



**North Country
Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting
At the
North Country Resource Center
629 Main St A, Lancaster, NH 03584
And via Zoom
Tuesday, May 9th, 2023
10:00AM-12:00PM**

Minutes

1. Call to Meeting

Meeting called to order at 10:04AM.

Robin Irving, Lancaster
Carl Martland, Sugar Hill
Ray Gorman, Colebrook
Harry Juergens, Stratford
Paul Robitaille, Gorham
Stan Judge, Shelburne
Michele Cormier, Randolph
Rosalind page, Lisbon (virtual)
Emily Benson, Jackson (Arrived at 10:10AM)

James Steele, NCC, (virtual)
Nick Altonaga, NCC
Stephanie Weiner (Congresswoman Kuster)
Chuck Henderson (Senator Shaheen)

2. Approve Meeting Minutes: March 7th, 2023 **

Ray Motioned to Approve the minutes from the meeting from March 7th, 2023.
Michele Seconded.
Motion Carried.

3. Ten-Year Plan Submittal Overages **

Nick presented the Ten-Year Plan overage information.

Robin Motioned to add the current \$1,556,472 overage to the next cycle of Ten-Year Plan funding.

Harry Seconded.

Motion Carried.

4. Regional Transportation Plan - Draft **

Nick presented the RTP and provided a summary of its sections and the current needs for the document.

Emily: What is the timing of this plan being adopted?

- Nick: Approval or conditional approval at this meeting, with the Commission review and approval in June.

Stefanie: What does the distribution list look like?

- Nick: This will be sent out to all the TAC reps and municipal contacts.

Robin: Does this incorporate the historic corridor studies done in the past?

- Nick: Not currently. Future updates later this year can incorporate some of those data points.

Carl: I read the entire plan. The beginning section is greatly improved. The survey information showing the priorities for the region is important. Would be good to shift that forward in the document.

Stefanie: Can someone explain Complete Streets and the Safe System Approach?

Nick provided an overview of complete streets and the safe systems approach as per Federal definition and current programs.

Michele: How would this work for a rural area?

Ray: We don't have the same needs as busier and urban areas, but it involves sidewalks and similar infrastructure. In Colebrook, Malfunction Junction at US 3 and NH 26 is the current concern along with the Balsams project and power projects looked at for complete streets treatment.

Michele: With the Balsams, NH26 will get much more use. Worried about cyclists and pedestrians.

Ray: Worked at the Balsams in the past. Did not see huge traffic along that route. Including from the Balsams to Errol. We have seen the work done to widen the shoulders along NH26.

Carl: One upcoming project (Gorham) involves sidewalks and alternative modes. We have rural towns with old centers that are surrounded by rural landscape and nature. Funding that supports pedestrian projects is important.

Paul: These sidewalks and systems also connect with the trail systems. The amount of people who use these trails and routes to walk are increasing. The TCCAP bus is full whenever I see it.

Michele: The thing that connects it together, we need to make sure our shoulders and breakdown lanes are improved to handle rain events and natural hazards.

Bill Watson attended virtually at 10:39AM.

Chris Turgeon attended virtually at 10:39AM.

Stan: We want people who visit and travel through the region to speak positively about our roadways (safety, condition)

Paul: When Route 2 Corridor study was done, we looked at expansions, safety, and road conditions. 8ft breakdown lane was mentioned. We should focus on implementing those items.

Robin: Good to add weblinks to the complete streets, traffic calming and other federal guidance and programs.

Carl: We want some language put in for the overarching concern for safety, including road shoulders and other infrastructure.

Emily: Under safety Goals and Objectives. Bring the Respondent priorities (In the Appendix) to the Safety intro discussion.

Paul: We don't want to lose sight of the Economic Development goals. NH16 is not helpful. Development is taking place and traffic will increase on US 2. What we need to consider is the many residents and others who commute into/out of and through the area.

Stefanie: Can we update the colors on the charts in the RTP? Want to ensure accessibility.

Paul Motioned to conditionally approve the Regional Transportation Plan with the amendments noted by members at the meeting as per member's email correspondence.

Stan Seconded.

Motion Carried.

