

**NCC Transportation Advisory Committee
Littleton Regional Healthcare
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
September 12th, 2019
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

Members Present: Paul Robitaille (Gorham), Doug Grant (Randolph), Carl Martland (Sugar Hill), Rosalind Page (Lisbon), Clayton Macdonald (Stratford), Brigitte Codling (Haverhill), Raymond Gorman (Colebrook), Robert Larson (Whitefield), Doug Damko (Littleton)

Others Present: Phil Beaulieu (NH DOT District 1), Brian Bresnahan (Representative Kuster), Liz Stratchan (NH DES Air Resources), Linda Dusenberry (NH DOT Planning & Community Assistance), Erin Hennessey (Grafton County Representative)

Staff Present: Alex Belenz, Danica Melone

1. Introductions/Attendance

Mr. Macdonald called the meeting to order at 3:06 PM and introductions were made.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes (4/11/19)

Mr. Martland moved to accept the minutes, Mr. Macdonald seconded, and the Committee moved to accept the minutes as written.

3. FY 2021-2030 Ten Year Plan Update

a. Regional Projects in Draft FY 2021-2030 TYP

Mr. Belenz began by providing an overview of NHDOT's draft FY 2021-2030 Ten Year Plan (TYP). The strategies proposed by NHDOT are provided in the TYP supplement (https://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/typ/documents/nhdot_gacit_fall_2019.pdf). A series of 20 statewide GACIT hearings has begun. GACIT will provide their updated TYP to the Governor later this fall, who review and send to the legislature. There will be two public hearings in the NCC planning region (Berlin and Conway), typically there are 3 or 4 total in the region. Ms. Dusenberry noted that there was a survey on NHDOT's website called the *Planning Ahead 2030 Online Survey*. (<https://nhdotplanningahead2030.metroquest.com/>)

The Committee reviewed the regional Ten Year Plan project spreadsheet provided by Mr. Belenz (http://www.nccouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Ten-Year-Plan-Comparison-Chart_v2.pdf). Minor project delays are not unusual, and new projects are typically added to the later years of the TYP. There was fair number of new projects in the region, most of which focus on Red List bridges or other bridge preservation efforts.

Mr. Belenz highlighted several regionally-significant projects, changes, and concerns:

- The Jefferson-Randolph US 2 project (13062C) is significantly underfunded according to the recent Public Information meeting. It is likely that the project would be scaled down to the highest-need areas should additional funding not be realized. Delaying/defunding other regional projects to fund this one would not be ideal. There are some challenges with potential right-of-way impacts with the shoulder widening component and some of the historic stone walls and properties in the Jefferson Highlands area. Mr. Robitaille noted the importance of completing the project given regional importance of US 2 as an east-west corridor. Gorham is increasingly looking at US 2 as their primary tourism corridor due to congestion on NH 16 to the south. There seems to be a lot of community support for fully funding the project.
- There are three placeholder projects for the Conway bypass in the draft TYP (listed under Conway-Madison). NHDOT's intent is to close out these projects and officially remove them. The placeholders were added by the legislature during the last TYP round. Mr. Robitaille noted the importance of addressing congestion in Conway for tourism-related travel in eastern Coos County. Mr. Belenz noted that the two Conway Main St projects should help with traffic flow, and the cost and maintenance liability of the Conway Bypass project (\$170 million) is well beyond current funding levels.
- Mr. Gorman noted the delay in Colebrook's TAP project (2024) and lack of alignment with the Main St reconstruction project (2021).
- The prior Interstate 93 project for maintenance between exits 35 and 42 has been changed. There are now two projects with significantly more funding addressing a smaller area (exits 35 through 39). Maintenance between exits 40 and 42 is now identified as requiring funding from future TYP rounds.
- Mr. Larson asked about a Whitefield bridge repair project. Mr. Belenz explained that the project came through from the State Aid Bridge Program; there was some concern from the prior Public Works Director over the scope and cost of the project. Mr. Belenz recommended that Mr. Larson follow up with NHDOT regarding the status of the project.
- Mr. Beaulieu noted that the Franconia NH 18 bridge project (24497) was recently completed and the Jackson NH 16 bridge project (27709) is ahead of schedule and should be completed shortly.
- Mr. Martland discussed that he felt DOT should be investing more in transportation improvements in the region. Poor roadway condition leads to additional car repair costs for regional residents, who typically have to drive farther distances than residents in other areas of the state.
- Mr. Codling asked why there was no EZ Pass increase or additional fee for out-of-state pass holders. In-state pass holders could receive a discount, and in some other states there is an additional charge as an out-of-state pass holder. Mr. Beaulieu responded that he was unsure of

