constrained and reflect regional priorities. Discussion on maintenance and asset management planning followed and Latchaw asked for details on General Sullivan bridge rehab status. Bogle responded that the highway bridges are complete and that NHDOT is developing the approach for maintaining the bicycle and pedestrian access over the historic General Sullivan bridge. Initially this was proposed as a rehabilitation but the current condition of the bridge has made looking at other options, such as removing the steel structure and put a new structure on current footings, viable choices. Maintenance is a major concern of the old steel structure. Continued discussion followed on bridges and maintenance. *J. Walker moved to recommend adoption of the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement program to the MPO Policy Committee; Nichols seconded. Roll Call vote was taken. 1 abstention. SO VOTED.*

4. RPC 2023-2032 Ten Year Plan Project Priorities – D. Walker

Walker explained that the MPO has received NHDOT's review of the candidate Ten Year Plan project proposals that were recommended by the TAC last September and approved by the MPO in October. It is time for the MPO to make a final decision on the project priority(ies) for the 2023-2032 Ten Year Plan based on the revised cost estimates. NHDOT has committed to including the MPO recommendations into the draft 2023-2032 Ten Year Plan as long as the regional funding target is not exceeded. Walker reviewed the project selection criteria and the suggested revised estimates for specific projects. Walker stated that the staff recommendation for the top priority project for the region is the East Coast Greenway project. Bogle spoke to the project and explained that Phase III covers the section of the greenway from the Center of Hampton south to the Hampton Falls/Seabrook Town line and would complete the off-road portion of the greenway in New Hampshire. The East Coast Greenway has been a regional priority since 2008. It creates a safer walking and biking option to Route 1 and may be an economic catalyst for southern Route 1 communities as well. This project will also contribute to marsh restoration efforts by opening several areas for tidal flow where they are currently restricted. Jacobs asked for further explanation of the benefits of this project and how this project is ranked higher than others. Bogle provided additional details on the benefits of the project and Walker explained that he shared NHDOT concerns regarding the scope and costs of the other candidate projects. Discussion followed. J. Walker stated she supports the East Coast Greenway project and Jacobs stated the explanation was helpful and he understands now. *Scruton moved to endorse the East Coast Greenway project for the Ten Year Plan that is fully contained in the regional funding allocation and recommend to the MPO Policy Committee in March; Landman seconded. Roll Call vote was taken. 1 abstention. SO VOTED.*

- 5. Project Updates:** Bogle stated that the Transportation Alternatives Program is holding a mandatory proposal meeting on Wednesday, March 3rd. The program has 43 projects worth a total of \$29 million and four are from the RPC region (Portsmouth, Rye, Newington, Salem). Bogle will send info to everyone.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, Annette Pettengill,
Recording Secretary