



Regional Planning Commission & Economic Development District

NCC Transportation Advisory Committee Tower Room, Littleton Opera House Meeting Minutes July 20, 2017

Members Present: Al Rossetto (Northumberland), Shawn White (Whitefield), Daniel Bacon (Chatham), Donna Laurent (Jefferson), Raymond Gorman (Colebrook), Neil McIver (Plymouth), Frank Claffey (Bethlehem), Dick Hamilton (Littleton), Joe Chenard (Lincoln).

Staff: Greg DiSanto (Planner), Barbara Robinson (Executive Director)

NHDOT: James McMahon (Assistant District Engineer – District 1)

Guests: Paul DegliAngeli (Conway Public Works), Joe Kenney (Executive Council – District 1), Joe Elgosin (Whitefield), Brian Bresnahan (Congresswoman Kuster's Office), Jaret Cape (Congresswoman Kuster's Office).

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Carl Martland at 1:05 PM. A roundtable of introductions was completed.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Gorman motions to approve minutes from March 16, 2017 and January 19, 2017. Mr. Claffey seconds motion.

Review of Regional Transportation Improvement Program:

Mr. DiSanto summarized the purpose of the RTIP.

Mr. DegliAngeli updates TAC on status of Conway's TYP projects. Conway is replacing a water main on Main Street and has agreed to manage the State's project (40018) while they are doing water main work on Main Street. Project 40638 is in the Ten Year Plan to construct two roundabouts on Main Street in 2025. Conway has withdrawn the roundabout plans and would like to install smart signals at the intersections. This would reduce the estimated cost from \$5.1 million to less than \$1 million. Conway would like to do this work in 2019, concurrent with project 40018, and is requesting the TAC's support for advancing this project by several years. There was general discussion about whether or not this would delay other projects in the region. The consensus was that this is difficult to predict.

Mr. Gorman updated the TAC on Colebrook's Main Street reconstruction project (40640) which is scheduled for construction in 2019-2020. Colebrook's town water and sewer project is scheduled to end in the spring of 2018. Colebrook is requesting the TAC's support to advance project 40640 to begin in 2018. Mr. Claffey expresses that advancing these projects might make sense transportation-wise, but that there might not be enough money programmed for 2018 and 2019 to accomplish this and that we don't know whether or not this would delay other regional projects.

Mr. Martland asked NCC to make a general statement to DOT that it supports situations where towns withdraw a project from the TYP in order to advance a less expensive project. Then there should be two separate, specific statements that Conway's project 40638 be advanced to 2019 and Colebrook's project

40640 be advanced to 2018. **Ms. Laurent motions** that the TAC conceptually supports any situation where advancing a project has a solid financial benefit. **Mr. Claffey seconds the motion.** Mr. Bacon expresses that there would have to be a big savings for it to be worth bumping another regional project. Dr. Robinson clarifies that NCC will communicate the TAC's support for advancing projects, but not to change the TYP process. The motion is **approved** by vote.

Ms. Laurent motions to communicate the TAC's support to advance these two projects, specifically. Mr. Martland asks how to word this. Mr. McIver requests that NCC communicate to DOT the TAC's support for advancing these projects, but not to request for other projects to be delayed. This **Mr. Claffey seconds the motion.** Councilor Kenney informs the TAC that DOT has advanced some projects in recent years using contingency money from projects that came in under budget. The motion is **approved** by vote.

Mr. DegliAngeli motions to adopt the Regional Transportation Improvement Program, with two comments that the TAC supports advancing project 40638 and 40640. **Ms. Laurent seconds** the motion. The motion is **approved** by vote.

Updates:

GACIT

Mr. DiSanto updated the TAC on the July 19th GACIT kick-off meeting. DOT's Ten Year Plan priorities are the same as they were in the 2014-2015 round. DOT is assuming flat funding from the federal government, in constraining the budget.

CMAQ

Mr. DiSanto updated the TAC on DOT's plans to score the CMAQ projects without any regional scoring from the RPCs, primarily because the timeline for the CMAQ process is tight. Ms. Laurent asked if this is a one-time thing. **Mr. Claffey motions** to send DOT a letter stating that the TAC supports DOT's scoring process if it is a one-time thing, but not if it will be done in future CMAQ rounds. Mr. Martland says that the TAC should not vote on this until we know whether or not it is a one-time thing, and directs NCC to request more information from DOT. There is no vote, but there is general support for allowing to DOT to do what they need to do because of time constraints.

