



*Southwest Region Planning Commission*  
37 Ashuelot Street, Keene, NH 03431 603-357-0557 Voice 603-357-7440 Fax

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**Transportation  
Advisory Committee**

Kendall Lane, Chair  
*Keene*

Frank Sterling, Vice Chair  
*Jaffrey*

Susan Ashworth  
*HCS Community Care*

Brian Barden  
*Dublin*

Leslie Casey  
*Sullivan*

William Faulkner  
*Pathways for Keene*

John Gomarlo  
*Winchester*

Rhett Lamb  
*Keene*

Gus Lerandeau  
*Swanzy*

Leandra MacDonald  
*Peterborough*

Cheryl Mayberry  
*Walpole*

Ed Smith  
*Hinsdale*

*with*

John Kallfelz  
*NH DOT District 4*

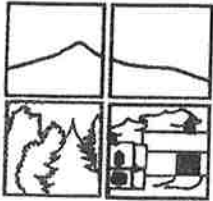
**Transportation Advisory Committee**

**April 1, 2019  
2:00 p.m.**

**Southwest Region Planning Commission  
37 Ashuelot Street  
Keene, NH**

**Agenda**

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Minutes of March 18, 2019
- III. Draft 2021-2030 Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan Regional Priorities
- IV. Next Meeting
- V. Adjourn



# Southwest Region Planning Commission

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## Southwest Region Planning Commission

### Transportation Advisory Committee

#### Minutes

March 18, 2019

**Present:** Kendall Lane, *Chairman, City of Keene*; Frank Sterling, *Vice Chairman, Town of Jaffrey*; Susan Ashworth, *Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services*; Leslie Casey, *Town of Sullivan*; William "Wink" Faulkner, *Pathways for Keene*; John Kallfelz, *NH DOT District 4*; Rhett Lamb, *City of Keene*; Gus Lerandean, *Town of Swanzey*; Cheryl Mayberry, *Town of Walpole*.

Staff members present: Tim Murphy, *Executive Director*; J. B. Mack, *Principal Planner*; Todd Horner, *Planner*; Patti Smith, *Administrative Assistant*.

Guest: Lucy St. John, *NH DOT*.

#### I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Lane called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m., welcomed those in attendance, and introductions were made.

#### II. Minutes of February 4, 2019

The minutes of February 4, 2019 were approved as submitted by unanimous vote.

#### III. NHDOT Presentation on Draft 2021-2030 Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TYP) and Associated Revenue Challenges

J. B. Mack referred TAC members to the agenda packet, which includes materials from NHDOT Assistant Commissioner Bill Cass' recent presentation during SWRPC's Winter Commission meeting on the Draft 2021-2030 TYP and associated revenue challenges in funding the transportation system. J. B. Mack highlighted some of the major points contained in the materials. For example, Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) funding, which has been used recently to maintain Tier 3 & Tier 4 state roads, are scheduled to expire in 2025 with no new source of funding yet identified to continue road maintenance on those roads. In addition, current level of funding for bridges is not expected to keep pace with the continually rising number of "red list" bridges in New Hampshire. He noted that these potential shortfalls present an opportunity for the TAC to educate the region about funding needs for transportation in New Hampshire. Tim Murphy reiterated that awareness is key and that a band-aid approach is not in the public's long-term interest. Cheryl Mayberry commented that she is frustrated to know that funds for these necessary items are not stable or sufficient. Susan Ashworth asked how the TAC could go about making people aware of these funding issues and wondered if there were legislative committees that should be contacted? Frank Sterling suggested the Public Works,

Transportation, Finance, and Ways & Means committees as possibilities. He also mentioned a tax proposal for electric vehicles, as these cars don't pay a fair share of the gas tax. John Kallfelz said he felt optimistic that funding solutions would come along when needed. He said six cents added to the gas tax could solve the problem. Frank Sterling responded that some other source of funding needs to begin as vehicle emission standards rise and electric cars become more affordable and common. Chairman Lane stated that registration fees could help pay for what is needed. Gus Lerandeau suggested that car owners' registrations record the past year's odometer reading and such information could be used to fund transportation based on mileage. Frank Sterling indicated a hybrid of these two ideas could be a likely solution. Tim Murphy commented that 2025 is when the TIFIA note needs to start being paid off. He reflected that it had come about in large part to finance the widening of I-93 which has little direct benefit to Southwest New Hampshire.

