



**NCC Transportation Advisory Committee**  
**Littleton Opera House**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
***Approved as Written 09/12/2019***  
**April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019**  
**3:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

**Members:** Doug Grant (Randolph); Carl Martland (Sugar Hill); Rosalind Page (Lisbon); Ray Gorman (Colebrook); Al Rosetto (Northumberland); Joe Chenard (Lincoln); Robert Larson (Whitefield); Stan Judge (Shelburne)

**NCC Staff:** Alex Belenz (Planner); Danica Melone (Associate Planner)

**Guests:** Chuck Henderson (Senator Shaheen); Ben Belanger (Senator Hassan)

**1. Introductions / Attendance**

Mr. Grant opened the meeting at 3:07 PM and introductions were made.

**2. Review and Approval of Minutes (2/21/19)**

Members reviewed the minutes. Mr. Martland noted a spelling error. Mr. Grant asked for a motion, Mr. Chenard motioned for approval, Mr. Martland seconded, and the Committee accepted the minutes as amended unanimously.

**3. FY 2021-2030 Ten Year Plan/Regional Transportation Improvement Program**

See presentation: [http://www.nccouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/TAC\\_TYP-Plan-Presentation-April-2019.pdf](http://www.nccouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/TAC_TYP-Plan-Presentation-April-2019.pdf).

Mr. Belenz discussed there is \$50 million made available statewide for new FY 2021-2030 Ten Year Plan (TYP) projects with \$6.1 million being allocated to the North Country Council planning region. Communities are asked to submit project proposals for the TYP, and NCC's TAC is charged with developing a ranked list of regional priorities using the submitted projects. The ranking is performed using statewide criteria established by NHDOT, with NCC and the TAC being able to assign weights to criteria to reflect regional priorities. For this TYP round, the criteria weights placed an emphasis on projects that improved safety and/or natural hazard resiliency on regionally-important transportation facilities.

After the preliminary list of project priorities was developed, the proposals were submitted to NHDOT for them to review and develop cost estimates. NCC met with NHDOT in March to review the projects and NHDOT's comments. NCC then contacted communities to communicate any changes in project cost/scope. Overall, NHDOT's cost estimates came in much higher than what was initially submitted. Mr. Grant asked Mr. Belenz if he felt NHDOT's estimates were fair. Mr. Belenz noted that NHDOT used actual unit/project costs from past TYP projects to do their estimates, citing the example of the previous

TYP project on NH 110 in Berlin. Some specific reasons for increases in costs included federal compliance, unanticipated relocation of utilities, and required upgrades to current NHDOT standards (e.g., shoulder widening).

Mr. Belenz reviewed the project proposals with the TAC and noted changes to project scopes, budgets, and scores (see presentation here: [http://www.nccouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/TAC\\_TYP-Plan-Presentation-April-2019.pdf](http://www.nccouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/TAC_TYP-Plan-Presentation-April-2019.pdf)). Mr. Belenz presented a draft project ranking list of 1) Gorham/NH 16; 2) Shelburne/US 2; 3) Berlin/NH 16; 4) Littleton/Main St; and 5) Gorham/NH 110. Using the new cost estimates, the Gorham and Shelburne projects would use the entire \$6.1 million regional funding allocation. Both projects would likely be constructed in FY 2029 or 2030. The two Berlin proposals have cost estimates that exceed the total regional allocation; however, they are still regional priorities. Mr. Martland asked that if the roadways are currently in poor shape but the project is not planned to be completed for ten years, what would happen to the maintenance of the road. Mr. Belenz noted that standard roadway maintenance projects are planned on a shorter timeframe, so there could be some flexibility in how those funds are allocated, depending on locations of a proposed project. Mr. Larson asked if the NHDOT cost estimates reflect future inflation and Mr. Belenz responded that they do.

Mr. Belenz asked the TAC if they supported including the two Berlin proposals in the regional priority rankings. By including Berlin in the ranking, it would better demonstrate the needs of the region in terms of transportation funding; however, neither project is eligible for funding in this round due to high project costs. Members supported including Berlin in the ranking to demonstrate regional needs. Mr. Martland noted that there is very little difference in the scores for the #1 and #2 projects (Gorham and Shelburne), and similarly little difference between the #3 and #4 projects (Berlin and Littleton), and suggested that the regional priorities reflect a tie for #1 (Gorham and Shelburne) and a tie for #3 (Berlin and Littleton). Gorman moved, Mr. Judge seconded; Mr. Gran asked for further discussion and there was none; the members agreed unanimously to the following project ranking: 1) Gorham/NH 16; 1) Shelburne/US 2; 3) Berlin/NH 16; 3) Littleton/Main St; and 5) Gorham/NH 110.

