



**North Country
Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting
At the
AHEAD Conference Room
262 Cottage St., Littleton, NH 03561
And via Zoom
Monday, December 4th, 2023
1:00PM to 3:00PM**

Minutes

1. Call to Meeting and Roll Call

Due to poor weather, the meeting was held primarily virtually. Nick Altonaga was present at the venue in case any members did not receive the notification of a remote meeting.

Paul Robitaille – Gorham
Robin Irving – Lancaster
Marc Decoteau – Waterville Valley
Emily Bensen – Jackson
Mary Moritz – Bethlehem
Carl Martland – Sugar Hill
Stanley Judge – Shelburne
Michele Cormier – Randolph
Rosalind Page – Lisbon
Doug Damko – Littleton

Tala Silver – Region 1 Mobility Manager
Chuck Henderson – Senator Shaheen’s Office
Vanessa Partington - NHDES
Krishna, Kanapareddy – NADO
Ross Wood – NHDOT District 2 Assistant District Engineer
William Rose – NHDOT
Stephanie Weiner – Congresswoman Kuster’s Office

The meeting was called to order at 1:02PM.

2. Approve Meeting Minutes:
a. June 13, 2023 **

b. August 23, 2023 **

Due to the lack of a quorum, discussion of the meeting minutes will be added to the agenda for the next TAC meeting.

3. Review Final Overage Amount for 2025-2034 TYP Projects**

Nick presented the TYP overage information.

William noted that there is a local match by Gorham, should be factored into the overage information.

4. Rural Transportation Challenges

Nick presented the NADO Task 4 and proposed project deliverables.

Emily: have you reached out to the regional senior centers? Gibson Center and CCRSVP?

- Gibson Center for Senior Services serving MWV and western Maine: <https://www.gibsoncenter.org/transportation/> Marianne Jackson Executive Director, but will soon be new ED David Smolen: execdirector@gibsoncenter.org
- Carroll County RSVP: <http://www.carrollcountyrsvp.org> (Best person to contact Mary Seavey)

Paul: ALL senior centers in the entire region should be looked at. There is the inability of people to access medical facilities and appointments due to a lack of transportation options.

Krishna: Hopes to develop pamphlets for bus racks and for vehicles. They are working with the local transportation providers and will touch base with Nick A to consult on how best to move forward.

Stephanie: An avenue to include is that when patients leave a hospital or doctor's office, many of them leave with follow-up paperwork. Suggested someone could coordinate with the hospital system to add bullet point notes at bottom of page/handout with information for transportation resources for appointments.

- Krishna supports the idea and will report that back to the group.

Emily: "I have also been curious about ways to leverage Uber or Lyft models to be able to compensate volunteers as well as dealing with liability/insurance for drivers."

- Just helping people around town and assisting with Gibson Center and RSVP, reducing redundancy and costs would be huge.

Tala: Teri Palmer, State Mobility Manager trying to implement Uber Health, is having difficulties due to rural nature.

- Compensation needs to be refined and determined.
- At a recent mobility management meeting, they discussed the statewide website that will be a resource for programs across the state. Will get some follow-up information.

Nick presented the idea that "Neighbor helping Neighbor" has been a much more popular idea than the top-down Uber approach.

5. NHDES Electric Charging Funding

Vanessa Partington:

- NHDES is working towards a community and fueling infrastructure (CFI) community grant program. NHDES applied in June for \$10million.
- If awarded, we plan to implement a community grant program (80/20 type) for community charging, corridors etc.
- Have established priority areas including rural, underserved, commerce centers, etc.).
- Eligibility – EV chargers, 4 EVs at once, Chargers must be fast chargers.
- Recent public listening session on 10/26 and took feedback. They are analyzing feedback and are developing a website.
- Awaiting word from FHWA on grant. Once funding is approved, they will be working on an RFP to send out to communities.
 - <https://www.des.nh.gov/business-and-community/loans-and-grants/community-electric-vehicle-charging-grant-program>
 - Vanessa Partington Vanessa.k.partington@des.nh.gov / 603-271-8330

Robin: A business in Lancaster received some VW funds.

- Under zoning, EV Charging does not qualify as a structure, we have decided to have property owners and businesses develop a site plan.
- Current conversation on Planning listserv is discussing how charging stations require full site plan review: We would rather fast track these as we are behind, and we are so close to the Canadian border.

Paul: Gorham was once on the list of spots for EVs, but is no longer on there. Is curious as to what happened with that.

Tala: There is a charging station (relatively new) in Colebrook at the IGA

Vanessa: NHDES community charging grant will be more flexible than the originally stated funds.

Robin: One of the conditions of approval mentioned during discussions is training for fire and emergency response services for hazards at charging stations. Not a lot of the North Country area is covered.

