

April 28, 2022 Project Updates

Seacoast Transportation Corridors Vulnerability Analysis (STCVA): RPC has completed work on the STCVA and the final document has been uploaded to the website (www.therpc.org/stcva). This project worked with the New Hampshire Coastal Program, NHDOT, and other stakeholders to conduct an analysis of the impacts of sea-level rise related flooding on the transportation infrastructure in the seacoast. The vulnerability analysis will form the basis of a long-term adaptation framework incorporating coastal hazards and prioritizing resilience in state and local transportation planning. A webinar on March 31 provided an overview of the project as well as discussing findings and recommendations and can be viewed on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/UI3SToZ4xsY>). Staff has also been presenting project findings to the Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW) (3/17), the Seabrook-Hampton Estuary Alliance (SHEA) (4/19), NHDOT Project Review Committee (4/20) and Hampton Falls Planning Board (4/26). A discussion with the Hampton Planning Board is scheduled (5/18) as well. (Dave Walker dwalker@therpc.org).

NH Seacoast Greenway: – Last week staff gave a presentation on the NH Seacoast Greenway at the NH ACEC Technology Transfer Conference jointly with staff from NHDOT and GPI. 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. RPC and NPS staff have been meeting with municipal staff from each corridor community over the past two months to get initial input on town goals for trail development and connections. Staff also submitted a letter to Congressman Pappas' office supporting the City of Portsmouth's Community Project (earmark) request for funding to construct two trailheads with parking and pave the trail within City limits. Trail surface along most of the corridor in New Hampshire will remain stonedust, though is paved on adjacent sections in Salisbury, Newburyport and most more urban areas of the East Coast Greenway. (Scott Bogle – sbogle@therpc.org)

Hampton Falls (29610): This study that considered options to address congestion on US 1 through the town center in Hampton Falls was recently completed. An advisory committee was formed and met several times to discuss various aspects of the project. Two public information sessions were 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 available on the RPC website: www.therpc.org/corridorstudies (Dave Walker dwalker@therpc.org).

Seabrook-Hampton Bridge Replacement (15904): The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project was submitted to FHWA for review and permitting and on March 30, 2022 the Federal Highway Administration issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the project. NHDOT is proceeding with final design of a replacement that is fixed (non-movable), 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 will be 50 feet wide with two travel lanes, 8-foot shoulders, and 6-foot sidewalks with bump outs at some piers. Private property impacts are be minimal although there are some environmental impacts 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).

Hampton 40797: The Ocean Boulevard reconstruction project continues to make progress towards construction. A Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting was held on January 27, 2022 where the NHDOT Project Manager and Consulting Engineers (HDR) covered progress on the environmental process, data collection, and the draft purpose and need statement. The next PAC meeting will occur on May 26, 2022 and will be a workshop format with efforts geared towards finalizing the purpose and need and beginning discussions of improvement options and alternatives for the corridor. (Dave Walker dwalker@therpc.org).

Age Friendly Communities Initiative: Community surveys are nearing completion in five of the six assessment communities and thus far have garnered nearly 1200 responses. Staff have been analyzing survey data and working with local steering committees to plan Community Forums for May and June where survey results will be shared and public input gathered on strategies to address needs identified in the surveys. The April meeting of the Regional Steering Committee included interim survey findings across the five communities that have been surveying actively, a presentation from Dr. Marianne Jackson of the Gibson Center for Senior Services in North Conway on their work on Age Friendly Communities in the Mt. Washington Valley; and presentations by each community on local programming for older adults and how that has been adapted during COVID. The six assessment communities include Exeter, Fremont, Hampstead, Hampton, Portsmouth and Stratham. (Scott Bogle – sbogle@therpc.org)

State Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan Review: Alta Planning and Design is back under contract with NHDOT to complete the NH Ped/Bike Plan. A meeting was held with the Project Advisory Committee in late March and a plan presented for wrap up work during March-May. RPCs were invited to submit comments on the proposed remaining work. A revised draft is anticipated in May. (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).
