

MINUTES
Rockingham Planning Commission
Metropolitan Planning Organization
May 13, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom and Public Input

Commissioners/MPO Reps Present: B. Kravitz, Chairman, A. Carnaby (Hampton); R. McDermott, A. Brubaker (H. Falls); P. Wilson (North Hampton); M. McAndrew (New Castle); A. Davis (Hampstead); T. Moore, J. Kiszka (Plaistow); G. Davison (NH DOT); P. Coffin, G. Coppelman (Kingston); L. Plumer, G. English (Exeter); E. Moreau (Portsmouth); R. Donahue (Salem); C. Cross (Newington); J. Doggett, M. Allen (Newton); P. Winslow, J. Grote (Rye); M. Turell (Atkinson); S. Gerrato (Greenland); R. Nichols (Executive Director, COAST); T. White (NHDes)

Guests: J. Bachand (Town Planner, Hampton), S. Meno (UNH Cooperative Extension), D. Moore (Town Administrator, Stratham), B. Warburton (Chief, Hampton Budget Committee and Hampton Master Plan Committee), R. Friedman (NRPC)

Staff: T. Roache (Executive Director), D. Walker (Assistant Director/Transportation Manager), S. Bogle (Sr. Transportation Planner), J. Rowden (Sr. Planner), A. Warhaft (Office Coordinator)

- 1. Call to Order: Chairman Kravitz called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.; introductions and roll call was made for the Zoom meeting attendees.**
- 2. Minutes of February 12, 2020**

*J. Doggett moved to approve the Minutes of February 12, 2020; R. McDermott seconded. **SO VOTED.** 10 abstentions.*

- 3. Public Hearing: Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #4 – D. Walker**

D. Walker opened the presentation of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Amendment #4 by summarizing for attendees what the TIP covers, why there are amendments to the plan and the timeline for the Program.

Walker explained that Amendment #4 to the TIP was noticed for a 10 day public comment period from May 2 – 12, 2020, and that no comments were filed. Overall, Amendment #4 addresses 3 Regional and 1 Statewide project changes (4 total). The changes include one project addition, one scope change and two adjustments to project costs and timing. There is a net increase in cost during the TIP years (2019-2022) of \$10.6 million and \$20.7 million total including all project funds in years beyond 2022. Walker reviewed each of the projects, cost/funding changes and adjustments. He also explained that the Long Range Transportation

Plan is being updated to maintain consistency between the project list in the two documents. Air quality conformity is maintained and will rely on previous conformity analysis. Fiscal constraint is being maintained with a small surplus in each of the four years.

Kravitz Opened the Public Hearing at 7:40 p.m. for the TIP Amendment #4 as presented by David Walker. Comments and discussion followed from the MPO Committee Members and the Public Input attendees.

Comment from David Moore (Town Administrator, Stratham): We are grateful to you and the RPC staff for the effort at making this hearing accessible in this way. I want to also thank the RPC, the MPO, and the MPO TAC for their work on the TIP and preceding plans. We have been following the Stratham project included in this amendment closely. We are grateful to the State for their support in moving this project along more quickly and we would appreciate your support for the improvements proposed for this intersection, which has been a safety concern. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

4. **MPO Discussion and Roll Call Vote on TIP Amendment #4.** *The Technical Advisory Committee met on April 23, 2020 and recommended approval of Amendment #4. L. Plumer moved to approve the TIP Amendment #4 as presented; P. Wilson seconded. **SO VOTED.***

Public Hearing closed at 8:05 p.m.

5. **MPO Operations COVID19 Update.** T. Roache brought the members up to speed on the RPC office and how we are dealing with the COVID crisis. Technology is allowing the office to successfully function as our employees work from home. The crisis has opened up opportunities to engage with our communities in new ways. Examples include: a joint effort between the RPC, the Town of Exeter, and the Regional Economic Development Corporation to assist the community and small businesses with available resources; the RPC has also partnered with the Southern Maine Planning District Commission and the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission to support a tri-state effort to coordinate the opening of beaches so as to not overwhelm any one community. T. Roache encouraged member communities to share comments and experiences with us so that information can be shared with RPC communities.

6. **Other Business/Public Comment.** None.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Warhaft

MEMORANDUM

TO: RPC Policy Committee
FROM: David Walker
RE: Project Selection Process
DATE: August 5, 2020

The MPO has requested transportation projects from communities and regional transit agencies and will be prioritizing projects to provide NHDOT a list of candidates for the next iteration of the State Ten Year Plan (2023-2032). To facilitate that, the MPO has coordinated with NHDOT and the other New Hampshire RPCs to develop guidance and establish a statewide process and a set of project selection criteria.

