

MINUTES
Rockingham Planning Commission
Metropolitan Planning Organization
August 12, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom and Public Input

Per RSA 91-A:2, III(b) the RPC Chair has declared the COVID-19 Outbreak an emergency and has waived the requirement that a quorum be physically present at the meeting.

Commissioners/MPO Reps Present: R. McDermott, Chairman (H. Falls); B. Kravitz, A. Carnaby (Hampton); A. Brubaker (H. Falls); P. Wilson (North Hampton); T. Moore (Plaistow); G. Davison (NH DOT); P. Coffin, G. Coppelman (Kingston); E. Moreau, P. Britz (Portsmouth); R. Donahue (Salem); J. Doggett, M. Allen (Newton); T. White (NHDes); L. Cushman (Stratham); D. Hebert (Newington)

Guests: C. Cross

Staff: T. Roache (Executive Director), D. Walker (Assistant Director/Transportation Manager), S. Bogle (Sr. Transportation Planner), A. Warhaft (Office Coordinator)

1. Call to Order: Chairman McDermott called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.; introductions and roll call was made for the Zoom meeting attendees.

2. Minutes of May 13, 2020

*J. Doggett moved to approve the Minutes of May 13, 2020; Peter Coffin seconded. Roll Call Vote taken. **SO VOTED.** 4 abstentions.*

3. Ten Year Plan Project Selection Process – D. Walker

D. Walker opened the presentation with a review of background information on the progression and process of project solicitation, selection and implementation for the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and State Ten Year Plan. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is involved with the first 3 and last 3 stages of the cycle of the Ten Year Plan. Currently we are in the project solicitation stage.

Project solicitation requests were sent out to communities and transit agencies; any projects submitted will be added to those that have been identified from data analysis and studies. These projects will then be reviewed and classified according to into “Local”, “Regional” and “Inter-Regional” project, then scoring with the approved criteria weighting will be applied to each project, from which a short list of projects will be gathered. The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) endorsed the breakdown of the weights given to each category and criterion.

*Jim Doggett moved to accept the project selection process, categories and criteria weights as endorsed by the TAC Committee; Peter Coffin seconded. Roll Call Vote taken. No abstentions. **SO VOTED.***

4. Derry/Salem/Manchester Transit Coordination Plan Update – S. Bogle

S. Bogle reviewed changes to the transit coordination plan. The Federal mandate under the FAST Act requires MPOs to develop Coordinated Public Transit/Human Service Transportation Plans, which are a prerequisite for accessing certain FTA funding streams and need to be updated every 5 years. The RPC participates in 2 of the Regional Coordination Council (RCC) Regions: Greater Manchester (Region 8) and Greater Derry-Salem (Region 9). There have been several changes since the plan was last updated in 2016: merger of Region 8 and Region 9, merger of CART & MTA, new regional mobility manager, possible access to flexed CMAQ funding, consolidation of service providers, and short and long term implications of COVID-19. The plan update will include: 3 surveys, demographic analysis, identification of service gaps, update and refine strategies, a public comment period and adoption by the MPO. Bogle reviewed the project timeline for the next year. Discussion followed.

5. Project Updates – D. Walker, S. Bogle

The RPC Team will circulate a memo with a detailed summary of the project updates. Some of the projects reviewed were:

- **2021 – 2030 State Ten Year Plan** – The governor adopted the plan on July 24, 2020.
- **Road Surface Management Systems Data Collection** – This project has been stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data collection requires two people which was difficult to coordinate with current restrictions.
- **Kittery-Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Joint Lan Use Study (JLUS)** – The Implementation phase of this project will begin in the fall and RPC staff will continue to participate
- **Bicycle & Pedestrian Counts** – RPC's EcoCounter has been deployed on several trails in the region. Trail use data shows trail use is up during the pandemic. One issue that may be addressed is a lack of parking at several of the trailheads.
- **PlanNH Webinar** – S. Bogle will participate in a PlanNH Webinar on August 13 to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on transportation and housing in our region.

6. Other Business/Public Comment

T. Roache discussed the September 2020 meeting and potential agenda items and gave an update on continuing RPC business during the State of Emergency, which has been extended.

Questions and discussion followed.

R. McDermott declared the meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Warhaft

Memorandum

DATE: October 9, 2020
TO: MPO Policy Committee
FROM: David Walker, Assistant Director
RE: Project Selection for the Ten Year Plan

The next phase in the project prioritization process is for the MPO to identify candidate projects for the State Ten Year Plan from the projects in the Long Range Transportation Plan. These candidate projects will be submitted to NHDOT for engineering and cost review prior to the MPO setting final priorities for the Ten Year Plan in February/March next year.