5. Discussion:

a. 2024 Eclipse

Ray: Added this to the agenda as it will affect a lot of our northern communities. Had a meeting with CEDC and other groups to help plan. Traffic was part of the discussion. Not sure if NHDOT was contacted at all. Looking for some guidance for the region. That time of the year will be very difficult in many ways due to being peak mud season and low staff at establishments.

Bill: Don't know if anyone has worked on this or had any discussions so far.

Ray: Erica Canales from CEDC is the primary point of contact.

Bill: Have her reach out to me. On a personal note, I know someone also working on Eclipse-related activities so I have heard some other discussions about the event.

Ray: Colebrook is also bringing on a planner to help organize the event for Colebrook. Could be a great way to get people engaged. People will be coming from all over the world to attend.

Stefanie: Who is in charge of marketing?

Ray: Chambers of Commerce but CEDC is taking the lead. Right now working to organize buses to shuttle people to good viewing areas and in from regional airports.

Carl: Bus service will be critical to getting people off the road but where they need to go.

Ray: Planning is critical in the next 3 months. Will be talking with Bill and NHDOT.

b. Funding Opportunities

Nick Presented the funding opportunities sheets. Want to remind members of the funding that is available.

Robin: Want to talk about the FHWA EV Charging grant. One part of this grant is that you can place chargers on private land (through a partnership). Have contacted people across the state to try and get a site quote. Have tried to find a list of preferred providers and found no information. Lancaster's partner would be North Country Ford. Right now at a loss for trying to talk with FHWA.

Bill: Becky Ohler is a manager at NHDES, who just communicated out to the RPC directors. DES is putting together two applications under the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary program that allows for EV and other Alt Fuel Vehicles. NHDOT is looking at the program to fill out and complete EV charging stations along the identified NH Corridors. NHDES is applying for funds that will be able to be competitively applied for with a partnership at the community level. It doesn't preclude a community moving forward on its own. NHDES has been reaching out to the RPCs to discuss EV charging and Alt fuels. Seeking to involve as many people as possible.

The issue of answering your questions is we are still working through the provisions of the EV Charging programs including Buy America, Build America. Under this program, Ford or other Private groups may not be able to use their own vendors. Gas Station and other private vendors are moving forward with programs and might be seeking retroactive support. There is a lot that businesses can do, but will not be as flexible

Robin: Is she the one managing the VW Settlement?

Bill: you might be thinking of Jessica Wilcox who is working with her on both those efforts.

Robin: Spoke to ChargePoint and they were very helpful in pointing me in the right direction.

c. NCC Projects

Nick provided a brief update on NCC activities including:

- Traffic Counts
- RSMS
- On-Call Engineering

d. Scenic Byways

One big project right now is updating the Corridor management Plans. Will be updating these as one plan, with sub-goals. The old plan goals have almost all been fully achieved. Plan will be an attempt to cut down on the size of the plan.

- River Heritage
- Woodland Heritage
- Moose path
- Presidential Range

Will be continuing the By the Byway Awards. Dick Mallion, Byway Steward passed away. Did a lot of work on trail improvements and built benches and did a lot of work on the Byways. Very involved with Conservation efforts and donated significantly to related efforts. Made a major contribution.

Bill: Town of Enfield received about \$750,000 in Byways funding from the 2022 application. NHDOT notified about two weeks ago about the award. Byway along Shaker Village and Mascoma lake. Lucy St. John is still the Byway coordinator and is regularly on calls with national Byways groups. Next 1-3 months there should be a new NOFO for FY23 funds with a bit more flexibility as per the amounts of funding to be applied for.

Carl: The \$750,000 grant is an indication of how we should think on projects. Clear from Michele's work along US2.

e. Updates from Communities (LISBON FIRST)

Nick reported the Lisbon updates: Lisbon has been invited to make a full application to NBRC for funding the design of town owned land in the downtown area for parking lot improvements to serve local apartment buildings and businesses.

Michele(Randolph): Need to follow up with Phil at District 1 for a few things. Cross NH Adventure Trail has provided Randolph with a port-a-potty along Pinkham-B for the past few years. Have inquired with Randolph about an additional port-a-potty. Will need to check with NHDOT due to it being on NHDOT property near Bowman. Need to get approval for the location, with XNHAT paying for it. Appalachia Trailhead is still an issue. We still have some energy. One suggestion is to install a bank of port-a-pottys at Appalachia. I think it is a non-starter. I think the right direction is the study real pit-toilets and a partnership to manage and maintain.