Overall, the process is similar to previous cycles with a few notable changes:

- “Alternative Modes” was removed as a distinct criterion removed. Aspects of alternative modes have been incorporated into other criteria.
- “Equity, Environmental Justice, and Accessibility” and “Economic Development” added as new criteria to consider.
- More detailed guidance on the project selection criteria has been developed by the nine New Hampshire RPCs and NHDOT. That guidance is available on the project selection web page (<https://www.therpc.org/ProjectSelection>).
- Projects must be submitted to NHDOT for engineering and cost review by November 6, 2020. This is one month earlier than last cycle.
- Final Ten Year Plan priorities are due to NHDOT by April 1, 2021. This is one month earlier than last cycle.

At the July 23, 2020 TAC meeting, staff worked with committee members to establish the draft weights for the project selection criteria as well as set the overall process defined in the attached **2020 RPC Project Selection Methodology** that will be utilized to determine which projects in the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan are priorities for the State Ten Year Plan.

Action

The MPO TAC endorsed the project selection criteria weights and project selection procedures outlined in the attached document at the July 23, 2020 meeting and recommended approval by the full MPO Policy Committee. Approval or endorsement by the MPO Policy Committee will formally establish the RPC project selection process for the 2023-2032 State Ten Year Plan.

2020 RPC Project Selection Methodology

Project Solicitation (July – August 2020)

Communities and regional transit agencies were asked to submit project proposals to the MPO by September 1, 2020. All projects submitted to the RPC will be incorporated into the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) provided they are eligible for federal funding and align with the vision, goals, and objectives of the LRTP. Projects will then be prioritized to be added to the State Ten Year Plan. The project prioritization process involves several steps:

Step 1: Project Development & Classification (August – September 2020)

All projects in the LRTP are classified into three categories based on the scale of impacts and benefits (local, regional, inter-regional - see **Table 1** below). Information is reviewed and updated for projects already in the LRTP and new projects are classified and added to the database.

Table 1: Project Classification

	Local	Regional	Inter-Regional
Focus	Safety, access, and multimodal connections <u>within</u> communities	Multimodal connections <u>between</u> communities and regional activity centers	Mobility & intermodal improvements to ensure that the region is well connected <u>to the rest of</u> New England and beyond.
Project Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller scale bike/ped and transit projects • Highway projects on “main street” state highways and some local roads • Multimodal access to services for all users • Complete Streets and context sensitive design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects primarily on State Highways • Regional Transit • Regional scale bike/ped • Improve access to regional activity centers • Improve mobility • Address safety issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects Related to National Highway System • Efficient travel on critical roadways • Freight mobility and travel time • Inter-regional Bus and Rail transit service • Safety problems
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving safety • Expanding multi-modal access • Support transportation efficient community design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving safety • Expanding multimodal access to activity centers • Support transportation efficient community design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving safety • Maintaining mobility • Connecting regional activity centers

Step 2: Determining Feasibility (September 2020)

For each project, the MPO must make a determination of feasibility and eligibility for funding in the Ten Year Plan. Several aspects of each project are considered:

1. The project must have a defined scope and cost estimate.
2. There is a clear need for project in the next ten years.
3. The approach to addressing the transportation issue is reasonable given existing resources.
4. The project is eligible for federal funds and is likely to receive necessary resource agency permits.
5. There is clear evidence of local support/priority.

Step 3: Scoring Projects (September 2020)

Each project is measured against the set of criteria that have been agreed upon by NHDOT and the nine New Hampshire Regional Planning Commissions. These criteria are grouped into the eight categories shown in **Table 2** and the criteria are weighted for consideration according to the distribution shown in **Table 3**. The weights shown for the criteria were determined through a priority setting exercise finalized at the RPC TAC meeting on July 23, 2020. Scores are assessed using available data and best judgement to apply the selection criteria to each project using the scale in **Table 4**. Projects are evaluated based on understanding of both need and expected impact, and those with higher need and/or higher impact

Table 2: 2020-2021 Project Selection Criteria

Category	Definition	How will projects be assessed?
Economic Development	The degree to which a project supports economic development needs and opportunities at the local and regional level; and the degree to which the project impacts the movement of goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the project improve access to a regional activity center (employment center, tourist destination, etc.)? • Will the project address a freight bottleneck?
Equity, Environmental Justice, & Accessibility	The degree to which a project promotes access to the transportation network, benefits traditionally underserved populations and ensures accessibility by all potential users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the project expand transportation choices or enhance alternative modes, particularly for historically underserved populations? • Will the project remove or reduce barriers to access?
Mobility	The degree to which a project reduces the time needed to get from one place to another.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The functional classification of the roadway & status as a local, regional, or statewide connection • The mobility benefits of the project
Natural Hazards Resiliency	The exposure of a location to risk of damage from natural hazards and the project approach to mitigating that risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the project in a location with identified natural hazards risks? • How will the project mitigate or eliminate the likelihood of damage from natural hazards?
Network Significance	The importance of the service or facility to the communities, region, and larger transportation system of the state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The volume of traffic at the location • How critical is the location to the transportation network?
Safety	The degree to which the project impacts traveler safety in relation to safety performance and the project's expected safety benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The crash history at the location (5 years) • The expected safety improvement from the proposed project
State of Repair	The extent to which the project improves infrastructure condition in the project area and the degree to which the project impacts NHDOT and/or municipal maintenance requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current condition of the infrastructure at the project location. • Will the project reduce maintenance requirements or add significant maintenance liabilities?
Support	The degree to which a project is supported by the RPC, locality, and feasibility of construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the project support the goals and objectives of the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan? • Is the project a community priority? • Has a new transportation need been identified