Prioritizing projects for the Ten Year Plan involves determining feasibility, ensuring projects are supported locally and regionally, checking eligibility for federal funding, and applying the project selection criteria to rank those projects that are feasible, supported, and eligible. The MPO Long Range Transportation Plan contains 127 total projects including those submitted by communities this summer. Of these projects, 30 are already included in the State Ten Year Plan or Transportation Improvement Program and don't need to be included in this process. Checking eligibility, support, and feasibility identified 24 projects that are ineligible for federal funding, lack community support, are being funded via other methods, or are simply not needed in the next ten years. As shown in **Table 1** below, this leaves 73 projects, distributed into three groups based on scale (Local, Regional, Inter-Regional), to be ranked and considered for the Ten Year Plan. Each of those 73 projects has been scored against the statewide project selection criteria using the weights set by the TAC on July 23, 2020 and approved by the MPO on August 12, 2020.

Table 1: RPC Long Range Transportation Projects

Total Projects	127		
Already in the Ten Year Plan	30		
Not eligible/feasible/Needed	24		
Scored for Ten Year Plan	73		
		Local	Regional
Categorized	24	27	22

The top five projects from each category are included in the **Preliminary Candidate Project List** worksheet attached to this memorandum. In addition to the location, scope, and inflated cost information, each project includes the weighted total score (from the project selection

criteria), the rank within the category, and the overall rank when compared to all projects. In addition, a "Reasons to Fund" column highlights aspects of the project that indicate why it should be a priority. This column references three recent regional analysis conducted by RPC that provide insight into project benefits:

- **Congestion Management Process (CMP):** Regional analysis that identifies congested corridors and segments based on travel time data. Almost all state highways are included in this analysis.
- **Level of Traffic Stress (LTS):** A study that looked at regional roadways critical to a connected bicycle network of "low stress" facilities from the cyclists perspective and identified gaps where riders would need to use high stress routes.
- **Regional Pedestrian Infrastructure Network Assessment:** A study of locations in the region with populations (seniors, disabled, children) likely to be dependent upon pedestrian infrastructure. The analysis identifies those locations where residents are more likely to be more dependent upon pedestrian facilities.

Other important information from the table:

- The intent of categorizing projects is to facilitate a competitive process for projects of many different sizes and types. Projects are listed in rank order by category (Local, Regional, Inter-Regional) and the overall rank is included as well to indicate how the project scored against all 73 projects.
- Each project includes an additional 10% indirect costs and has costs inflated 8 years for engineering, 9 years for right-of-way, and 10 years for construction as a starting point. This may need to be adjusted once the NHDOT review is complete.
- Funding the top ranked project from all three categories would cost roughly 235% of our regional target allocation (\$6,674,000) for the two years. Funding the top three scoring projects would cost a similar amount at around 225% of the allocation.
- The following projects have had relatively recent estimates completed by engineers on at least a conceptual design: Portsmouth Islington St (6379028); Portsmouth Maplewood Avenue (6379005); Hampton Ocean Blvd (6197014), East Coast Greenway (6001019); and Stratham Circle (6431001).
- US 1 Bypass, US 1, and NH 125 project costs are based on estimates included in those corridor studies completed in 2004, 2011, and 2008 respectively.
- The Portsmouth Bartlett Street bridge project and Epping Signalization at NH 125/155 are likely under-estimated and could see a substantial increase from NHDOT review.
- Before being constructed, each project will go through an alternatives analysis and design process that will refine the scope and costs. Scopes listed could change considerably over the course of implementation and those listed are a starting point.

The TAC used the worksheet to select a draft list of candidate projects for engineering and cost review up to the regional allocation target (\$6,674,000) plus an additional two projects as per NHDOT guidance. The TAC continued the commitment to send at least one project from each category for review and selected the overall top ranked project (East Coast Greenway – Regional Category) and a lower cost project from each of the other categories to

complete the selection within the budget target amount. The two additional projects were selected based on their moderate cost and estimated impacts for transportation in their communities. The TAC voted to recommend the projects included in **Table 2** as the Candidate Project List to the MPO Policy Committee.

Table 2: Draft Candidate Projects List

Projects within Target Budget

Category	RPC Project Number	Community	Roads	Scope	Inflated Cost
Regional	6001019	Hampton Falls-Hampton	East Coast Greenway	Construct rail trail on 2.3 miles of the abandoned Hampton Branch rail corridor, elevating the causeway through the marsh 2'-3' for resiliency purposes and span washouts with sections of boardwalk.	\$5,996,618
Inter-Regional	6147006	Epping	NH 125	Signalize intersection of NH 125 with Lee Hill Road	\$431,061
Local	6379013	Portsmouth	Bartlett St.	Bridge upgrade / replacement over Hodgson Brook	\$491,409
					\$6,397,679

