

## December 2, 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 has been meeting with individual communities to discuss initial findings and impacts on the transportation network. Discussions have been held with Portsmouth, New Castle, and Seabrook, and North Hampton is planned for next week. Meetings with Hampton and Rye are still in the works. The UNH research team has recently completed a draft of the site specific analyses and that is being reviewed. The project is expected to conclude in March 2022. (*Dave Walker* [dwalker@therpc.org](mailto:dwalker@therpc.org)).

**NH Seacoast Greenway** –Staff made a presentation via Zoom to the Seabrook Hampton Estuary Alliance on November 10<sup>th</sup> that was attended by 58 people and well received. Staff are working with the NPS Rivers and Trails Program team on start-up assistance for the new NH Seacoast Greenway Alliance non-profit group, as well as workgroups focused on development of a signage plan for the trail and planning for community connections. Staff from NHDOT and consultant GPI met with RPC staff and officials from Hampton and North Hampton last month to provide an update on design for the Hampton-Portsmouth segment. Due to the unanticipated complexity of drainage issues the cost for construction is higher than expected and some amount of additional right of way is needed for drainage construction. The proposal is to proceed as rapidly as possible with the eight miles from North Hampton to Portsmouth, with construction going to bid in late 2022 and completing in 2024. The right of way process would delay start of construction in Hampton but both segments should be completed by the end of 2024.. (*Scott Bogle* – [sbogle@therpc.org](mailto: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. The most recent advisory committee meeting was on July 14 and focused on discussion of options for improvements in each section including bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. (*Dave Walker* [dwalker@therpc.org](mailto: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 three times to date. Two public information sessions have been held,

with the most recent on July 15. That meeting was a workshop format with tables set up to get direct input from attendees regarding alternatives that could be implemented. The study is on track to be completed this fall and a third public information session will be held to discuss the options and recommendations report. (Dave Walker [dwalker@therpc.org](mailto:dwalker@therpc.org)).

**Seabrook-Hampton Bridge Replacement (15904):** A public comment period on the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) concluded on April 23, 2021 in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and NHDOT's guidelines for environmental documents. NHDOT and the consultant team are in the process of finalizing that document for publication and federal agency approval. 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 additional funding identified in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is expected to allow this project to proceed without requiring any bonding. The project is anticipated to advertise for construction in late 2023 with construction beginning in 2024. (Dave Walker [dwalker@therpc.org](mailto:dwalker@therpc.org)).

**Age Friendly Communities Initiative:** The kick-off meeting for the Regional Steering Committee meeting for the Age Friendly Communities project is scheduled for December 8<sup>th</sup>. The first task of the Steering Committee will be to review and finalize the survey instrument that will be used in each community. Staff have been polishing a draft survey instrument that will be sent to the Committee for review this week. A second meeting of the Committee will be held in early January to finalize the survey, and the local assessment committees will begin their work in mid-January. Confirmed assessment communities include Exeter, Fremont, Hampstead, Portsmouth and Stratham. Seabrook opted not to participate, but there may be interest in Hampton to participate in Year 1 as a sixth community. (Scott Bogle – [sbogle@therpc.org](mailto:sbogle@therpc.org))

**State Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan Review:** Staff are participating in a workgroup for NHDOT reviewing over 600 comments received on the draft NH Ped/Bike Plan produced by Alta Planning & Design in August. The Alta contract lapsed 9/1/21 and NHDOT is working to renew it for the firm to complete the document. The review committee is processing and evaluating comments to streamline Alta's work once they are back on board. (Scott Bogle – [sbogle@therpc.org](mailto:sbogle@therpc.org))

**Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant Applications:** Staff have been working with two separate groups on grant proposals to EDA for a pool of competitive tourism development funding. One project is led by UConn Cooperative Extension and the Rails to Trails Conservancy and would establish a network of permanent bike/ped counting equipment on rail trails around New England, together with a six state data dashboard and outreach to chambers of commerce and businesses to help them gauge the business development opportunities presented by rail trails. RPC is the subrecipient for New Hampshire on this proposal and would work with SNHPC, CNHRPC, UVLSRPC and various volunteer trail groups. The second group is being led by Hampton Chamber of Commerce along with Portsmouth Chamber, UNH Cooperative Extension and NHDOT and is focused on four components of the NH Seacoast Greenway: 1) supplemental construction funding in Hampton, 2) trailhead construction, 3) wayfinding signage, and 4) business development planning and outreach. REDC is supporting both proposals. (Scott Bogle – [sbogle@therpc.org](mailto:sbogle@therpc.org))

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