

RPC Transportation Advisory Committee
August 24, 2023
9:00-11:00 AM

RPC Offices

156 Water Street, Exeter, NH

Location: <https://goo.gl/maps/X9AvHrcfy2SivYDx7>

There is an elevator available via the Center Street entrance.

Virtual Participation via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81357139301?pwd=dzFYRStuNy9FZSs1U1hWZ0xYMVNTQT09>

The full zoom invitation is on page 2

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Minutes of 4/27/2023 Meeting (**Attachment #1**) — **[Motion Required]** (5 minutes)
3. Ten Year Plan Priorities and GACIT Hearings (**Attachment #2**) — Dave Walker (20 Minutes)
4. Long Range Transportation Plan Update – Mikayla Jerominek (20 Minutes)
5. COAST Transit Stop Accessibility Study – Scott Bogle (20 minutes)
6. Hampstead RSMS Project – Trisha Cheever (10 minutes)
7. Agency and Community announcements and updates (20 minutes)
8. Project Updates – Dave Walker (10 minutes)
9. Open discussion/Comments

TAC MEETING SCHEDULE For 2022 (Next meeting highlighted)

January 26	April 27	July 27	October 26
February 23	May 25	August 24	December 7***
March 23	June 22	September 28	

***Off Schedule

Rockingham Planning is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: RPC Transportation Advisory Committee

Time: Apr 27, 2023 09:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Every month on the Fourth Thu, until Oct 26, 2023, 7 more occurrence(s)

May 25, 2023 09:00 AM

Jun 22, 2023 09:00 AM

Jul 27, 2023 09:00 AM

Aug 24, 2023 09:00 AM

Sep 28, 2023 09:00 AM

Oct 26, 2023 09:00 AM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Monthly:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZUucu6prTlpGtXcLbxfFBWqoOrbNE_4btbK/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGprT4tG9ecsxmGRpwcA4_4KOvztIhejbdlnzPnGyZ1QDTnOc1QMjxaL4zS

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81357139301?pwd=dzFYRStuNy9FZSs1U1hWZ0xYMVNTQT09>

Meeting ID: 813 5713 9301

Passcode: 422574

One tap mobile

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Dial by your location

+1 305 224 1968 US

+1 309 205 3325 US

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 931 3860 US

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

Meeting ID: 813 5713 9301

Passcode: 422574

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kdkzhDIXBu>

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

March 31, 2023

William Cass
Commissioner
NH Department of Transportation
7 Hazen Drive
Concord, New Hampshire 03302-0483

RE: Rockingham Planning Commission Prioritized list of Projects for the 2025-2034 Ten Year Plan

Dear Commissioner Cass:

The Rockingham MPO has completed the regional project ranking process with respect to the 10 Year Plan update (per RSA 228:99) and is pleased to submit to you two project priorities for this cycle:

- **Portsmouth Circle Engineering and Feasibility:** The reconfiguration of the Portsmouth Traffic Circle is the top ranked project in the RPC region and the operational and safety issues at the location are of great concern to the MPO. Based on feedback from NHDOT's project review committee, consensus was reached by the MPO that additional study is necessary to better understand workable options for improvements at the site. In that regard, the MPO recommends that an update to the (circa 2000) Portsmouth Circle feasibility study is the necessary step for this project and requests including \$1,100,000 for design engineering in the 2025-2034 Ten Year Plan. NHDOT's review indicated engineering programmed for 2029 however the MPO would request earlier funding to allow for a full operational assessment and alternatives analysis and a solid basis from which make decisions regarding programming construction funding. The cost estimate for this project as scoped by RPC for the Ten Year Plan process and NHDOT's review are attached.
- **Ashworth Avenue Complete Streets (\$6,904,497 inflated cost):** This project was highly ranked in the region, will continue to enhance the safety and function of the bicycle and pedestrian network in Hampton Beach, and will complement the work occurring on Ocean Boulevard as part of Hampton 40797. The full scope and cost estimate for this project and NHDOT review are attached.

