

MINUTES
Rockingham Planning Commission
MPO Technical Advisory Committee
RPC Offices, 156 Water Street, Exeter NH
April 27, 2023

Members Present: T. Moore (Plaistow); B. Dion (Greenland); P. Coffin (Kingston); D. Sharples (Exeter); E. Eby (Portsmouth); R. Nichols (COAST); R. DiCillo, (NHDES); L. St. John (NHDOT).

Staff: S. Bogle (Senior Transportation Planner); T. Roache (Executive Director)

- 1. Introductions:** Roll call attendance was taken. Bogle indicated that the chair was not attending and that he would run the meeting.
- 2. Minutes of 1/26/23 and 2/23/23 TAC Meetings**

*Motion by Sharples to approve TAC minutes from 1/26/22 and 2/23/23. Second by Coffin. Roll Call Vote was taken. **SO VOTED.***

3. 2023-2026 TIP Amendment #1 (Attachment #2) – S. Bogle

Referencing Attachment #2, Bogle summarized the three projects in the RPC MPO region included in Amendment #1 to the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Projects include:

- Portsmouth-Kittery 15731 (SML Bridge Replacement) – Net change of \$2,869,726 to replace functionality of State Pier which was limited by bridge replacement.
- Statewide PAVE-T1-RESURF (Preservation of Tier 1 Highways) - Scope only adjustment to better reflect purpose of the program. Switched out the work “Resurface” for “Preservation” in scope.
- Statewide 44196 (Development of Resilience Improvement Plan) – State Resiliency Improvement Plans are a new planning document allowed by the BIL/IIJA

Bogle noted that fiscal constraint of the TIP/STIP is maintained per NHDOT fiscal constraint documentation included with Attachment #2. Regarding air quality conformity, as of July 20, 2013, all of New Hampshire is unclassifiable/attainment for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (the 2008 ozone standard) and as of April 6, 2015, the 1997 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (the 1997 ozone standard) is revoked for all purposes, including transportation conformity purposes in the Boston-Manchester-Portsmouth (SE) NH area. For this reason, no air quality conformity analysis is necessary.

*Motion by Nichols to endorse the changes included in TIP Amendment 1 and recommend approval by the MPO Policy Committee. Second by Sharples. Roll Call Vote was taken. St. John abstained. **SO VOTED.***

4. Ten Year Plan Project Priorities Submitted to NHDOT (Attachment #3) – T. Roache

Roache provided a brief update on information regarding project priorities received from NHDOT subsequent to the February 23, 2023 TAC meeting, and the discussion and ultimate prioritization vote taken at the MPO Policy Committee meeting on March 8, 2023.

At the TAC meeting on February 23, 2023, the TAC reached a consensus to recommend to the MPO Policy Committee that the Portsmouth Circle redesign project be put forward as the region's top priority for the current Ten Year Plan update cycle. A formal vote was not taken as there was not a quorum at the meeting. While this project exceeded region's target budget there was indication at the meeting from NHDOT that additional funding might be found to round out the project given its regional importance in the department's view.

Between the February TAC and April Policy Committee meeting clarification was received from NHDOT that supplemental funding would not be available, but the MPO could choose to prioritize the project in this Ten Year Plan round and again in the next round to allocate adequate funding. There was subsequent discussion of additional projects which had scored highly in the project ranking process including Ashworth Avenue Complete Streets in Hampton and NH102/Blueberry Hill Road in Raymond.

The Policy Committee ultimately voted to prioritize the Hampton Ashworth Avenue project and an engineering study for the Portsmouth Traffic Circle project as MPO priorities for the Ten Year Plan. The Raymond NH102/Blueberry Hill Road project was put forward for a Road Safety Audit (RSA) under the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). Depending on the results of the RSA, safety improvements at that location can likely be completed with HSIP funding on a shorter timeline than would be possible under the Ten Year Plan.

5. COAST & NH Transit Coalition Update – (Attachment #4) – Rad Nichols

Nichols provided an update on COAST operations and post-pandemic ridership recovery, and on the new COAST Maintenance, Operations and Administration facility that is currently in design and for which the agency has secured the needed federal funding and is now pursuing remaining needed non-federal match. Nichols also summarized the efforts of the NH Public Transportation Coalition to support NHDOT's request for additional state operating support for urban and rural transit systems. The Coalition is made up of city mayors and city councils, major private employers, chambers of commerce, nonprofit human service agencies and transit providers around the state. While NHDOT's request was not initially included in the Governor's budget, it was inserted by House Finance Division II and subsequently remained in the budget bill as adopted by the full House. The budget has now crossed over and is in Senate Finance. Coalition members are meeting with key Senators to ensure they understand local and regional transit need in their districts.

6. Project Updates: S. Bogle

- Bogle provided an update on the NH Seacoast Greenway, the first phase of which is now under construction in North Hampton and moving northward. Staff assisted Portsmouth with an earmark application to Congressman Pappas' office to support construction of two trailhead facilities. Staff are also working with Rye and Greenland on a Recreation Trails Program grant application for another trailhead facility at Breakfast Hill Road.
- RPC and SRPC secured an FTA Section 5305e State Planning and Research grant to for a study assessing accessibility of fixed route bus stops on the COAST and Wildcat Transit route networks, and how local development review policies consider transit access for multi-family develops in the vicinity of transit stops.
- The NH Office of Highway Safety is holding a series of three virtual listening sessions as part of updating the NH Highway Safety Plan. Sessions will be held 5/22, 5/24 and 5/26.
- Efforts to bolster attendance at TAC meetings were discussed.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Scott Bogle, Recording Secretary