

**NCC Transportation Advisory Committee
Littleton Regional Healthcare, Littleton, NH
DRAFT Meeting Summary
September 20, 2018
No quorum present**

Members: Carl Martland, Sugar Hill; Paul Robitaille, Gorham; Raymond Gorman, Colebrook; Clayton MacDonald, Stratford (Chair); Stan Judge, Shelburne

NCC Staff: Alex Belenz; Danica Melone; Michelle Moren-Grey

NHDOT Staff: Phil Beaulieu (District 1); Linda Dusenberry (Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance)

Guests: Liz Strachan, NHDES; Chuck Henderson, Sen. Shaheen's Office; Brian Bresnahan, Rep. Annie Kuster's Office

Call To Order: Mr. MacDonald called the meeting to order at 1:08 PM and introductions were made.

1. Approval of Minutes

Mr. MacDonald reviewed the minutes with the Committee, noting that there was not a quorum present at this meeting so accepting the minutes of the past meeting would be tabled to the following meeting. Mr. MacDonald noted that his last name was spelled "MacDonald." There were no further comments and the minutes were tabled to the next meeting.

2. Regular Updates

North Country Council Updates. Mr. Belenz provided several updates:

- Regional Transportation Plan. NCC continues to perform data analysis and outline the approach for public engagement for the plan. The next meeting will include a work session for the plan.
- Franconia Notch Parking: NH State Parks is operating a pilot shuttle service to the Lafayette Place Trailhead from Canon Mountain. The the initial plan was to issue an RFP to hire a private contractor; however, there was not much interest shown. The current service uses two 11-passenger vans and charges \$5 per person. NH State Parks is currently losing money operating the system. NCC is participating in a working group with other stakeholders to apply for federal funds to perform a transit feasibility study.

- NCC is assisting the Town of Littleton Parking Commission with a parking study to understand parking conditions in the downtown and develop recommendations and strategies for the Town. The Littleton Parking Commission is a diverse group which includes Selectboard members, members-at-large, town stakeholders, etc.
- Field work: NCC is continuing to perform traffic counts and there is still time in the year if any towns are interested in conducting a traffic count. The culvert assessment work was finalized the month prior, and NCC is working with NH Fish & Game to develop a plan for community outreach.
- Mrs. Moren-Grey provided an update on the NH 10-year Economic Development Strategy, which is will be finished by December 2018. Mrs. Moren-Grey added that the project consultant, Fourth Economy, will be holding roundtable discussions focused on broad-based engagement and for various perspectives on economic development strategy.

Mr. Bresnahan asked about traffic counts and who to contact with questions. Mr. Belenz responded he was the main point of contact.

North Country Transit

Mrs. Gagne not present.

Scenic Byways Committee Updates

Mr. Martland stated that NCC will be submitting applications for new byway designations: NH 116 from Whitefield to Jefferson (new Presidential Range Trail segment), US 2 from Main state line to Gorham Town Common (change from Moose Path Trail to Presidential Range Trail), and NH 16 from Berlin to Milan, NH 110B, and NH 110A from NH 110B to NH 110 (Woodlands Heritage Trail). These designations are recommended in the corridor management plans for each byway. Mr. Martland and Mr. Belenz met with each affected community and they all supported the changes. In their meeting with Berlin, there was spirited discussion regarding the de-design of NH 110 as a scenic byway, which occurred in fall 2017. Mr. Martland and Mr. Belenz are working with the City of Berlin on approaches to potentially re-designate NH 110.

District Engineer Updates

Mr. Beaulieu provided an update on NHDOT District 1. Crews are wrapping up drainage and repaving and resurfacing work. Approximately 90 miles of highway were repaved this summer. The Stewartstown Bridge Project is nearing completion, as-is bridge work in Crawford's Notch. There are also several guardrail projects that are expected to be completed in October. Crews

will be shifting their focus towards tree brush and tree canopy work to make progress on some routine maintenance work before winter.

Mr. Beaulieu noted that for the Franconia Notch State Park shuttle program, that he had spoke with several people who were interested in contracting to do the work however were concerned that if there was not active enforcement of illegal parking along the highway that the shuttle would not have enough ridership to be able to financially exist.

Mr. Beaulieu added that one the primary challenges in rural regions of the state is providing smaller towns with the resources to develop and submit projects to the Ten Year Plan. Conway has a strong public works department, and it shows with how many Ten Year Plan projects they have received. While there is a large need in Conway, there are large needs elsewhere in the region as well. Mr. Belenzs noted that NCC is looking at options for connecting municipalities to engineering firms. Mr. MacDonald added that towns such as Stratford would benefit from having access to an engineer for preliminary work for projects. Mr. Robitaille asked if letters of support from neighboring towns would make it more likely that Ten Year Plan projects are accepted. Mr. Belenzs noted that level of support is one of the criteria.

4. FY 2021 – 2030 Ten Year Plan Update and Process

Mr. Belenzs discussed the current process for the FY2021 – 2030 Ten Year Plan (TYP). Towns have until November 9th to submit projects to NCC. NCC is available to assist communities with project development.

Mr. Belenzs distributed a list of current TYP plan projects. The Plymouth Highland St project is being taken out of the plan, as the town is proceeding with the project and funding it on their own. Mr. Belenzs asked if there were any projects that members thought were no longer a regional priority, there were none.

Mr. Belenzs the criteria was for project prioritization and explained the process for applying. The TAC will be asked to review TYP applications using NHDOT criteria. This round, NHDOT will conduct engineering cost estimates for submitted projects and provide a review of project proposals. NHDOT will provide NCC with feedback that will inform the development of the final project list.