This new set of RPC project priorities is based on the assumption that any projects currently in the Ten Year Plan remain so and that new projects will be programmed for construction in fiscal years 2033 and 2034. The process that the MPO followed to develop our priorities is detailed below.

Project Solicitation & Selection Process

The development of regional Ten Year Plan recommendations began in April 2022 with the scoping of the overall process, the setting of project selection criteria, and a request to our stakeholders to identify transportation needs in the region. The need to send projects to engineers for scope and cost development required an earlier start on the solicitation process and setting selection criteria weights.

Solicitation for Projects (April-July, 2022): The scope and schedule for the process began in April 2022 and was set in May 2022. The weights for selection criteria were set in June 2022. The project solicitation resulted in several new projects proposals received from communities and nearly thirty other projects added from other studies. This brought the total number of identified transportation improvement projects in the region to nearly 170, including those currently in the TIP and Ten Year Plan.

Project Development and Classification (June-July, 2022): Staff reviewed the projects in the Long Range Transportation Plan and updated details as necessary. After removing projects that have been completed or are already in the Ten Year Plan or Transportation Improvement Program, this left **100 potentially eligible projects** for prioritization (estimated current cost of greater than \$200 million).

Initial Project Scoring and Development of Short List: Eligible projects were scored against the selection criteria and a short list of 15 projects was presented to the MPO TAC at the July 2022 meeting. Based on budget limitations for engineering services, the TAC reduced the list to 8 projects to be sent to the engineering consultants for scope and cost development.

Scope and Cost Development (August-October, 2022): Hoyle Tanner Associates (HTA), the RPC's on-call engineering consultants, developed scope and cost estimates for each of the 8 projects after discussions with RPC staff regarding expected scopes.

Selecting Candidate Projects (October-November, 2022): The scope and cost estimates were reviewed at the October TAC meeting and that committee recommended a list of 5 projects to be sent to NHDOT for scope and Cost review. Those five projects were approved by the MPO Policy Committee at the November 9, 2022 meeting and submitted to NHDOT on November 10, 2022 for scope and cost review.

Finalize list of Ten Year Plan Priorities (February-March, 2023): NHDOT reviewed four of the five candidate projects and forwarded the results to the MPO on February 27, 2023. Prior to receiving the feedback from NHDOT, the MPO TAC met and recommended that the MPO prioritize the top ranked regional project (Portsmouth Circle) for the Ten Year Plan with the understanding that final estimated costs were unknown at the time. At the March 8, 2023 meeting, the MPO Policy Committee reviewed NHDOT comments on the scope and cost of the Portsmouth Traffic Circle and determined that additional analysis and study was needed prior to moving forward with that project. The result of this was the current priority of

- **Portsmouth Circle Engineering and Feasibility:** The operational and safety issues at the Portsmouth Circle remain of great concern to the MPO and this project remains the top priority of the region. There was consensus that the scope for this project was uncertain and that an update to the feasibility study conducted in the early 2000s is necessary to make progress and determine the best approach for resolving the problems at the site. *The MPO requests including \$1,100,000 in engineering funds in the Ten Year Plan (programmed as soon*

as is feasible) for this project to move forward a full operational assessment and alternatives analysis. The cost estimate for this project and NHDOT review are attached.

- **Ashworth Avenue Complete Streets (\$6,904,497 inflated cost):** This project will complement the work occurring on Ocean Boulevard in Hampton (40797) and continue to enhance the safety and function of the bicycle and pedestrian network in Hampton Beach. The cost estimate for this project and NHDOT review are attached.