Mr. Chenard asked about how the regional funding allocations were developed. Mr. Belenz explained that the allocation of funds is based on a formula looking at the population of the planning region and the number of federal aid-eligible lane miles, noting that the NCC region has smallest population and most FAE lane miles. Mr. Chenard noted that even with the smallest year-round population, the region's roads see a significant amount of tourist traffic and there are a lot of second homes. Mr. Belenz agreed that the formula was simple, and there are a number of different factors that could be included that could potentially increase or decrease the relevant amount of funding that the NCC region receives.

Mr. Belenz provided an overview of the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), which is essentially a regional wish-list for transportation projects that is updated in concert with the Ten Year Plan every two years. The RTIP will be approved by NCC's Commissioners, but should be supported by the TAC as well. Mr. Rosetto inquired about the inclusion of the Northumberland covered bridge projects in the RTIP, given that it is not TYP-eligible and has some significant challenges. Mr. Belenz noted that including the project could help demonstrate the need for an alternative crossing of the Upper Ammonoosuc River. Mr. Martland suggested adding a footnote under Table 4 which would say something along the lines of "this list is not intended to be a complete list of unfunded projects of regional significance." Mr. Rosetto moved, Mr. Chenard seconded, and the TAC agreed unanimously to add the footnote to Table 4.

Mr. Belenz asked if there was any further comment on the RTIP, there was none. Mr. Martland moved to have the TAC support the RTIP as amended, Mr. Chenard seconded, and the TAC agreed unanimously.

#### **4. Regular Updates**

Mr. Grant and Mr. Martland noted that the North Country Council is looking for additional Commissioners and explained the commitment and how Commissioners may be appointed.

##### a. NCC Updates

Mr. Belenz provided the following updates from NCC's transportation program:

- Mr. Belenz will be sending out a monthly bulletin for TAC updates. The goal is to keep TAC members regularly updated and provide a document that can be easily forwarded to select boards and planning boards.
- NHDOT has completed a Statewide Freight Plan. The Plan identifies the route of US 2, NH 115, and US 3 as a Critical Rural Freight Corridor candidate; which could mean additional funding availability for these roads through the National Highway Freight Program. Mr. Belenz will invite NHDOT to present on the Plan at the June TAC meeting. Mr. Belenz thanked the TAC members who helped express regional priorities for freight corridors and funding.
- NH's nine regional planning commissions have been in touch with NH's congressional delegation regarding priorities for the reauthorization of the FAST Act, the federal surface transportation bill. A number of needs have been identified, including a more fair distribution of funds to the states (NH is currently last), an emphasis on resiliency of infrastructure, re-establishing a Scenic Byways program, and more streamlined procedures for programs like TAP.
- NCC is working with the Town of Littleton on a Parking Plan which is close to wrapping up.
- Mr. Belenz received word that the proposed transit feasibility study for Franconia Notch State Park and White Mountain National Forest was declined for funding through the Federal Lands Access Program.

##### b. North Country Scenic Byways Council Updates

Mr. Martland discussed that Ms. Melone, Mr. Belenz, and Mr. Grant were working to produce a byways website providing information on the North Country's byways. He noted that the City of Berlin was currently evaluating community support for pursuing the re-designation of NH 110 in Berlin as a byway.

The NCSBC is working to evaluate all byways to identify issues and see if they are still suitable for byway designation. Their second goal is to have NCSBC members identify scenic view sheds in their own communities. He lastly discussed the Council's continued desire for funds that may be used for Byways infrastructure such as pull-off improvements.

##### c. District Engineer Updates

*The District Engineer was not in attendance*

##### d. Updates from Communities

Mr. Gorman discussed updates regarding NHDOT's discontinuation of roads in Colebrook and noted that going forward, he felt the TAC should be notified by NHDOT when discontinuations are proposed. The Committee members discussed how they would like to improve coordination with NHDOT and suggested ideas of how communications may be strengthened. Mr. Belenz indicated that he would follow up with the District office to discuss options for increased coordination. Ms. Page suggested that a written summary could be provided in lieu of attendance. Mr. Belenz can also provide more information about schedules for roadway maintenance projects.

Mr. Gorman noted that there have been significant delays in getting their Main Street project advanced. The matter has not made it onto the Governor & Council agenda yet despite multiple requests, and the project may be implemented later than the original timeline at this point. There were also delays in having NHDOT approve the Town's new LPA contact after the Town Manager left, and have been struggling to get updates from NHDOT. The goal was to have the project completed by the Town's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and that is now looking unlikely. The Town has voiced their concerns to Councilor Cryans. Mr. Belenz noted that many Towns around the state have struggled with timely implementation of TAP-funded projects.

**5. Regional Transportation Plan Update.**

*Due to time limitations, this discussion was tabled until the next meeting.*

**6. Other Business.**

Mr. Belenz noted that the meeting time will be moved back to the third Thursday of each month. The next TAC meeting would be scheduled for June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

**7. Adjourn.**

Mr. Chenard made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Grant seconded, and the TAC agreed unanimously to adjourn at 5:09 PM.