Robin: Examples of solar-powered composting. Would be good to investigate funding to set up an operation.

Stan (Shelburne): Not much to report. There is lots of activity at the pipeline pumping station. Crews have been cleaning up. It has not impacted the Reflection Pond.

Paul (Gorham): Gorham is working on a comprehensive parking plan in the downtown /commercial compact area. Want to allow for more 2-3 story buildings to provide more apartments. Looking to options for renting spaces along the RR. Trail updates. Town resident saw Gorham at top of list of "Top Undiscovered towns in New England." By the next meeting. Gorham should be down to 2 empty storefronts in central Gorham. Looking at having 3-4 new restaurants open within the next few months. Been in transition with Denise Vallee retiring and new Town manager coming in. Our Code Enforcement officer passed away. He was very active in the surrounding communities and Coos County.

Harry (Stratford): Still digging out from winter sand. Putting finishing touches on the 250th anniversary. A few infrastructure projects planned for this year

Emily (Jackson): Solar Ordinance passed this month. Limits Solar developments to no more than an acre. Interested in EV charging programs and projects. Looking at Valley Cross Road Bridge. Just passed that is a Beaver pond. Had a big tree tip up and want to look at accesses there. Have been in touch with Chuck regarding the Jackson Firehouse for possible renovation or replacement and what funding opportunities are available. NHDOT has been in town a lot with all the damage from rains. Have looked at Carter Notch Rd and the materials that have been used. Has not lasted well. Looking at the integrity of the roadway and conditions. The MWV has received the designation as Age Friendly Community by AARP (through the Gibson Center)

Scott Boisvert held a town hall meeting to discuss transportation in the region. Great discussion on services and needs. Going to be really interesting to see how this local transportation service rolls out.

Chuck: Received 250 applications for congressionally designated spending. One good one from Lancaster. A lot of the pipes under our small town streets are over 100 years old. We vetted the projects at the staff level, Senator reads the staff reports, and then submitted to the Senate Committee. Eventually the money does come through.

Bill is guiding a project on Union Street in Whitefield involving drainage culverts.

Ray (Colebrook): Colebrook has a town manager now, Tim Stevens, started 3 weeks ago. County Administrator will start next week.

Carl: Nothing to report for Sugar Hill. Would like to mention two projects related to what was discussed. Wife is on the board of the Forest Society. The Rocks Estate will have a public restroom for use anytime. Franconia is putting in a new information facility with restrooms.

Stefanie: No updates from the Congresswoman's office. But appreciate being invited and discussing.

Robin: Lancaster submitted Congressionally directed spending. Lancaster is improving a portion of town connected to other previously done projects. Want to reconfigure and redo the intersection near the Intersection near Dalton Mountain Motors due to traffic safety concerns. Summer Street functions as a downtown bypass and want to eliminate this confusion. Will seek out funds possibly next year. Spoke with Eric Grenier to collaborate with NHDOT on that project. Housing: Lancaster Housing Needs Assessment is completed. Very limited housing options.

Was there a discussion about North Country Freight Lines? Would like an update on that if possible. Lines between Groveton and Berlin may see additional freight traffic over the coming years.

- Nick will grab the catchment area NBRC information for Robin.

North Country Mural efforts: Working with Whitefield, Groveton, and Stratford. Sites for the mural have been developed. Colebrook also has one.

Stefanie: Is the Lancaster mural a part of it?

Robin: The Lancaster motel prompted it and led to the wider effort.

6. Other Business

7. Meeting Scheduling

Nick will send out a Doodle Poll for mid-June.

8. Adjourn

Harry Motioned to Adjourn.

Emily Seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 12:01PM

****Indicates vote of the TAC is required**

An in-person quorum (7) is needed in order to conduct any votes, so please plan to attend if you are willing and able. If this is not possible, please use the information on the following page to attend virtually. While attending in-person, please wear a face covering for the duration of the meeting and keep a safe distance between yourself and others. Thank you.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88065317463>

Meeting ID: 880 6531 7463