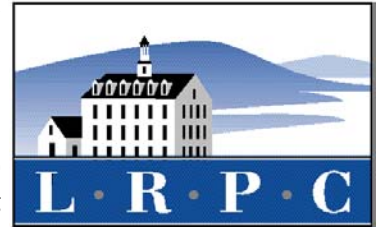


LAKES REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

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MINUTES
LRPC COMMISSION MEETING
 Pinckney Boathouse – Brewster Academy
 Wolfeboro, NH
 November 23, 2009

PRESIDING: Stanley Bean, Vice-Chairman **CALL TO ORDER:** 6:00 PM

QUORUM: Yes

COMMUNITIES PRESENT: 14

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Margaret LaBerge, Alexandria
 Dan McLaughlin, Alexandria
 Thomas Hoopes, Alton
 Steve Favorite, Bristol
 Phyllis Taylor, Danbury
 Anne Cunningham, Freedom
 Scott Dunn, Gilford
 Richard Wait, Gilford
 Stanley Bean, Jr., Gilmanton
 Warren Hutchins, Laconia
 William Bayard, Meredith
 Herbert Vadney, Meredith
 Herb Farnham, Moultonborough
 Wayne Crowley, Northfield
 Doug Read, Northfield
 Patricia Jones, Ossipee
 Roger Murray, Wolfeboro

OTHERS PRESENT: Commissioner George Campbell, NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT); Alton: Rep. Peter Bolster, Nancy Mayville; Bristol: R. Murray Campbell, Joe Denning; Moultonborough: Eric Tausig; Wolfeboro: Rep. Dave Knox. LRPC: Kimon Koulet, Marie Gelin, Michael Izard; and other interested parties.

1 Welcome and Introduction

Vice-Chairman Stan Bean called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. and welcomed all members. He asked for a motion for those present to constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting business, a motion was made and unanimously approved. *M/S/P Waitt/LaBerge*

2 Minutes of September 28, 2009 Commission Meeting

Vice-Chairman Stanley Bean asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the September 28, 2009 meeting. There being none, a motion to approve the minutes was unanimously approved. *M/S/P LaBerge/Murray*

3. New Hampshire's Current and Future Transportation System

S. Bean introduced Commissioner George Campbell, New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), who said NHDOT is committed to preserving and improving the transportation system for safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Projects include highway and bridge projects, park and ride projects, rail and transit improvements, aeronautic improvements, bicycle and pedestrian projects, and other initiatives. Collectively, these projects preserve and upgrade the existing system and take the state a step closer to a more complete and integrated transportation system. The existing 2009-2018 Ten Year Plan was developed with a very disciplined approach towards financial constraint, resulting in a credible, financially responsible Plan.

Commissioner Campbell said New Hampshire RSA 228:99 and RSA 240 require that the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) propose a plan for improvements to the state's transportation system every two years. The purpose of the Ten Year Plan is to develop and implement a plan allowing New Hampshire to fully participate in federally supported transportation improvement projects as well as to outline projects and programs funded with state transportation dollars. There is approximately \$2.3 billion in project costs against \$2.1 billion revenue, with \$200 million over programmed and \$270 million in new requests from the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) for 2009.

Commissioner Campbell added NH received about \$130 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds that addressed many deferred needs throughout the state. ARRA provided funds to resurface 750 miles of roads, as compared to the 250 mile annual average that has been achieved with available funding over the last few years. While helpful to address these deferred needs, it is only a one time boost and does not substantially impact the overall Ten Year Plan. In order to continue maintenance and preservation programs, the state will need \$37 million for annual betterment in 2011, and approximately \$60 million annually of the federal program.

With regard to the long range transportation plan, Commissioner Campbell said all Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are currently required to develop and complete updates every other year. The NHDOT encourages all rural Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) to develop and maintain similar regional plans.

According to Commissioner Campbell, the 2011-2020 Draft Ten Year Plan priorities continue to focus on maintenance and preservation, aggressively address red listed bridges, and consider fully funding the I-93 improvements. The draft plan involves a disciplined, financially-constrained planning approach, while working with the Financial Commission to consider longer term funding approaches. Due to NHDOT's robust efforts on the Turnpike System, Turnpike Toll Credits are being

utilized, allowing the state to use federal funds at approximately 100% instead of the usual 80%. Use of Toll Credits over the Ten Year Plan reduces funding levels available for capital projects by about \$150M.

Commissioner Campbell pointed out the current Federal authorization bill expired at end of September 2009. It is expected there will be continuing resolutions that extend the bill for up to 18 months. There is much uncertainty and speculation about the future Federal Reauthorization bill. Additional capital needs to be considered in the 2011-2020 Ten Year Plan development total at least \$800M in new projects, including additional funding for preservation, red listed bridges, consideration of previously identified projects that remain unfunded, and other specific needs identified by the Department and Regional Planning Commissions. Other needs not specifically quantified but recognized as areas that require attention include additional focus on posted/weight restricted bridges, municipal highway and bridge programs, secondary and unnumbered state roads, funding assistance to cities/urban areas, and funding needed to support rail, transit and aeronautics priorities.

He said advancing major projects such as I-93 by relying solely on federal program funding is difficult. One alternative being considered is a federal demonstration project that would allow tolling on the interstate to fund the unmet needs for capital and maintenance expenses. This would facilitate the completion of I-93 sooner than would otherwise be possible and within the Ten Year Plan timeframe. More importantly, this would free up funds (approximately \$150M in the Ten Year Plan for I-93 debt service) that could go toward funding other statewide capital needs.