- Emily: There are trainings going on for Firefighters and EMS to be aware of the increased amount of these vehicles on the road.

6. Discussion:

a. Funding Opportunities

Nick presented the different funding sources. Emily asked Nick to send just the grants after the meeting.

b. NCC Projects

Bethlehem Pop-Up

- Went very well. A lot of good data and observations made.

- Presented our final report at the Selectboard a few weeks ago. They are interested in implementing traffic calming measures long term.

On-Call Engineering:

- Currently two requests submitted.
- Met with Engineer last week to go over some questions about the requests.
- Anticipating draft Task Orders this week or next.

Robin: Intersection of Page Hill and Route 3.

- Nick: I will send an updated Request form.

Emily: can I have that form as well?

- Nick: Yes, no problem.

Traffic Count Program:

- Only missed about 5 counts. Asked to be notified if there are any other local spots to add to our list for next year.

Ten-Year Plan – other updates:

- GACIT hearings took place.

Town of Gorham is very interested in the Jefferson project. Worried that Jefferson-Bowman project was removed in favor of I-293 project. Have seen a history of funds reallocated from North Country projects when Southern NH priorities change.

Jefferson-Randolph Project:

- Concerned that there may be a lot of political pushing behind the scenes to kill the project. Route 2 is the major access for the region to I-93 and it is very important to rebuild it.
- Hoping to receive an update on the project and where it is.

Nick will check on the status of the project and where it is in the process.

c. Scenic Byways

- Nick shared the NCSBC update document.
- Carl presented the update.

2015 CMP update in process. – 2015 plan is largely fulfilled. Detailed document is ready for review.

- Byway Enhancement Award – New Attraction Award: Lisbon Area historical Society Museum building
- Byway Enhancement Award – Stratford Grange upgrade and renovation. Now an enticement place for travelers to stop.
- Byway Read the Marker Award – Stratford Log Drives – marker situated right next to the river near kiosk for Stratford River launch and picnic area.

Stewardship reports –

- Carl has been appointed Chief Steward. Will be working to regularly travel the byways.
 - Big question is SHOULD sections still be considered scenic byways?

- What are the SAFETY issues?

Byways Council meeting early next year. Hoping to have some Federal funding for byways.

Robin: Town of Lancaster got an intern to do a wayfinding project for the town.

- Will probably put forward a warrant article to pay for signage.
- Downtown, the walking trails, and other areas that we would like to tie in. (historical markers)

Carl: the state historical markers are a specific state process.

- There is a specific application need from the local level.
- Thornton has a historical society and they have put out a dozen or so markers around town.
 - <https://camptonhistorical.org/site-markers/>

Robin: Wants to que QR Codes to display different languages.

d. Updates from Communities

Paul (Gorham)

- Working on the HOP Grant (including a parking study).
 - This has led us to a major study of Railroad street and how to utilize housing in the downtown area. All of those buildings were built a long time ago and had no parking.
 - Zoning code has made it difficult to have long term rentals due to lack of parking.
 - Revamping if the zoning and parking ordinances has allowed greater flexibility for land uses, especially for residences.
 - Current idea is to use railroad street for on-street parking for the adjacent apartments. Hoping to incentivize more housing development in the downtown area.
- Want to thank North Country Council (Kaela Taveres, Tara Bamford).
- Hoping to see more home sales and long term residential use.

Mary (Bethlehem): How has parking permitting been received by businesses and residents?

- Paul: it is a new concept that is difficult for some. People in smaller towns see paid parking unheard of. Reaction has been mixed, but conversations are progressing. There are some people who do not want to see ANY change, but decades ago there were a few hundred people who lived in the downtown area. Would increase business traffic and activity downtown. Might be a model for other areas.

Tala: How are the parking spots labelled or signed?

- Paul: Plan is to have them designated/marked for each building. Windshield stickers.

Mary (Bethlehem)

- Traffic Calming project was a huge success and was a lot of work for NCC.
- Was a huge success due to the data we can use to update main Street.
 - Main St has been a huge safety concern.
- Bethlehem is also participating in the Housing grant and is investigating ADUs and other housing types.
- Met briefly with TCCAP to discuss transportation issues in the Fall.

- Happy to see the active conversation about senior transportation.
 - Would be great to see more workforce transportation .

Emily (Jackson):

- Planning Board has been wrapped up in CIP process.
- Lots of outreach to town departments.
 - Part of it has been work upgrading our Fire Station.
 - Interesting study on northern NH towns located close to libraries.
 - Offered to share data.
- New town administrator, Julie Hoyt stepped up from assistant role.

Black Mountain Ski Area is re-opening in town.

- Looking at EV Charging stations and affordable housing options.
 - Very interesting efforts.

