

July 14, 2021 Project Updates

Seacoast Transportation Corridors Vulnerability Analysis (STC): RPC is working with the New Hampshire Coastal Program, NHDOT, and other stakeholders to build off the efforts of the Tides To Storms and C-RISE studies, and the Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission to conduct an analysis of the transportation infrastructure in the seacoast anticipated to be impacted by additional flooding due to sea level rise and climate change. The vulnerability analysis is in progress and will form the basis for establishing a long-term adaptation framework to incorporate coastal hazards and prioritize resilience in state and local transportation planning and construction. That component will include some estimates regarding the costs of improvements as well as methods for assessing resiliency as part of the project selection process. Most recently, staff spent a morning with NHDOT and Coastal Zone Program staff and UNH researchers visiting ten sites along the coast as part of the evaluation process. Climate adaptation options for these sites will be drafted over the summer and meetings are being planned for coastal communities in the fall. Progress has been slowed due to COVID-19 and the project is expected to conclude in March 2022. (*Dave Walker dwalker@therpc.org*).

NH Seacoast Greenway – This spring staff secured a grant from the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) for technical assistance in planning for trailhead design, community connectivity, wayfinding and interpretive signage design and communications strategy. This will build on recent staff work on trailhead access. We have met with the RTCA team twice now and they will meet with the broader NHSG Committee in July. Work by GPI on the design of the Hampton-Portsmouth trail segment continues, with the project team meeting with municipal DPW staff in each community over the last month. The anticipated timeline is for the project to go to bid in the summer or fall of 2022 and construction to begin in spring 2023. Construction should be completable in once season allowing trail opening in late 2023. (*Scott Bogle – sbogle@therpc.org*)

Epping NH 125 (29608): RPC staff is participating in the Project Advisory Committee for this project which is looking at capacity and traffic management improvements on NH 125 between Brickyard Square and NH 87 in Epping. Signal coordination and operations is proposed for the southern-most portion of the corridor along with relocating the Park and Ride driveway south to align with the Brickyard Square driveway. From Fresh River Road to NH 27/Water Street the focus will be on creating a consistent 5-lane cross-section and improving access management and expanding pedestrian access. North of NH27 the focus is on maintaining traffic flow, widening NH 125 at the Fogg Rd/Coffin Rd signal to improve capacity, and adding left turn lanes at NH87 to improve safety. (*Dave Walker dwalker@therpc.org*).

Hampton Falls (29610): This study of the US 1 Corridor through the town center in Hampton Falls is looking in detail at addressing the congestion that occurs in that location. An advisory committee has been formed and has met twice to date. One public information session has been held and a second is scheduled for July 15. The July public meeting will be a workshop style format with the goal of getting input regarding various alternative improvements that could be implemented. The intent is to complete the study in the fall with a third public information session and report that identifies potential options to improve traffic flow and makes recommendations for implementation. (*Dave Walker dwalker@therpc.org*).

Seabrook-Hampton Bridge Replacement (15904): A public hearing discussing the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was held on April 8, 2021 in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and NHDOT's guidelines for environmental documents. The comment period for the draft EA concluded on April 23, 2021 and NHDOT and the consultant team are in the process of finalizing that document for publication and federal agency approval. The design of the selected alternative would begin after that. The preferred alternative is a replacement with a fixed bridge that is 48 feet off the water, aligned to the west of the current structure, and would widen the navigational channel to 150 feet. The bridge itself would be 50 feet wide with two travel lanes, 8 foot shoulders, and 6 foot sidewalks with bump outs at some piers. Private property impacts would be minimal although there are some environmental impacts that will likely need to be mitigated. The life-cycle cost of the new structure is estimated at \$71-\$75 million and the project would take approximately 3 years to construct. The project is anticipated to advertise for construction in late 2023 with construction beginning in 2024. (Dave Walker dwalker@therpc.org).

Ocean Blvd Reconstruction (Hampton 40797): This project is working to reconstruct Ocean Blvd in Hampton based on the outcome of the Hampton Beach Transportation Master Plan. Primarily, this project will focus on making improvements to traffic circulation and wayfinding, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, addressing stormwater and drainage as well as other environmental and historic resource issues, and parking. A Public Officials meeting/Public Information Meeting was held on March 2, 2021 via Zoom. And an overview of the project was provided to the public. Attendees voiced concerns regarding safety and roadway issues and provided ideas for potential improvements. (Dave Walker dwalker@therpc.org).

Age Friendly Communities Initiative: We will hear this week whether we have been awarded the grant from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation for funding to support a regional Age Friendly Communities pilot project. This would be modeled on work done by the Southern NH Planning Commission as well as SWRPC and SRPC. The Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels Program (RNMOW) would serve as fiscal agent and partner for the project along with AARP NH which has also committed funding and staff time. If funded the project will begin in July and run for two years. A total of \$99,000 was proposed for the two year project. (Scott Bogle – sbogle@therpc.org)

Transit Economic Impact Study – RPC and SRPC are nearing completion of a study of the economic impact of transit in the Seacoast. This has involved a quantitative element including economic modeling of the direct, indirect and induced economic impacts of COAST spending on operations; as well as estimation of the economic benefits to riders, employers and medical providers of access provided by COAST for employment and medical care. A qualitative analysis component has included an extensive series of stakeholder interviews with municipal economic development directors, employers, private developers, chambers of commerce, hospitals and health care providers, housing authorities, and non-profits involved with housing, adult education, and senior services. The project will be completed by June 30, 2021. (Scott Bogle – sbogle@therpc.org)

Transit Coordination Planning for Greater Derry-Salem/Greater Manchester Region – Staff are working with staff from SNHPC on an update to the Coordinated public Transit/Human Services Transportation plan for the combined Greater Derry-Salem and Greater Manchester regions. This includes analysis of Census and DHHS data (TANF, Medicaid) data on populations likely to have unmet transportation needs; surveys of existing transportation provider agencies, local welfare directors and other non-profit health and human service agencies to gather data on current services and unmet need; and revisiting strategies for service expansion and coordination to improve transportation access in the region. The draft plan will be brought to the TAC for review in June and the MPO Policy Committee for review and adoption in July. (Scott Bogle – sbogle@therpc.org)
