

MINUTES

**Rockingham Planning Commission
MPO Technical Advisory Committee
RPC Offices, 156 Water Street, Exeter NH
September 26, 2024, 12:00 PM-2:00 PM**

Members Present: S. Kizza (Brentwood); L. O’Neil (East Kingston); B. Dion (Greenland); J. Lynch (Hampton); J. Lavacchia (Hampstead); P. Coffin (Kingston); C. Papachristos (Newton); T. Moore (Plaistow); E. Eby (Portsmouth); J. Harris (Portsmouth); M. Connors (Stratham); M. Williams (COAST); J. Wade (NHDES); L. St. John (NHDOT); L. Levine (FHWA).

Non-Members Present: F. Koczalka (VHB); D. Schandel (VHB)

Staff: D. Walker (Assistant Director); M. Jerominek (Regional Planner); T. Roache (Executive Director).

1. Introductions

Roll call attendance was taken.

2. Minutes of 6/27/2024 Meetings

Minutes of the meetings were approved without discussion. **Motion: P. Coffin; Seconded by B. Dion. Approved with L. St. John, J. Wade, and M. Williams abstaining.**

3. Regional Safety Action Plan Presentation – F. Koczalka

Koczalka presented on VHB’s work to date regarding the NH MPO Safety Action Plan. The Action Plan will be completed by the end of calendar year 2024 and is funded in part by the USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) planning grant. The Action Plan being developed also aligns with NHDOT’s 2022-26 Strategic Highway Safety Plan and is guided by a steering committee. To date, VHB has surveyed over 1,000 road users in addition to completing a crash analysis measuring crash severity, location, demographics, time of day, season, and other metrics for the plan area. Stakeholder engagement meetings with underrepresented groups in the Portsmouth area are set to take place in the coming weeks. Koczalka shared that the main concerns identified through engagement with the public have been distracted driving, speeding, and aggressive driving. Following the presentation of collected crash and public involvement data, Koczalka opened discussion up to the TAC to identify the most significant transportation safety risks or concerns in MPO communities. TAC also discussed strategies and projects that have been or would potentially be beneficial to communities.

4. FHWA Case Study: Promising Practices for People Experiencing Homelessness – M. Jerominek

Jerominek presented on FHWA’s September 2024 Case Study, *Promising practices to Address Road Safety among People Experiencing Homelessness*. The case study highlights how State and local transportation agencies are using alternative, more dignified strategies than traditional displacement to provide people experiencing homelessness with resources to seek social support and long-term housing. Jerominek shared updated figures on national and state counts recording

homelessness, including New Hampshire's 2023 PIT (Point in Time) count showing an estimated 52.08% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness since 2022 while the more accurate and comprehensive HMIS (Homelessness Management Information Systems) shows the 2022 statewide counts at 6,031 people in New Hampshire experiencing homelessness. Jerominek also shared how factors like unemployment during Covid-19's onset in 2020 and traditional approaches for clearing the row through displacements can push people from ROW to ROW at increased numbers than prior years. The presentation concluded with Jerominek sharing the promising practices from the case study, including making sure transportation planning decisions involve people experiencing homelessness and their safety needs as well as ensuring people are reached out to with options for safe shelter or one-time transportation vouchers for reconnecting with support networks.

5. 2025 Project Selection Progress Report – D. Walker

Walker shared updated on the project selection process as follows:

- **Raymond 638001 – NH 102/Blueberry Hill Rd** was removed from getting an updated cost estimate as it's in the queue for a Road Safety Audit.
- **Portsmouth 6379021 – Portsmouth Traffic Circle Improvements** was removed from getting an updated cost estimate as the project is in the Ten Year Plan.
- **Rye-New Castle 6397006/6323003 – Address low spots on NH1B based on analysis in**
- **New Castle Causeway Feasibility Study** was removed from getting an updated cost estimate as the improvements are being included in New Castle 42517 and New Castle-Rye 41713 which will be making shoulder bike lane and sidewalk improvements along NH 1B.
- The following projects are slated to receive updated costs: **Portsmouth 6379005 – Maplewood Ave Culvert; Stratham 6431007 – Stratham Gateway Bike/Ped Improvements; Stratham 6431001 – Stratham Circle Improvements; and Brentwood 6055004 – NH 125/South Road Roundabout from 2024 Road Safety Audit.**
- Walker also shared out projects for which new scope and cost estimates are being developed. These projects include **Plaistow 6375004 – Main Street/North Avenue intersection improvements; Greenland 6187003 – NH 33/Bayside/Winnicut Road intersection improvements; Epping 61470011 – Epping 5 corners (NH27/Blake Rd/Friend St/Depot St) safety and operational improvements; Hampton 6197021 – NH 101 eastbound/I-95 interchange safety and operational improvements.**
- **Seabrook 6409006 - NH1A Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements** - Walker shared that the scope of this project was expanded to become a traffic calming project which would reduce the number of lanes to 1 in each direction with turn lanes and intersection improvements in addition to the bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.
- **Coastal Communities 6001018 – Route 1A Evacuation ITS Improvements** will be scoped as a study as there is no clear indication of exactly what is needed.

Walker also shared that the engineering team has begun work on the above projects and will have results to RPC on time for the October TAC meeting. There is a meeting scheduled with NHDOT District 6 to discuss the scope of the NH 101/I-95 project and once that is set, a list of projects with proposed scope descriptions will be sent to NHDOT in Concord to provide comments before the work is finalized. The MPO Policy commission will make a draft decision on Project Selection to put forward to DOT for scope and cost review. The draft selected

projects will be reviewed with feedback from DOT likely returning to the MPO by February's TAC meeting. Project Selection will be formally voted on by the MPO in March as to provide a final decision by the end of CY March 2025.

6. Agency Updates and Announcements

- L. St. John (NHDOT) brought up that she sent the NHDOT NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity) for the National Scenic Byways Program to all NH RPC executive directors. The grant is due Dec 16, 2024.
- Any other updates?

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Walker, Recording Secretary