

ATTACHMENT 2

MEMORANDUM

To: MPO Transportation Advisory Committee
From: Dave Walker, Senior Transportation Planner
Date: 9/18/2015
RE: Draft 2017-2026 Ten Year Plan Comments

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the Governor's Advisory Committee on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) have released the draft 2017-2026 Ten Year Transportation Improvement Program as well as the schedule of public hearings that are occurring to discuss the document. NHDOT has a section of their website dedicated to the Ten Year Plan and the current draft list of projects and other supplemental information can be found at the following web address: <http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/typ/index.htm>.

There are two public hearings occurring in the RPC region. The first is on September 29th in Hampton at the Seashell Complex and the second is in Kingston on October 1st at the Kingston Community Library. There is also a meeting on October 8th in Londonderry that may be more convenient for the communities in the western part of the region and the full list of meetings is attached to this memorandum.

Analysis of Draft 2017-2026 Ten Year Plan

This iteration of the Ten Year Plan has added several projects in the region as prioritized by the RPC earlier in 2015. Six of our top ten project priorities are included in the draft plan and no existing projects were recommended to be dropped other than those that have been constructed. The new additions are:

- Plaistow Main Street traffic calming/safety improvements (2025)
- Portsmouth Maplewood Avenue complete streets improvements (2025)
- Epping NH 125 signal coordination and control (2025)
- Portsmouth Maplewood Avenue railroad crossing upgrade (2026)
- Plaistow NH 125 signal coordination and control (2026)

In addition, there are some other new projects listed that have come from statewide programs:

- Exeter NH111A bridge replacement over the Little River (075/078) in 2026

- Hampton Falls-Hampton Taylor River Bridge replacement (13408B) and Taylor River Dam removal/replacement (13408C) from 2017-2020. This project is not new but was not in the last Ten Year Plan.
- Newfields-Newmarket 28393 bridge rehabilitations on NH 108 over the B&M railroad in 2021-2022.
- Portsmouth 28757 Safe Routes to School project to add bicycle lanes on Lafayette Road and Middle Street.

There are also some changes to projects already in the Ten Year Plan that are important to note:

- East Kingston NH107 Bridge replacement delayed from 2019 to 2020.
- Epping has two projects listed sequentially. NH 125 Improvements between NH27 and NH87 constructed in 2022 followed by signal coordination on NH 125 in 2025.
- Hampton-Portsmouth Hampton Branch rail corridor construction delayed to 2017.
- Hampton Ocean Blvd, Hampton Falls US 1, and New Castle NH1B Causeway studies remain scheduled for 2018. Similar analysis for the NH1A Bridge between Seabrook and Hampton is being undertaken currently.
- Plaistow-Kingston 10044E which would make improvements to NH 125 from about the Plaistow-Kingston town line to Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road has had \$567,000 in engineering advanced to 2018. Construction is scheduled for 2023-24.
- Portsmouth 13455D replacement of Woodbury Ave and Stark Street bridges over the US 1 Bypass delayed from 2020 to 2021.
- Portsmouth 27690 US 1 Bypass replacement of culvert over Hodgson Brook was advanced from 2024 to 2019.
- Seabrook-Hampton 15904 rehabilitation of the NH1A (Neil Underwood) Bridge over the Hampton River has been delayed from 2018 to 2019.
- Reconfiguration of some statewide programs to be focused on the various Tiers of facilities and be more descriptive of the work performed.
- Added "Other" phase funding for Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to facilitate pre-engineering project planning.

Finally, there are some identified policy/programming changes and recognition of funding shortfalls:

- Additional \$35,000,000 for bridge maintenance and preservation.
 - Additional \$10,000,000 for culvert replacements.
 - Increased transit funding due to anticipated increase in FTA allocation.
 - Transferring 25% of HSIP funds to more "flexible" programs to help address pavement and bridge maintenance and preservation shortfalls.
 - Transferring 50% of CMAQ funds to more "flexible" programs to help address pavement and bridge maintenance and preservation shortfalls.
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- \$23 Million set aside of CMAQ funding for intercity transit
- Bonding \$200 million for remainder of I-93 project, road and bridge maintenance needs.
- \$55.5 million per year in unfunded bridge investment needs and another \$14.5 million per year in unfunded paving needs.