#### **IV. Draft 2021-2030 Ten Year Improvement Plan Regional Priorities**

J. B. Mack provided a presentation documenting the steps SWRPC and the TAC have taken in developing regional priorities for the 2021-2030 TYP. He reminded the TAC that SWRPC's regional allocation budget is \$4.3 M. He noted that last week SWRPC staff met with NHDOT about four priority projects that the TAC submitted for engineering review to get detailed feedback about the projects. NHDOT provided feedback on eligibility constraints, cost estimates and other matters. He proceeded to summarize the four projects and the feedback that was received by NHDOT on each project.

1. NH 10 (Winchester Street) Corridor Improvements – J. B. Mack noted that this project is currently in the TYP as Project #40666 but is underfunded according to the project scope. The goal of the project is to reconstruct Rt. 10 between the NH 10/12/101 roundabout in Keene south to the Swanzey town line, to address traffic flow, access management and multimodal transportation considerations. Presently the road has numerous trouble spots, especially during the peak hour. NHDOT estimates that if the project involves full depth reconstruction with a rebuild design of two opposing twelve foot lanes, a two-way left turn lane, five foot shoulders and a five foot sidewalk, it estimates that the project would cost approximately \$6.5M in 2025 and 2026 dollars. NHDOT assumes that the City of Keene will match the project cost 20% (\$1.3M) and manage the project locally. Chairman Lane commented that this project has been 40 years in the works. Rhett Lamb commented that it was supposed to be 100% federally funded when it was part of the bypass project years ago. J.B. Mack said that after accounting for the new project estimate and Keene's 20% match, an additional \$2.2M would be needed to complete the project. He also indicated that NHDOT would start preliminary engineering and right-of-way phasing one year earlier than what is currently listed in the 2019-2028 TYP.

2. NH 101 Corridor Improvements – J. B. Mack stated that this project is also in the current TYP, listed as Project #41590. The full scope of the project is to reconstruct NH 101 from approximately the Stone Arch Bridge in Keene east to the Marlborough town line with as close as possible to 12 foot lanes and 8 foot shoulders. In addition, the project would address the sight distance safety issue at the intersection of Swanzey Factory Road and NH 101. In their assessment and as a way to address the sight distance issue, NHDOT assumed that they would build a new bridge downstream on the Branch Brook which would provide an alternate connection from Swanzey Factory Road to NH 101 (west of the current intersection). NHDOT estimates that the project would cost \$16.5M in 2027 and 2028 dollars, which represents a \$12.5M shortfall of what is currently allocated in the TYP. J. B. Mack said that NHDOT also anticipates rehabilitating the existing NH 101 bridge that crosses over Branch Brook sometime in the future, but that would be paid for with bridge funds separate from this project and project estimate. He noted that like the NH 10 project, NHDOT proposes starting preliminary engineering and right-of-way phases a year earlier than shown in the current TYP. Chairman Lane asked if this project could be done in phases. John Kallfelz said he didn't hold optimism for that idea. He said this is a challenging project and that looking at other design options might be smart. Tim Murphy said that during staff's recent meeting, the NHDOT indicated efficiencies in constructing the project at one time, suggesting that phasing the project would be

more costly. J. B. Mack noted that there will be another full TYP update process before preliminary engineering starts on this project, so there is yet another cycle in which the TAC could hypothetically allocate more funding to the project budget.