Two Additional Projects

Regional	6383004	Raymond	NH 27/NH 156	Address safety and capacity issues at the intersection of NH 27 and NH 156	\$1,036,850
Inter-Regional	6345011	North Hampton	US 1/NH 111	Capacity improvements at Intersection of US 1 and Atlantic Avenue (NH 111) including safety improvements for bicycle and pedestrian access	\$1,075,528
					\$8,510,057

The candidate project list approved by the Policy Committee (and the details and supporting documentation of each project) will be submitted to NHDOT for cost and engineering review by the November 6, 2020 deadline. Once NHDOT review has been completed, updated costs and scope considerations will be shared back to RPC (Jan-Feb, 2021). The RPC TAC and Policy Committees will produce a finalized priority list for the Ten Year Plan to be submitted to NHDOT by April 1, 2021.

Recommended Action: Consider the draft Candidate Project List recommended by the TAC and approve a final Candidate Project List to send to NHDOT for engineering and cost review.

Preliminary Candidate Projects List - Needs to be constrained to the Target Amount (\$6,674,000) plus two projects

RPC Project		Inflated	Weighted	Category	Overall				
Number	City/Town	Roads	Scope	Reasons to Fund	Cost	Score	Rank	Rank	
LOCAL PROJECTS	6379005	Portsmouth	Maplewood Ave	Replace Maplewood Avenue culvert over North Mill Pond. Replacement structure will consist of three concrete arches with existing stone reused to construct seawalls.	This project addresses a red list bridge in an area that is susceptible to impacts from sea level rise. The roadway has been identified as congested in the CMP, is a critical link in the LTS analysis, and a lower sidewalk priority in the regional sidewalk analysis.	\$9,110,700	42.41	1	16
	6379028	Portsmouth	Islington St	Reconstruction of Islington Street including subsurface utility work, sidewalk improvements, street lighting and street furniture, curbing and bump outs as well as traffic signal improvements and realignment of the Bartlett St / Islington St intersection.	Project would improve bike/pedestrian facilities connecting residential neighborhoods to commercial areas. Area is identified as congested in the Congestion Management Process, an important link in the Level of Traffic Stress (bike) study, and a higher priority area in the sidewalk analysis.	\$2,880,229	41.65	2	19
	6375004	Plaistow	NH 121A	Intersection improvements at North Avenue And NH 121A In Plaistow	Project would improve traffic flow and safety on Main Street in Plaistow. Use of a roundabout might move trucks back to NH 125 and the are is identified as a mid-range sidewalk priority.	\$2,601,018	38.95	3	26
	6379013	Portsmouth	Bartlett St	Bridge upgrade / replacement over Hodgson Brook	This project addresses a red list bridge. The roadway has been identified as congested in the CMP, is a critical link in the LTS analysis, and a lower sidewalk priority in the regional sidewalk analysis.	\$491,409	37.10	4	33
	6197011	Hampton	Church Street	Rebuild Church Street within the urban compact area including reconstruction of the roadway, drainage, sidewalks, replacing traffic signals and improved street lighting.	Project is in an area susceptible to flooding from sea level rise and these improvements could mitigate that. Regional sidewalk analysis indicates this area is a higher priority to maintain and improve connections.	\$2,483,467	36.44	5	38
REGIONAL PROJECTS	6001019	Hampton Falls	East Coast Greenway	Construct rail trail on 2.3 miles of the abandoned Hampton Branch rail corridor, elevating the causeway through the marsh 2'-3' for resiliency purposes and span washouts with sections of boardwalk.	Project would complete the East Coast Greenway in NH and would provide some coastal resiliency benefits by improving tidal flow in the Hampton Marsh. US 1 is identified as congested in the CMP and this would provide an off-road alternative for pedestrians and cyclists.	\$5,475,209	54.25	1	1
	6431001	Stratham	Rte. 108 and 33 / Portsmouth Ave and Winnicutt Rd	Reconfigure the Rte. 108 / Rte. 33 Stratham Circle through the Town Center District for improved traffic flow and safety, pedestrian and bicycle access and safety.	Project would reduce speeds and improve safety through Stratham town center and remove the outdated traffic circle design. Would also improve bicycle and pedestrian access. The area is identified as a mid-range priority in the sidewalk analysis.	\$4,243,169	51.31	2	2
	6199001	Hampton Falls	US 1	Improve intersection function and traffic flow on US 1 through the center of Hampton Falls.	Location is a major bottleneck and cause of congestion on the US 1 corridor in Hampton Falls and Seabrook. The route is identified as congested in the CMP and a mid-range priority for sidewalks.	\$5,298,063	51.16	3	3
	6197014	Hampton	Ocean Blvd	(Ocean Blvd Phase II) Capacity and traffic flow improvements on Ocean Boulevard from the Highland Avenue Intersection to the Church Street Intersection	Project would implement Phase 2 of the Hampton Beach Transportation Master Plan and would enhance bike and pedestrian facilities and safety as well as improve traffic flow. Project is on a road identified as congested in the CMP, and a mid-range priority in the sidewalk analysis.	\$6,219,575	50.58	4	5
	6383004	Raymond	NH 27	Address safety and capacity issues at the intersection of NH 27 and NH 156	Project would address congested intersection and improve traffic flow. The area is identified as congested in the CMP and is a mid-range sidewalk priority.	\$1,036,850	48.81	5	6
INTER-REGIONAL PROJECTS	6379021	Portsmouth	US Route 1 Bypass	Functional and operational Improvements to the US 1 Bypass traffic circle. Assumes at grade circle/roundabout or intersection	This project would replace the traffic circle with a modern design (signals or roundabout) with the intent of reducing the number of crashes and improving the flow of traffic. The location is identified as congested in the CMP and is a low priority for sidewalks.	\$7,243,446	50.88	1	4
	6147006	Epping	NH 125	Signalize intersection of NH 125 with Lee Hill Road	This project would improve access to NH 125 from NH 155 and the safety of the left-turn movement at the intersection. This location is identified as congested in the CMP and is a low priority for sidewalks.	\$431,061	45.29	2	8
	6379006	Portsmouth	US Route 1 Bypass	Reconstruct the US 1 Bypass to current standards between the split from Lafayette Road to just south of the traffic circle.	This project would bring the southern segment of the US 1 Bypass up to current standards and would improve access/egress to that facility. Facility is identified as congested in the CMP, and is a mid-range priority for sidewalks.	\$14,205,432	44.09	3	10
	6379020	Portsmouth	US Route 1 Bypass	Reconstruct the Northern segment of the US 1 Bypass between the traffic circle and the Sarah Long Bridge to current standards	This project would bring the US 1 Bypass northern segment up to current standards and would improve access/egress from that facility. The facility is identified as congested in the CMP and is a low sidewalk priority.	\$10,927,255	42.78	4	15
6345011	North Hampton	US 1	Capacity improvements at Intersection of US 1 and Atlantic Avenue (NH 111) including safety improvements for bicycle and pedestrian access	This intersection is a bottleneck on US 1 in North Hampton and is a lower sidewalk priority.	\$1,075,528	40.91	5	21	