Draft Ten Year Plan Comments

As part of the GACIT hearings, RPC will be providing two types of input. During the introductory portion of the hearings we will be relating the process that we used to gather and prioritize projects. During the public comment portion of the agenda, RPC staff will be providing our comments regarding the specific projects and policies represented in (or potentially missing from) the draft Ten Year Plan. Input regarding these comments from TAC members is important as we will not be having an MPO Policy Committee meeting until after the GACIT hearings are done in the RPC region. We are looking for confirmation that the comments below are supported as well as for any additional aspects of the Ten Year Plan that committee members would like to see considered.

- ***Project Selection Process:*** Overall, the RPC is happy regarding the inclusion of regional priority projects into the Ten Year Plan. The fact that 5 of the RPC top 10 projects as prioritized by the TAC and Policy Committees have been recommended for addition to the Ten Year Plan was unexpected given previous iterations of this process. This is a very positive step for the Ten Year Plan process and we see this only improving as we move to a performance-based planning and programming process.
 - ***Flexing HSIP:*** NHDOT is proposing to flex 25% of HSIP funding to the Surface Transportation Program and we do not support the movement of safety funds to general bridge and pavement maintenance. Safety remains a top priority for transportation agencies and flexing funds away from HSIP means addressing fewer of those concerns each year. Instead of moving funding away from this focus, New Hampshire should be looking to expand the reach of this data-driven program to address automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian safety issues on state highways and continue the work to reduce fatalities and injuries from crashes.
 - ***Flexing CMAQ:*** NHDOT is proposing to flex 50% of CMAQ funding to the Surface Transportation Program for use in general bridge and pavement maintenance and preservation. This, combined with the proposed set-aside of CMAQ funds for commuter/intercity bus fleet replacement (40284) would seem to leave very little remaining for any other purpose that those funds are eligible for. Historically in New Hampshire, projects that were CMAQ eligible were unlikely to receive funding from any other source and the supporters of those projects have come to rely on CMAQ for that reason. In fact, CMAQ funding goes towards projects that reduce dependency upon automobile travel, reduce travel on the roadways, and/or reduce congestion which potentially provides as much (or more) benefit through avoided road maintenance and construction costs than if that funding is used simply to pave roads.
 - ***CMAQ Set-aside for Commuter/Intercity Bus Fleet Replacement (40284):*** FTA Section 5307 funds available to COAST (and to other regional transit agencies) are inadequate to meet their long term needs for vehicle replacement. The transit agencies have been told to wait for future CMAQ rounds to have an opportunity to compete for additional funding through the CMAQ program, and it has been 6 years since the last chance at that money. However, the proposed intercity bus set aside, combined with the anticipated transfer of 50% of CMAQ funds to other funding programs, would seem to leave very little remaining to aid these regional transit
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providers, or fund any other CMAQ eligible projects. The recent increase in FTA Section 5307 funding available to NH from the Boston Urbanized Area is likely a more appropriate source of funding for intercity bus replacement, as much of that funding increase is attributable to Boston Express and C&J beginning to report revenue miles in the National Transit Database. This would help meet the need for intercity bus replacement while keeping CMAQ funding available for regional transit needs and other project types that have traditionally relied on that program.

- ***Plaistow-Kingston (10044E)***: Pleased that PE work on this project has been advanced to 2018. Some early work on this project to help define the improvement needs over the next 20 years may lead to reduced costs
- ***Newfields-Newmarket 28393 bridge rehabilitations***: The Newmarket shoulder widening project on NH108 terminated at Ash Swamp Road near, but not including, these bridges in the scope due to funding limitations. At the same time, the approach to these bridges has very narrow shoulders and is dangerous for cyclists. This rehabilitation project is an opportunity to widen the shoulders on the approaches to this bridge to make it safer for bicycle travel and the RPC would like to see that need included in the scope of the project.
- ***Epping 29608 & 40643***: These two projects are being constructed sequentially adjacent to each other and overlapping to some extent. It may make sense to consider consolidating them into a single project or at the very least coordinating them as much as possible to avoid tearing up any new construction from the first project during the second.