NHDOT's continued focus will be on preserving and maintaining our existing infrastructure, addressing red list bridges, and safety issues. There will be continued dialogue and efforts to find a better way to accomplish the I-93 project. Coordination with RPCs and committees are critical to allow effective communication. Our system is not about infrastructure, it is about mobility moving goods and people.

Following the presentation, the audience raised many questions, some of which are as follows:

- An attendee asked about state roads being turned back to the towns. Commissioner Campbell said the state can as long as upgrades are done to the road to the condition the town find acceptable. N. Mayville said there is a program that provides reconstruction of these roads that has two-thirds state funds and one-third local match. When a state aid highway project is completed, the road is turned back over to the town.
- M. LaBerge enquired on other sources of public transportation to the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport. Commissioner Campbell said there is service from the Lake Sunapee to Manchester.
- K. Koulet asked about rails-to-trails in Tilton and Senate Bill 203 in trying to extend indemnification to railroad operators. Commissioner Campbell said the NHDOT supports the legislation and effort. Commissioner Steve Favorite said this has gone to study committee, because there are many issues involving

indemnification. New Hampshire does not currently pay for the insurance and towns must foot the bill.

- S. Favorite asked what the state is currently doing about reclaiming resurfacing materials on roads and is this being reworked in a different fashion. Commissioner Campbell said NHDOT is working on doing more reclaiming, grinding, and rebinding.

4. Lakes Region Transportation Enhancements (TE)

S. Bean introduced Mike Izard, LRPC Planning Manager, who said the TE process began in May with NHDOT and the TAC, with significant changes to the process since the last grant round in 2005. Communities must now submit a Letter of Intent (LOI). NHDOT encourages all TE projects to be municipally managed to help them better understand the management side. Workshops take place prior to the submission of the final application. RPC planning staff must certify the project has gone through a public planning process. Scoring is conducted by NHDOT and favors regional priority projects, with 45 bonus points awarded to the top ranking regional project. Fifteen points is awarded to the second ranked project, and five points for the third. Eleven Letters of Intent were submitted from area towns; six submitted full applications asking for \$1.8 million in projects.

M. Izard presented TAC's recommended project list as follows: 1) Bristol Center Square; 2) Northfield Winnepesaukee River Bridge; 3) Wolfeboro Multimodal Village Core; 4) Alton Rail Corridor to Route 28; 5) Moultonborough Neck; 6) NHDOT statewide historic bridge inventory. TAC recommendations are to be submitted to the NHDOT by December 10, 2009, which will announce the awards in the spring of 2010. A motion was made and unanimously approved to accept the TAC Transportation Enhancement list as presented. *M/S/P Waitt/Taylor*

5. New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority

Vice Chairman Bean introduced Malcolm Taylor, LRPC's representative to the NH Rail Transit Authority. M. Taylor gave a brief history of the railroad and the evolution of agencies.

Pan Am Railways (Boston-Maine) is working on the New Hampshire Capital Corridor from Nashua to Concord. Washington set aside \$8.1 billion for upgrading and revitalizing rail projects across the country. New Hampshire was prepared to apply, but did not meet one of the criteria in order to proceed with the application. There is an agreement with local railroads in the states of Maine and Vermont, but New Hampshire did not sign on. The NHRTA is hoping to get a planning grant to upgrade and do engineering studies of the Northern Line. The first step is to get the Nashua line to Concord, and get the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to Nashua. New Hampshire has until June 2010 to apply for the stimulus money. It is his hope to have Pan Am Railway back at the table. If this option is not available, then NHRTA will ask Amtrak to take the line by eminent domain, which would be a last resort.

Following the presentation, the audience raised many questions, some of which are as follows:

- An attendee asked about a legislator owning the Lyndborough line (Milford to Bennington). T. Taylor said the contract was re-awarded to Rep. Peter Leishman from Hillsborough.
- An attendee enquired if it makes sense to start the eminent domain process now rather than waiting. T. Taylor said the NHRTA officials are going to Washington to meet with Amtrak and their legal counsel on December 1.
- S. Favorite asked about rails with trails that are bicycle trails. Are there any plans to make these rails again. T. Taylor noted some of the rails to trails corridors were taken subject to return of rails. Some were taken in fee forever to be trails. There is also a concern about high speed rails in place where there are pedestrians and bicycles on the rails to trails.
- An attendee asked if there are plans to upgrade the rail crossing from Vermont into Claremont, New Hampshire. T. Taylor said one of the proposals for stimulus funds is to upgrade the Vermont line down to Springfield. It would require a commitment from New Hampshire.

6. Other Business

K. Koulet reminded attendees of the TAC meeting on Wednesday, December 2 at the Tamworth Town House.

K. Koulet informed attendees of some of LRPC's current activities. The Brownfield Advisory Committee is working on an RFP to hire a consultant. He added since the CEDS has been completed, LRPC is considering becoming an Economic Development District (EDD). He said new American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) proposals have kept staff busy, the latest related to energy planning assistance, with \$2 million available through the Office of Energy and Planning (OEP). In addition, LRPC is waiting to hear on a proposal submitted with UNH and the other RPCs for broadband mapping.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for January 25, location to be determined.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 PM.