Additional Comments

In addition to the projects proposed for the Ten Year Plan, the MPO has some comments and recommendations regarding the process:

The project engineering and cost review continues to be a valuable addition to the Ten Year Plan process. MPO staff, TAC members, and Policy Committee members all appreciated the time and effort that NHDOT spent reviewing our projects and found the feedback extremely beneficial in the decision-making process. This is something that RPC would like to see continue (and expanded if possible) as they provided a critical perspective on timing, need, and cost, and that furthers our goal of providing quality projects for the Ten Year Plan. The addition of utilizing consulting engineers to develop project estimates was extremely helpful to our process. One additional step that RPC staff feels would be beneficial would be some early input from NHDOT's project review committee prior to the consulting engineers spending time developing cost estimates. Some early consultation and coordination on scopes would have resolved much of the cost difference between the RPC estimates and the NHDOT review estimates.

Implementing the corridor study program. RPC is anticipating the start of the corridor study program and, as previously expressed, has the need for a comprehensive analysis of several corridors in the region. The corridor that the RPC has identified as in need of study are the following (in route number order):

- **NH 1A:** The RPC is currently conducting a vulnerability assessment for NH1A (and other coastal corridors) to assess the areas potentially impacted by Sea-level rise and attempting to identify mitigating improvements. A comprehensive look at the coastal corridors with detailed improvements is needed to understand the true scope and cost of maintaining the transportation network on the coast in the face of climate change.
 - **NH33:** Development at Pease Tradeport and along NH 33 in Portsmouth, Greenland, and Stratham has resulted in growing safety and congestion issues along the corridor. Recently, there have been serious crashes that have prompted calls from the community and elected officials for safety improvements as well as a thorough examination of the corridor.
 - **NH 101:** The NH 101 expansion was completed 20 years ago and many of the unsignalized interchanges were experiencing significant congestion during peak periods Pre-COVID. The RPC would like to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the unsignalized interchanges to determine if improvements are needed to facilitate improved traffic flow and safety, particularly at exits 6,8,9,10, 12, as well as the NH 101/I-95 interchange.
 - **NH 111:** The segment of NH 111 from NH 125 in Kingston to the Shadow Lake Bypass in Salem has experienced substantial growth and development over the last 20 years and the
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corridor regularly experiences serious motor vehicle crashes and requests for traffic signals and other improvements. In addition, some areas have been subject to flooding during severe storms. A comprehensive examination of the corridor is needed to develop a comprehensive set of safety and traffic flow improvements and mitigate stormwater and related flooding issues.

- **NH 125:** In Kingston and Brentwood, there is a short section of NH 125 not incorporated in the 1999 Plaistow-Kingston Study or the 2008 Epping-Rochester Study. Growth and development on that portion of the corridor has increased in recent years, including the recent approval of an approximately one million square foot warehouse facility. High travel speeds, the lack of turn lanes, and other factors have resulted in multiple serious crashes, including a fatality at South Road in 2022. The development of a comprehensive plan focused on corridor-wide safety improvements is warranted to determine the needs for this section of this critical state roadway.

Coastal Resilience Planning: RPC is acutely aware of the threats to our coastal roads both in the long term from sea level rise, and the short term from storms like the one that occurred on December 23, 2022. The December 2022 storm tides correlated closely with anticipated sea level rise of three to four feet (See the [story map](#) documenting the impacts). The impacts to the NH 1B Causeway and NH 1A corridor warrant a comprehensive strategy to minimize the imminent impacts to the built and natural environments. The scale of the effort that will be required to mitigate the impacts of sea-level rise and coastal storms on the coastal transportation system is well beyond what we can hope to manage solely via RPC's \$8 million target programming for each cycle, especially given competing interests of the region. The RPC would welcome the opportunity to collaborate on a comprehensive sea level rise strategy to address infrastructure resilience on the Seacoast.

The MPO supports continued efforts to refine the project identification and selection process and improve transparency in transportation project programming. We look forward to working with the Department and the other RPCs/MPOs on the continued evolution of the Ten Year Plan.

Sincerely,



Tim Roache
Executive Director

cc: Executive Councilor Janet Stevens
Peter Stamnas, NHDOT Director of Project Development
Bill Watson, Administrator, NHDOT Planning and Community Assistance
City Council/Select Boards
RPC Policy Committee Members
RPC TAC Members