an answer and recommended she reach out to the NHDOT contact who deals with turnpikes and toll revenue.

Mr. Belenz noted that he will keep the TAC updated as the TYP process moves forward, including any changes to projects in the region. Members were encouraged to submit feedback by attending GACIT hearings or participating in the online survey.

4. Regional CMAQ Project Rankings

Mr. Belenz discussed the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program (CMAQ) which is a federal reimbursement program aimed at improving air quality. Types of projects that are included in the listing include vehicle replacement programs; improving traffic flow; reducing tail pipe emissions; projects that improve or provide access to transit services; or bike and pedestrian projects. \$13.5 million is available statewide. There are three proposals that include projects in the region; TAC's rankings will count for 10% of the total score. A subcommittee consisting of Mr. Belenz, Mr. Martland, and Ms. Page had met to give these projects preliminary rankings in an effort to expedite the process.

Mr. Belenz referenced the handout related to the CMAQ ranking process and explained the different criteria by which the projects are ranked.

Mr. Belenz then provided overviews of each of the proposals and the preliminary feedback developed by the project review subcommittee. Discussion ensued regarding the benefits and challenges associated with each proposal, summarized below:

Littleton – Park & Ride

- The proposal is for the upgrading of the current public parking lot behind JAX JR Cinema in Littleton into a park-and-ride lot, including signage, reconfiguring the parking lot to add more parking spaces, improving lighting, and improving drainage.
- Mr. Belenz noted that the *Downtown Littleton Parking Plan* noted that reconfiguring the lot could add 10 to 30 additional parking spaces depending on the scope of the project.
- Members noted the need for a park-and-ride lot in the region. There are no park-and-rides north of New Hampton in the I-93 corridor.
- Members expressed concerns over the location of the parking lot. It is directly adjacent to Main Street and is already heavily utilized. Having cars parked for long durations or multiple days could limit the use of the lot by customers of Main Street businesses. There didn't appear to be any coordination with nearby businesses or current transit service providers (Concord Coach, Tri-Country Transit, Rural Community Transportation), so it is hard to know how well the lot would function as a park-and-ride, or if it is supported by local business. Buses may also have a hard time getting in and out of the parking lot. Robust signage would be needed to direct drivers from Interstate 93.

- Members agreed that it was difficult to know if there would be tangible air quality benefits, given the aforementioned challenges.
- Members agreed that a park-and-ride lot in Littleton would be beneficial, but that there are likely better locations closer to the Interstate.
- The project initially received a score of 69/100 from the subcommittee, this was changed to 64 out of 100 to address the TACs concerns.

Littleton – Rail-Trail Connector to Bridge St Ped-Bike Bridge

- The proposal is to construct an 8-foot-wide multi-use path from the current rail corridor along Deer Court to the Bridge Street ped-bike bridge. The Town is planning to improve the rail corridor into a bike-ped rail trail (funded by Northern Borders). On the north side of the river, there is a long-term to re-route Saranac St to Bridge St, including sidewalks. This would help better connect planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the north and south sides of the river in downtown.
- There was some concern about the rail trail project and if ATVs would be allowed. They are currently allowed on the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail to the south. Mr. Belenz noted that this project is being described as a bike-ped facility and ATVs would not be allowed given the funding source.
- Members agreed that the proposed facility would help form a link in the bicycle and pedestrian network.
- Members noted that Deer Court and the residential area on South Street are relatively low-traffic areas and that this is not a high-stress area for bicyclists and pedestrians. Discussion centered around whether or not this would actually increase the number of bicyclists and pedestrian trips versus private vehicle trips. Members agreed that there might be a slight air quality benefit but that it was difficult to know for certain. There were no bicycle or pedestrian counts submitted with the proposal.
- The project received a score of 73 of out 100.