will receive more points. Once each project is given a score for each criterion, the total weighted score for each project is calculated based on the weights and classification of the project shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Draft Project Selection Criteria Weighting for the State Ten Year Plan (7/23/2020)

Category/Criteria	Local	Regional	Inter-Regional
Economic Development	10%	13%	12%
<i>Access to Activity Centers (Impact)</i>	58%	58%	58%
<i>Freight Mobility (Need)</i>	42%	42%	42%
Equity, Environmental Justice, & Accessibility	17%	15%	18%
<i>Expanding Transportation Choices (Impact)</i>	67%	67%	67%
<i>Removing Barriers to Access (Need)</i>	33%	33%	33%
Mobility	11%	12%	11%
<i>Project Location Congestion (Need)</i>	53%	53%	53%
<i>Effectiveness of Approach (Impact)</i>	47%	47%	47%
Natural Hazard Resiliency	10%	7%	8%
<i>Vulnerability to Natural Hazards (Need)</i>	44%	44%	44%
<i>Risk Mitigation Strategy (Impact)</i>	56%	56%	56%
Network Significance	14%	15%	15%
<i>Traffic Volume (Impact)</i>	44%	44%	44%
<i>Facility Importance (Need)</i>	56%	56%	56%
Safety	17%	16%	17%
<i>Past Safety Performance (Need)</i>	48%	48%	48%
<i>Safety Measures (Impact)</i>	52%	52%	52%
State of Repair	13%	13%	11%
<i>Current Infrastructure Condition (Need)</i>	53%	53%	53%
<i>Reduced Maintenance Requirements (Impact)</i>	47%	47%	47%
Support	8%	7%	10%
<i>Local Priority (Need)</i>	45%	45%	45%
<i>Support for LRTP (Impact)</i>	29%	29%	29%
<i>Newly Identified Need (Need)</i>	26%	26%	26%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Total of all categories will equal 100% for each column

Total within each category will equal 100%

Table 4: Project Scoring Scale

Score	Project Need For Each Criterion:		Project Impact For Each Criterion:		Relevancy For Each Criterion:
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	There is a very high need for this project	OR	The proposed project would deliver a significant improvement		
	There is a moderate need for the project	OR	The proposed project would deliver a moderate improvement		
	There is minimal/ no need for the project	OR	The proposed project would deliver minimal/ no improvement	OR	The proposed project is not relevant to this criterion.
		OR	The proposed project would result in a negative impact		

Step 4: Prioritization (September – October 2020)

Projects will be assessed and scored by RPC staff using the weights for each criterion at each scale shown in **Table 3**, and the results will be brought to the MPO TAC meeting on September 24, 2020 for discussion and candidate project selection. Staff will present the top five (at minimum) local, regional, and inter-regional projects to the TAC for consideration as candidate projects for the 2023-2032 Ten Year Plan. From those projects, the TAC will select a draft list of candidate projects recommended to the MPO Policy Committee, up to the regional budget target (approximately \$6.6 million) plus one to two projects. The MPO Policy Committee will meet on October 14, 2020 to discuss and approve a final candidate list of projects submitted to NHDOT for engineering and cost review by November 6, 2020. NHDOT engineering and cost review will be completed in January/February, 2021 and the MPO will assess project recommendations based on that review, constrain the draft list to the budget target, and make final recommendations for the 2023-2032 State Ten Year Plan in February (2/25/21 TAC) and March, 2021 (3/10/21 Policy).

Step 5: NHDOT Engineering and Cost Review (November 2020 – February 2021)

By November 6, 2020, the MPO must submit a single list of candidate projects to NHDOT for engineering and cost review. NHDOT will examine both the feasibility of the proposal as well as the reasonableness of the cost estimate. Some adjustments to the project cost or scope may be recommended.

Step 6: Final Prioritization (February – March 2021)

NHDOT project cost and engineering review will be completed in January/February 2021 and recommendations returned to the MPO. The MPO TAC will meet on February 25, 2021 to make a final recommendation on project priorities to the MPO Policy Committee. The Policy Committee will meet on March 10, 2021 to approve the MPO recommendations for the 2023-2032 State Ten Year Plan and these will be submitted to NHDOT by April 1, 2021.