Mr. Belenz proposed two options for the Ten Year Plan project prioritization process. One option would involve sending all projects to the TAC members for them to score. NCC would then compile the scores and present a draft list to the TAC, which would then be discussed and finalized. The issue with this option in the past has been low participation from TAC members. It is also a significant amount of work for a volunteer to take on. Another option would be to have an NCC staff committee score projects and develop a draft project ranking. The benefit of this approach is that NCC staff can pay for their time to ensure a thorough effort, and are not relying on volunteers to carry the effort forward. Mr. MacDonald noted that the first approach (using the TAC members) seemed like it would be a significant amount of work. It would seem like site visits for all the projects would be beneficial as well. Mr. Martland noted that site visits have not been conducted in the past, and that you have to draw the line somewhere in terms of how in-depth the review is. Mr. Martland suggested that the initial project review committee could include interested TAC members in addition to NCC staff. Mr. Robitaille agreed that TAC member input can be beneficial in receiving diverse perspectives, but added that he felt it could also be beneficial to have an unbiased representation from NCC. Mr. Robitaille expressed support for the idea of joint TAC and NCC committee to develop initial project rankings. Mr. MacDonald added that he was concerned that TAC members might submit hastily-developed project scores due to the amount of work involved. Mr. Belenz stated that NCC will flesh this idea out further and bring it up for discussion at the October meeting.

5. New Hampshire Clean Diesel Grant Program – presentation by Liz Strachan, NHDES

Ms. Strachan provided an overview of the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) and NHDES Clean Grant Diesel Grant Program. The goal of DERA is to help improve air quality by reducing harmful emissions from diesel engines. The grant program is primarily for vehicle replacement; however, projects such as exhaust controls and idling reduction technologies are also eligible. Those applying for grants often have large fleets and that RFPs are typically sent out in the spring. There will be additional funds available this year from the Volkswagen settlement. The grant program pays a percentage of the cost of the replacement vehicle, which varies depending on the type of vehicle.

Ms. Strachan reviewed the various funding restrictions for the grant program. Vehicles scheduled for replacement within the next three years are not eligible – the program is aimed towards getting higher-emission vehicles off the road that might not otherwise be replaced. Vehicles that are replaced cannot be resold and must be destroyed; once that is complete, the scrap metal can be sold off.

Ms. Strachan describe the application process, which is detailed on the DES website (<https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/air/tsb/tps/msp/diesel-vehicles/dera.htm>).

There will be multiple submission rounds going into December 2018. Ms. Strachan encouraged all members and member municipalities to contact her if they have any questions about a proposed project in their town. Mr. MacDonald asked if it was open to any municipality and Ms. Strachan responded that it is open to any municipality or commercial company. Mr. MacDonald asked that, for instance, in Stratford they have a contracted road agent and asked if he could apply and receive the money. Ms. Strachan responded that he could do so. Ms. Moren-Grey asked what the match requirement of the municipality was and Ms. Strachan clarified that it's varies by vehicle characteristic and project type; however, it is typically around 70-75% of project cost. Ms. Strachan added that it is a reimbursement program, so towns must budget for all expenses up front.

6. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Project Ranking

Mr. Belenz noted that six project proposals were received for TAP Round 3.

Mr. Belenz discussed criteria for applications used by the Statewide TAP Advisory Committee for developing the final project ranking list. There is a set amount of funding, and amount of funded projects will vary depending on how much money is requested by the highest-ranked projects. Mr. Belenz noted that the Regional Planning Commission's rankings only count for 6% of the project score; most RPC's are in favor of this percentage being increased.

Mr. Belenz explained that, in developing their rankings, most RPC's do not use the socioeconomic criteria. This criteria is used by NHDOT; they essentially plug the project location into a model that indicates the socioeconomic need and impact for the project. It would take significant resources to recreate this at the regional level, and is probably not worth the investment given the low weight given to the RPC rankings.

Mr. Belenz then proposed that the RPC rankings be performed using the three remaining criteria: potential for success, safety, and project connectivity. Mr. Belenz asked if any of the weights for these criteria should be adjusted (compared to NHDOT's weights). Mr. MacDonald suggested that the project connectivity criteria should be somewhat higher. Mr. Belenz noted that the weights can be finalized at the next meeting.

Mr. Belenz proposed two strategies for developing the draft project prioritization list, similar to the strategies proposed for the Ten Year Plan project list. Members agreed that the having a

committee of NCC staff and TAC members develop the draft list would be best. Mr. Belenz noted that he would send out an e-mail to solicit volunteers to participate in developing the project list. A Doodle poll will also be sent out to TAC members to schedule an October meeting so that the TAP ranking can be sent into NHDOT by the November 9th deadline.

7. NCC TAC - Discussion on How to Best Serve the Region – continued from July meeting

Mr. Belenz noted that at the previous meeting there had been discussion about moving TAC meetings to various locations in order to gain more participation. Mr. Belenz suggested holding every-other meeting in a different location, with Littleton serving as the default location. Mr. MacDonald discussed that Colebrook could be a good location northern Coos County towns. Mr. Belenz agreed, and noted that there other good locations would include Gorham, Mt. Washington Valley, and Lincoln (or another town south of Franconia Notch).

Mr. Belenz noted that feedback from the member survey from the previous meeting was strongly opposed to having a monthly meeting instead of a bimonthly. Mr. Belenz explained that he was concerned about changing the time of meetings because he didn't want to bar members from coming if they had been coming consistently at the current time. Mr. MacDonald expressed that he liked the current daytime meeting time. Mr. Belenz noted that if the meetings were held slightly later in the afternoon, that it would be better for members who work a regular, 9-to-5 schedule.

8. Adjournment. Mr. Martland moved to adjourn, Mr. Gorman seconded, and the Committee agreed unanimously to adjourn at 2:55 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Danica Melone