Over the next couple of weeks staff will be continuing to review the draft Ten Year Plan for changes and potential comments. After the hearings, the comments will be finalized and presented to the MPO Policy Committee at the October 14th, 2015 meeting prior to being submitted to NHDOT.

Recommendation

TAC endorsement of a set of comments to be provided during the upcoming GACIT hearings on the 2017-2026 Ten Year Plan.

Fall 2015

Public Hearing Schedule for 2017 - 2026 Ten Year Plan

Executive Councilor	Date	Town/City	Time	Location
District 1 Cnclr. Joseph D. Kenney	(Tue) 9/15/15	Lebanon	7:00 PM	City Council Chambers 51 North Park Street 5 th Floor
District 1 Cnclr. Joseph D. Kenney	(Wed) 9/16/15	Berlin	6:00 PM	City Hall Auditorium 168 Main Street
District 2 Cnclr. Colin Van Ostern	(Thur) 9/17/15	Rochester	6:00 PM	*Frisbie Memorial Hospital Community Education & Conference Center Strafford Room 11 Whitehall Road
District 2 Cnclr. Colin Van Ostern Co-Hosted with District 5 Cnclr. David K. Wheeler	(Fri) 9/18/15	Keene	12:00 NOON	Keene Parks and Recreation 312 Washington Street, Room 14
District 2 Cnclr. Colin Van Ostern Co-Hosted with District 1 Cnclr. Joseph D. Kenney	(Fri) 9/18/15	Charlestown	3:00 PM	Town Hall 19 Summer Street
District 4 Cnclr. Christopher C. Pappas Co-Hosted with District 5 Cnclr. David K. Wheeler	(Mon) 9/21/15	Bedford	7:00 PM	Bedford Cable TV Meeting Room 10 Meetinghouse Road
District 4 Cnclr. Christopher C. Pappas	(Wed) 9/23/15	Manchester	7:00 PM	Aldermanic Chambers – 3 rd Floor City Hall, 1 City Hall Plaza
District 2 Cnclr. Colin Van Ostern Co-Hosted with District 4 Cnclr. Christopher C. Pappas	(Thur) 9/24/15	Concord	5:30 PM	NH Department of Transportation 7 Hazen Drive, Room 114
District 3 Cnclr. Christopher T. Sununu	(Tue) 9/29/15	Hampton	7:00 PM	Seashell Complex Ocean Front Pavillion Room 170 Ocean Blvd.
District 3 Cnclr. Christopher T. Sununu	(Thur) 10/1/15	Kingston	7:00 PM	Kingston Community Library 56 Church Street by GPS Actual address 2 Library Lane
District 4 Cnclr. Christopher C. Pappas Co-Hosted with District 3 Cnclr. Christopher T. Sununu	(Thur) 10/8/15	Londonderry	7:00 PM	Town Office Council Chambers Moosehill Room 268B Mammoth Road
District 5 Cnclr. David K. Wheeler	(Tue) 10/13/15	Merrimack	6:30 PM	Merrimack Town Hall – West Wing Matthew Thornton Room 6 Baboosic Lake Road

District 1 Cnclr. Joseph D. Kenney	(Mon) 10/26/15	Conway	8:00 AM	Town Hall, Upstairs 1634 East Main Street
District 1 Cnclr. Joseph D. Kenney	(Mon) 10/26/15	Wakefield	11:30 AM	Sanbornville Public Safety Building 2017 Wakefield Road
District 1 Cnclr. Joseph D. Kenney	(Mon) 10/26/15	Plymouth	3:00 PM	Town Hall – Upstairs 6 Post Office Square
District 1 Cnclr. Joseph D.. Kenney	(Mon) 10/26/15	Laconia	6:30 PM	Belknap Mill 25 Beacon Street East Third Floor Meeting Room

- **Denotes Meeting moved from Community Center Room 1A to Frisbie Memorial Hospital, Community Education & Conference Center, (Strafford Room) 11 Whitehall Road, Rochester, NH**

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