Memorandum

DATE: October 8, 2020
TO: MPO Policy Committee
FROM: Scott Bogle, Senior Transportation Planner
RE: MPO Public Participation Plan Update

Rockingham Planning Commission, as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible under federal transportation planning rules for conducting a locally-developed public participation process. This is required by the Joint Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/ Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Planning Rule (23 CFR part 450, 49 CFR part 613). The rule requires that the metropolitan planning process must “include a proactive public participation process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and early and continuing participation of the public in developing plans” and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) [23 CFR part 450.316(b)(1)].

Staff undertook an update to the Public Participation Plan this summer, initially to add provisions for virtual meetings made necessary by COVID19. Ultimately the update has included range of mostly minor changes including:

- Provisions for virtual meetings of MPO TAC and Policy Committees and virtual public hearings under the Governor’s Emergency Order related to COVID19
- Provisions for continued use of virtual meetings post-COVID19 to the extent allowable under RSA-91A
- New MPO Public Participation Performance Measures summarized in Table 4
- Updated TAC and Policy Committee membership lists including the Manchester Transit Authority (MTA) which absorbed the Derry-Salem CART transit system in 2019
- Updated reference to the MPO website to use our new domain name: www.therpc.org
- Updated information on MPO use of social media for information dissemination
- Updated glossary of frequently used acronyms

A clean copy of the draft update is downloadable from the MPO website at the URL below and a markup version accompanies this memo in the meeting agenda packet for ease of identifying changes to the document. <https://www.therpc.org/news/124>

Federal rules require that updates to MPO Public Participation Plans undergo a comment period of 45 days. Staff initiated the 45-day public comment period on September 1st. The MPO

TAC reviewed and discussed the draft at their meeting on September 24th and voted to recommend adoption by the MPO Policy Committee. A public hearing will be held on the draft document at the Policy Committee meeting on October 14th, while the comment period will extend until October 16th. The MPO meeting and hearing will provide an opportunity for Policy Committee members to discuss the draft, ask questions and recommend any further needed changes. To be able to consider any public input that may be submitted in the final days of the comment period, staff recommend that the Policy Committee authorize the RPC Executive Committee to vote on adoption at their meeting on October 28th.

Requested Action

That the Policy Committee review and discuss the draft Public Participation Plan at the public hearing on October 14th, recommend changes as needed, then authorize the RPC Executive Committee to take formal action to adopt the updated Public Participation Plan at their meeting on October 28th.