Conway is applying for CMAQ funding for their bike path project.

Plymouth Alternative Transit/Transportation Update

Mr. McIver updated the TAC on Plymouth's resolution to be a destination for eco-tourism, and how that influences their plans for alternative transit. Plymouth's recent TAP application for sidewalk submission barely missed the cut for funding. Plymouth needs to extend a sidewalk on Highland Street to reach Tenney Mountain Highway. Highland Street is heavily travelled by vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians and serves the University, the town's schools, and the Hospital. The sidewalk currently runs the entire length of the street, except for the last 100 yards or so. The town needs to complete the sidewalk to the Tenney Mtn Hwy intersection in order to get funding for a crosswalk there, but the town does not have the money for sidewalks.

North Country Transit

Mr. DiSanto updated the TAC on Tri-County Transit. Brenda Gagne was appointed in May to fill Beverly Raymond's position as Director of the Transit Division. Jeanene McDonald hired to fill Ms. Gagne's previous role as Operations Manager for transit. Tri-County Transit is working on improvements to the scheduling software.

Scenic Byways Committee

Mr. Martland updated the TAC on the Byways Committee's recent work. Their main focus recently has been on simplifying the Byways network, especially in the River Heritage Trail. There is a sprawling network of roads in the Ammoonosuc and Pemigewasset watersheds that are part of this Trail. The proposal is to make two tiers of Byways in this network – one route that is a defined "River Heritage Trail" and other routes that are still Scenic Byways, but are not part of the "Trail". They are working on scenic overlooks and signage. The Committee does not have money for signage that is up to DOT/FHWA's standards for state roads, but are considering placing maps in downtown businesses and at information kiosks along the Trail. The Committee is also considering creating an informational phone application for Byways travelers.

Franconia Notch State Park Update:

Mr. DiSanto updated the TAC on FNSP's efforts to address overflow parking on the Parkway in the Notch. A working group of partner agencies and organizations is working on a bus shuttle and enforcement solution.

District Engineer Update:

Mr. McMahon, Assistant District Engineer from DOT District 1, updated the TAC on the district's highway maintenance efforts. The storms on July 1st caused extensive damage to state roads in the NCC region, mostly in District 2, but some in District 1. DOT has been doing the repair work in-house, and District 1 sent some crews to assist District 2. Whitefield shared the repair estimates for their local roads. Coos County is likely to meet the damage threshold for federal assistance.

State Aid Bridge Discussion:

Discussion from the March 16th meeting continued, regarding towns opting to complete bridge projects on their own, without the State Aid Bridge project. Mr. DiSanto shared with the TAC that the issue happens in other regions throughout the state. Mr. White shared details from a recent bridge replacement in Whitefield. The town was replacing a small, 14 ft. wide, wood-deck bridge that served a few houses. DOT wanted the replacement bridge to be two lanes wide, concrete, and have sidewalks. Whitefield's 20% match for that bridge would have been more expensive than what they were quoted by a contractor. Mr. Martland said that the issue was about building a context sensitive bridge. Mr. Gorman and Mr. Martland asked NCC to ask DOT if there has been any survey or any data collected on this issue, so that the discussion can move beyond anecdotal stories. NCC will consider options for collecting this data, if it does not exist.

Sidewalks:

Rockingham Planning Commission staff has asked regional planners for information on how often towns refuse a sidewalk that would be paid for by DOT, because the town would be responsible for snow removal. Mr. DiSanto asked the TAC if there are any examples in the NCC region where this has happened recently. There were no examples within the region, but Councilor Kenney shared that Tamworth has refused to construct a sidewalk because of the cost to maintain it.

Overnight Truck Parking:

FHWA recently released a report on the availability of overnight truck parking nationwide. Mr. DiSanto asked the TAC if there are any examples of towns in the NCC region where truck drivers cannot find a suitable place to park overnight, and park in problematic locations. In Sugar Hill, Presby Construction's facility is used as a staging area for trucks that deliver to NCES in Bethlehem. This is seen as a nuisance by some residents on NH 117. Mr. White shared that in Whitefield, there is a state-owned parking lot

that had been used by truckers to park their trucks and/or trailers – sometimes leaving them unoccupied for long periods. The town worked with the state to end this practice.

Adjournment: Mr. Claffey motioned for adjournment at approximately 3:00pm. **Mr. Martland seconds** the motion. A vote was taken and the **motion is approved** unanimously.

Next meeting 9/21/17 at 1pm. Location TBD.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gregory DiSanto