

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUREAU OF RAIL AND TRANSIT**

CONFERENCE REPORT

DATE OF MEETING: June 24, 2015

LOCATION OF MEETING: NHDOT, 7 Hazen Drive, Concord NH - Room 161

SUBJECT: Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (BPTAC)

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Felice Janelle, NHDES (BPTAC - Chair)
Dave Topham, Granite State Wheelmen
Erik Paddleford, NHDOT – Rail and Transit
Tim Blagden, Bike – Walk Alliance of NH
Mary Poesse, North Country Council
Scott Bourcier, Dubois-King
Eric Feldbaum, DRED
Albert Willis, DHHS
Rick Taintor, Portsmouth Planning Dept.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS/ OTHERS PRESENT:

Larry Keniston, NHDOT – Rail and Transit
Jim Kirouac, NHDOT – Highway Design
Matt Waitkins, NRPC (by phone)

NOTES ON MEETING:

The regular meeting of the BPTAC was called to order on June 24, 2015 at 11 a.m. by the Chair.

Approval of May Minutes

The minutes of the May meeting were approved.

Rail Trail and Claremont's Waiver request

Larry gave an update on the waiver request by the City of Claremont. Last year the City agreed to stop allowing ATVs to use a 1.8 mile section of rail trail in the City because the trail was constructed with federal TE funds which do not allow the use of motorized vehicles. The trail has long been used by ATVs and the City is preparing a waiver request to submit to FHWA that would allow ATVs back on the trail.

Tim Blagden rode the trail last week and attended the public hearing regarding the waiver request. Tim indicated that ATVs have been off the western 0.5 miles of the trail for the last two years and were banned from the remaining 1.8 miles of trail last year. The local ATV group had strong attendance at the public hearing as well as strong political support from the City. Representative Kuster wrote a letter in favor of the waiver. ATV users vastly outnumbered bicycle advocates at the hearing. Tim also noted that no waivers of this type have been granted nationally.

It is also important to note that the trail does link a lower income area to important destinations like shopping and employment. Because the trail is not being used the way TE funding is intended, ATVs are providing a barrier to this type of this type of connection. Also, local bike shop personnel said they have to send beginner riders to out of town to places like Springfield, VT, Lebanon, or Hanover because there is no suitable place for beginners in town. Not surprisingly, Strava data shows the trail is lightly used when compared to the Northern Rail Trail; a direct result of ATV use and the unfriendly trail surface. While the BPTAC does not oppose the use of ATVs in appropriately designated areas, it does oppose the use in this case where funding used on the trail explicitly disallows their use.

The NHDOT Bureau of Planning will be coordinating a review of the waiver request once the city is done with their public involvement process. The outcome of the review will be to make a recommendation as to whether to support the waiver request to the FHWA NH Division office, who will make the final decision. [BPTAC has weighed in on this as a committee](#), so at this point individuals can provide input to the City directly if they wish.

It was suggested that the [mobile sources unit of NHDES](#) send a letter to Claremont opposing the waiver request citing increased pollution. BWA-NH has sent a letter opposing the waiver as well.

Felice will send out a reminder to committee members to send in individual comments to the City.

Netherlands Bicycle Infrastructure Presentation

Rick Taintor gave a presentation on bicycle facilities in the Netherlands. Rick has traveled to the county many times and had some great photos and knowledge to share about the cycling culture and facilities from the country.

Lane Markings – Route 120 Lebanon

Assistant Commissioner William Cass provided a response to the [BPTAC recommendation letter submitted regarding bicycle lane striping](#) in the form of a letter. Felice read the response letter to the group. Essentially, the letter indicated the Department will not maintain any new optional markings when current resources do not allow for the completion of the current marking inventory every year. It has been the practice to allow the municipality requesting the additional markings to sign a maintenance agreement with the Department and assume responsibility for maintaining the markings.

Pavement Marking Subcommittee

Dave Topham gave an update on the pavement marking subcommittee work. The committee has come up with a [number of recommendations](#) to be submitted to the Department for consideration. Felice suggested the committee take a look at the recommendations in preparation for a discussion about them at the next meeting, where the committee can decide what should be submitted to the Department. It was discussed that once the committee is comfortable with the recommendations, Bill Lambert (Traffic Bureau) should be invited to a meeting to discuss those recommendations with the committee.

Bike Ped Advocates Guide

The purpose of the guide is to educate bicycle and pedestrian stakeholders on how to engage in the transportation project planning and design process at appropriate times in order to ensure that transportation agencies consider bicycling and pedestrian accommodations. It will present information on how to get involved in the planning process and what types of improvements are beneficial for non-motorized users.

NHDOT has finalized the scope of work for the project and the consultant RSG has been given the notice to proceed. An initial conference kick-off call meeting will be scheduled towards the end of July. Completion of the guide is anticipated sometime in the spring of 2016.

General Discussion

Assistant Commissioner Cass indicated to Felice that he would be willing to meet to discuss BPTAC related items. Felice would like to invite him to the August BPTAC meeting. An agenda item for the July BPTAC meeting should be to discuss what questions we'd like to ask Assistant Commissioner Cass and those questions should be provided to him in advance of him attending a future BPTAC meeting.

Tim Blagden provided an update on the [Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets](#). So far in NH, Hanover and Manchester have signed on, Keene and Portsmouth are working toward it, and Laconia is a possibility.

Felice mentioned that the conference planning is coming along. Assistant Commissioner Bill Cass has agreed to provide welcome remarks. Erik agreed to ask Patrick Herlihy, Aeronautics, Rail and Transit Director, to provide some background on the BPTAC and introduce the keynote speaker at the conference. There will be a conference planning meeting on Friday, June 26.

Meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm

Next Meeting: July 22, 11:00-1:00pm, NHDOT: 5 Hazen Drive, Room 205 – Materials and Research Building.