Littleton – Purchase of 2 Transit Vans for Recreation Department

- The proposal is for the purchase of two Ford Transit vans for Recreation Department and after-school kids' programming. The proposal notes that the vans would reduce the need for personal vehicle trips by kids' parents as kids could be shuttled directly from school or from event to event.
- Members discussed that it was difficult to understand the potential air quality benefits as it was not known whether the van service would be supporting additional programming versus existing programming. If the former, it could increase the number of vehicle trips. If the latter, it could reduce personal vehicle trips and potentially reduce the number of idling vehicles and congestion around after-school pickup at Lakeway Elementary School. It was also not known if

the vans were going to be used primarily for local trips or there would be longer-distance trips (e.g., hiking or mountain biking trips). The proposal did not address these questions.

- Members noted that the Transit vans are not alternative fuel vehicles, though there are not many options currently.
- Members noted that the project would have a lot of community benefits; however, it is difficult to ascertain the potential air quality benefits.
- The project received a score of 61 out of 100.

NH DES – EV Charger Installation

- The proposal is for the installation of 3 Level-2 EV chargers at either the Flume Gorge Visitor Center or Cannon Mountain. Each charger can charge 2 vehicles at a time. NH DES estimates that up to 20 vehicles could be charged per day. The chargers would be available year-round, 24/7 for the traveling public on the I-93 corridor as well as visitors to either location. The chargers are compatible with both plug-in hybrid and fully-electric vehicles. This is part of a pilot test the rollout of EV charging infrastructure at state-owned facilities.
- Members agreed for the need for more EV charging infrastructure in the I-93 corridor. However, there is a significant additional need beyond the 3 chargers in the proposal.
- Mr. Bresnahan asked if the proposed locations are maintained in the winter, Mr. Beaulieu noted that they are plowed regularly.
- The project received a score of 80 out of 100, with members agreeing that the score would be higher if there was a greater number of chargers.

NH DOT – Statewide Flashing Yellow Arrow Evaluations and Upgrades

- The proposal includes the evaluation of numerous traffic signals statewide for potential flashing yellow arrow (FYA) upgrades, including three traffic lights at the I-93/US 302/Dells Rd intersections in Littleton. NH DOT notes that up to ten signals will be upgraded post-evaluation. The goal is to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion by eliminating red arrows, allowing for better traffic flow.
- Members agreed that there are likely localized air quality issues at these intersections due to high traffic volumes on I-93 and US 302 and periodic traffic congestion, and that there would be some air quality benefit due to improved traffic flow. However, there is no guarantee the project, if funded, would result in improvements in Littleton per the language of the proposal (up to 10 locations upgraded statewide).
- The project received a score of 63 out of 100 due to lack of assurances for project delivery in the region.

The Committee reviewed the final scores for the CMAQ projects. Mr. Martland moved to accept the scores, Mr. Macdonald seconded, and the Committee agreed unanimously.

5. District 1 Summer 2019 Activities - Update (Phil Beaulieu)

Mr. Beaulieu described District 1's 2019 activities, including significant repaving work, major culvert upgrade along NH 135 in Dalton; and a few closed-drainage projects throughout the district such as in Jackson and in Crawford Notch. He added that there was a roadway rehabilitation project in Northumberland on Brown Road in order to turn over that road to the Town and by first bringing it up to standards. The District has been able to significantly increase its repaving work in recent years due to increases in funding.

Mr. Robitaille commended the assistance of the NHDOT crew in Gorham recently as they were helpful in resolving his erosion issues. Mr. Martland also noted that there has been a noticeable improvement in pavement condition on state highways in the region. Mr. Beaulieu said he would pass the message along.

Remaining agenda items were tabled for the next meeting due to time constraints.

6. Adjourn

Mr. Grant moved to adjourn, Mr. Macdonald seconded, and the Committee agreed unanimously to adjourn at 5:08 PM.