Robin (Lancaster):

- Working on the HOP grant.
 - 26 new units in downtown area alone.
 - It will create parking issues eventually.
 - Have been trying to look for alternatives on behalf of landlords for parking.
 - Town's position is that parking will not be restricted to tenants or private groups.
- As seen on the news, Covered Bridges have been in disrepair.
 - Mount Orne Bridge is partially closed off until repairs are completed.
 - Looking for some solutions to that.
 - Trying to convince the town manager to shut the bridges down to motor vehicles and limit to pedestrians and snowmobiles, ATVs.
- We also have the Water and Sewer project.
 - Heading towards a warrant article.

Doug (Littleton):

- Littleton Selectboard has done EV charging updates.
 - Added parking by renovating and demolishing an existing vacant structure.
- Some issues with enforcement of parking.
 - Police issued an overnight parking permitting program that will go into effect Jan. 1st.
 - Meant to control parking.
 - Lot of 2nd and 3rd story apartments to help control overnight lot users.
- Sidewalk project (TAP) is long delayed. Has had a lot of challenges getting it implemented.
 - Working with NHDOT to get that project revised accordingly.
- Have applied for a RAISE Grant and CDS grant to continue 2009/2010 implementation for Main Street.

Mark (Waterville Valley):

- Walkability project completed this summer. A little over a mile of resurfacing of local roads and inclusion of multi-use pedestrian bike path. Multi-use path replaced sidewalks or installed new sidewalks. Huge improvement for pedestrians.

- Working with Planning Board and Selectboard to choose the next section to install a similar system/design. The design uses removeable plastic delineators that will help with traffic coming off of route 49.
 - Have had a good reaction/impact on traffic slowing down coming into town.
 - The area along Valley Rd used to see 40-50+ MPH before the work.
 - Confident that it will help control traffic speeds.
- Next spring, the town will determine how many delineators will be re-installed but are ready to install them along the entire multi-use path, giving pedestrians a lot more room to walk.

Moving forward, working on HOP Grant, plan to have zoning amendments related to parking. A conceptual plan is in front of the Planning board for a multi-unit housing building (~20 individual apartments) located in a spot close to the multi-use path. Intended for locals and employees. Parking is a very controversial item in town, so unsure if changes will take place. (it is for reducing parking requirements to multi-unit developments). HOP Grant discussions have also dealt with setbacks especially LMI level housing. More affordable housing than the million-dollar condos than we have seen in town lately. Working to get relief from setbacks to open more areas for housing.

Will work with Nick to get more residential areas connected by sidewalks. If more areas are serviced with this type of design, we can connect residences and trails.

- Could greatly increase bike and pedestrian use.

Carl (Sugar Hill):

- Correcting the note about Thronton,
 - CAMPTON has 15 historical markers and has a website that shows the information.
- Engineering has been done for sidewalks throughout the town center area, as well as improvements for Ski School historical marker and scenic viewsheds.
- To get a scenic parking area, it will most likely be on private land.
 - Makes sense to have an official parking area instead of piecemeal illegal parking. Iris farm (THE View),

Nick: Also met with the Selectboard of Sugar Hill to implement the engineering designs completed earlier this year.

Carl: Interesting to see the result of the Waterville Valley approach.

Mark:

- A lot less expense than a curbed sidewalk.
- It may take some work from our Police Department to make sure people won't travel in it.
 - Should give 7-8ft of area for pedestrians to walk in.
 - It will involve some breaking some perceptions about walking against traffic.
 - Even now people have started to use it.
 - With the first big snow storm, we will see how people use it in the winter and plowing operations.

Nick will provide the image to the group.

Stan (Shelburne): Primary issues looking right now.

- FERC has completed receiving input re: relicensing for dam.
 - Releasing an environmental impact statement shortly.
 - Town is eager to provide comments.
 - Especially concerned about lack of public use sites around area under company's control.
- The Energy Committee is active and trying to increase solar permitting.
- The task force continues to work on updating and replacing Fire Stations.
 - Anxious budget times.
 - Our valuation has gone down \$8mil.
 - Otherwise, seem to be active on the local items.
- Interested in the WV road approach, especially re: North Road which has had increasing pedestrian and bicycle use.
 - NHDOT just released a memo about the walkability of town roads.

Rosalind (Lisbon):

- A lot of private landowners are renovating their multi-family buildings.
- Selectboard has finally recognized that they need to up their game with downtown infrastructure.
 - Will be spearheading the search for grant funding to support revitalization studies and work to help downtown activities.
 - Will follow-up with NCC for support.
- Conservation Commission is getting energized about focusing on Ammonoosuc river to do grant funding for boat launches.

Ross (District 2): No specific updates. We have started our winter maintenance operations. Front and center of those in the office.

Stephanie: Looking forward to wrapping up the stage.

7. Other Business

The Group had no other business to report.

8. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 3:02PM

Next Meeting: February (tentative)

***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.