3. West Street Corridor Improvements – J. B. Mack stated that this project, which involves making “complete streets” improvements, addressing congestion and access management on the West Street corridor in Keene from School Street to the NH 9/10/12 interchange, is not currently in the TYP. NHDOT engineers estimate this project to cost \$5.9M in 2030 dollars. This is based on several assumptions including reducing the street’s configuration from four lanes to three (two opposing lanes and a two-way left turn lane) with five foot sidewalks on both sides of the street and remaining space allocated for shoulders to create a complete streets facility. This cost estimate is based on minimal right-of-way impacts. If the road was expanded, right-of-way costs could be extremely high and project implementation could be complex and challenging. The project estimate also does not include addressing the West Street bridge over the Ashuelot River. NHDOT expressed concern that such a “road diet” may lead to congestion issues. As part of its estimate, NHDOT stated that it would cap federal funds for a project like this at \$4.74M leaving Keene to make up \$1.18M as a required local match of 20%. The inference is that any costs beyond the \$5.9M would be the responsibility of the City of Keene. Lucy St. John said the project as presented has many unknowns. Tim Murphy commented that since this is a newly proposed project to the TYP, he sees this as the beginning of a conversation. J. B. Mack commented that the project may have competing objectives (multimodal access and congestion relief) and said the NHDOT suggested this project is a good candidate for an engineering study. Rhett Lamb said that multimodal needs were the focus point when the project was proposed. He said congestion on West Street is an issue only at peak hour times and that he didn’t think car traffic volume levels have changed drastically in many years. Chairman Lane indicated that West Street is “built out” and that major increases in traffic is unlikely.

4. NH 10 (Manning Hill Road) Corridor Improvements – J. B. Mack noted that this project is not currently in the TYP, however, it has been known as a safety concern for many years. The Town of Winchester’s proposal calls for \$700K to clear trees to allow more sunlight onto the road to help address ice and snow buildup and periodic road closures. The NHDOT responded to the proposal by stating that it is considered a “maintenance” project and, therefore, would not be eligible for federal funds in the TYP. In its response, NHDOT gave a counter proposal which would address some of the tree growth but also improve the road by widening it to twelve foot lanes with 4 foot shoulders and addressing road drainage and safety appurtenances such as guardrails. NHDOT’s estimate for this revised project is \$13.5M in 2030 dollars. SWRPC staff asked NHDOT if there were other sources of funding to do the more limited tree clearing project. NHDOT responded that betterment funding might be the only option for the tree clearing.

J. B. Mack informed the TAC that there is a May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline for TYP recommendations to the DOT. As part of its recommendation, the TAC will need to decide how to apportion the \$4.3M regional budget to the current slate of projects. The TAC’s priority project recommendations for the 2021-2030 TYP are scheduled to go before the SWRPC Board of Directors at its April 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. There is a TAC meeting scheduled for April 1<sup>st</sup>, if the TAC needs more time to develop its recommendations. Tim Murphy offered the staff’s recommendation which would be to fully fund the NH 10 (Winchester Street) Corridor Improvement project and allocate the remaining amount of funds from the regional budget allocation to the NH 101 Corridor Improvements project. Rhett Lamb indicated that he thought it would be important to get more information from the City of Keene Public Works Department on the West Street Corridor Improvements Project before making a decision.

J. B. Mack noted that his take-away from the discussion about the four projects with NHDOT is that the West Street project may benefit from an engineering study coupled with a strong public involvement component. Rhett Lamb said he would be looking for study dollars from NHDOT. Lucy St. John

suggested that first, at the local level, the City look at examples from other communities that have tried to implement road diets on similar roads. She emphasized that it isn't a bad project, but it may need redefining because of the implications of change. Rhett Lamb reiterated that he wanted to present this information to the City of Keene's Department of Public Works for their input.

J. B. Mack noted that NHDOT staff suggested that SWRPC would be sending a mixed signal if it decides not to augment funding to the two underfunded projects currently in the TYP by introducing a new project for inclusion in the TYP. NHDOT expressed that it is their preference that SWRPC is clear about which projects are priorities and which are not, and if priorities have changed. Chairman Lane suggested that there is a strong case for fully funding the Rt. 10 project. He concluded that the TAC will revisit the project priorities discussion at the April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting and perhaps in the meantime more information can be obtained from the City of Keene about the West Street Corridor Improvements project to be shared with TAC.

**V. Next Meeting:**

The next meeting is scheduled for April 1, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. at the SWRPC office.

**VI. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Smith  
Administrative Assistant