

MEMORANDUM

TO: RPC MPO Transportation Advisory Committee
FROM: RPC/MPO Staff
DATE: September 27, 2018
RE: Project Updates

FHWA Grant Project – Measuring Multimodal Connectivity: In August RPC was awarded a \$99,988 grant under the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Measuring Multimodal Connectivity Pilot Grant Program. The goal of the proposed pilot project is to improve bicycle network planning for New Hampshire’s Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) through further development and refinement of a shared model for evaluating Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS); collection and compilation of supplemental road attribute data in five planning regions; development of one or more shared transportation system performance measures based on LTS; and incorporation of that measure/those measures in project development and project prioritization. RPC is partnering with the state’s three other MPOs plus Central NH Planning Commission and Plymouth State University (PSU) on the project. We are currently working on contract development with NHDOT and anticipate a January 2019 start and September 2019 completion of the project. (*Scott Bogle – sbogle@rpc-nh.org*)

State Freight Plan: NHDOT is nearing completion of the State Freight Plan that will define a short and long-term vision for the freight transportation system in New Hampshire. The Freight Plan will be multi-modal and will identify strategies to guide future freight policies, investments and partnerships. A Freight Summit was held in Newington this summer where an overview of the plan was provided along with updates on national trends in freight transportation, and information on the Port of New Hampshire, and a presentation on the future of autonomous trucks and goods movement. The last Freight Advisory Committee meeting was held on September 19th and members provided input on priority freight routes and projects. More information can be found on NHDOT’s website: <https://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/freight-plan/index.htm>. (*Dave Walker – dwalker@rpc-nh.org*)

Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT) – Staff are working with COAST and ACT to put together a forum on non-emergency medical transportation on October 30th. The forum is intended to bring together providers of transportation services and schedulers and administrators from medical facilities to improve understanding of transportation services that exist in the region, and discuss nuts and bolts of how trip scheduling and medical appointment scheduling are handled and how agencies can work together better to ensure patients needing transportation make it to their medical appointments. The forum is being co-sponsored by the Alliance for Healthy Aging, a statewide organization focused on senior services and preparing New Hampshire for a growing senior population.

Stratham Safe Routes to School Initiative: Data collection has been the main focus of work on the Stratham Safe Routes to School Action Plan during September. Staff have met with administrators at Stratham Memorial School and the Cooperative Middle School; and worked with engineers from TEC and SRTS Committee members on site visits at both school to observe traffic flow during morning arrival and afternoon departure periods. RPC GIS staff have mapped student address data to identify concentrations of potential walk/bike commuters in neighborhoods near the school zones. Given the town’s extensive trail system and the proximity of SMS to Stratham Hill Park, GIS staff have also mapped trails and land ownership on undeveloped land surrounding both schools to look at potential for off-road paths connecting the schools to adjacent neighborhoods. TEC engineers are under contract with the town to develop conceptual designs and first order cost estimates for a limited number of school zone infrastructure improvements as prioritized by the town’s SRTS Committee. (*Scott Bogle – sbogle@rpc-nh.org*)

NHDOT Research Proposal – Estimating Economic Impact of Interstate Rail Trail Development in New Hampshire: Staff in September worked with UNH Cooperative Extension to develop and submit a proposal for NHDOT’s Research program to study the potential economic impact of two major multi-state rail trails crossing New Hampshire – the New Hampshire Seacoast Greenway and the Granite State Rail Trail. Similar studies have been conducted for many rail trails around the country and have been a useful tool for demonstrating trail benefits and in turn generating municipal and private sector funding for trail development. Such funds are key in filling the gap between resources needed to complete trails and limited state and federal funding. If funded all work on the project will be conducted by Cooperative Extension, but the product will be valuable for regional trail development efforts around the state. (Scott Bogle – sbogle@rpc-nh.org)

Public-Private Partnership (P3) Infrastructure Oversight Commission: The New Hampshire Legislature passed Senate Bill 549 in 2016 establishing a Public-Private Partnership Oversight Commission to consider and recommend to the Commissioner of Transportation projects that may be suitable for delivery using design-build-finance-operate-maintain or design-build-operate-maintain services. The Commission will also act as an advisory board during the execution of a public-private partnership project. The Commission recently completed a process to solicit letters of interest from parties identifying potential projects in the state that could be implemented via a public-private partnership and responses were received relating to privatizing rest areas on the interstates, privatizing intercity transit terminals and related parking, as well as other proposals. The Commission met on March 23rd, 2018 to hear from the groups submitting letters of interest and any other feedback on proposals. Until April 20th, the Commission is in a public comment period and is accepting written comments on any of the letters of interest received. While the Commission gave some indication of areas that they were and were not interested in pursuing, they will meet on April 20th to review any additional comments received and begin formulating the next steps to move forward in the areas where private and public interests align. The information about the Commission and the letters of interest can be seen on NHDOT’s website here: <https://www.nh.gov/dot/programs/public-private-partnership/index.htm>. (Dave Walker – dwalker@rpc-nh.org)

Seabrook-Hampton Neil Underwood Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement: The NHDOT is continuing the work to determine the best path forward for the NH 1A bridge between Seabrook and Hampton. A Public Information Session was held on September 26th, 2018 at the Marston School in Hampton. Turnout was heavy and people had many questions about the process that NHDOT is undertaking in determining whether to rehabilitate the existing bascule bridge or replace it with a new structure. There are substantial environmental and cultural resources surrounding the site as well as houses and businesses and the impacts to all of these considered over the next year as an Environmental Assessment for the project is developed. The Environmental Assessment for this project is moving forward quickly as this effort has been tied to the New Castle-Rye bridge project as these two bridges represent the only remaining Bascule lift bridges in New Hampshire. The proposed replacement of the New Castle Rye Bridge is on hold pending the outcome of this Environmental Assessment (Dave Walker – dwalker@rpc-nh.org)

Road Surface Management Systems Data Collection: RPC is working with NHDOT and the UNH Technology Transfer center to conduct Road Surface Management Systems (RSMS) data for interested communities to help them manage and time road surface improvements. RSMS has been progressing very well this collection season. We have finished the data collection in Fremont and Epping and work will begin this fall in Newington. Repair forecasting for the two completed towns has begun and is expected to conclude in late fall/early winter. Next collection season we will be collecting data for Hampstead and potentially other towns dependent upon the resources available. If interested in learning more or signing up for a future collection season, please contact Christian Matthews (cmatthews@rpc-nh.org).