



Victoria F. Sheehan
Commissioner

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



William Cass, P.E.
Assistant Commissioner

July 9, 2021

Secretary Peter P. M. Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please find enclosed an application for the 2021 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Grant (RAISE 2021) Discretionary Grant program. It is being submitted by the State of New Hampshire for the “*Hampton Harbor Bridge Replacement Project*” and requests \$20 million of Federal funds under the RAISE 2021 program. This project will address safety concerns relative to the historic, structurally deficient and functionally-obsolete Neil R. Underwood Bridge, enhance local multimodal transportation needs, and ensure the continued economic vitality of the communities of Hampton and Seabrook, and the region.

Built in 1949, the existing scour critical and fracture critical bridge carries NH Route 1A over the Hampton River at the inlet to Hampton Harbor and has a moveable, bascule span, over the navigation channel to allow taller vessels to access Hampton and Seabrook Harbors. It is experiencing extensive deterioration of the plate girders, floorbeams, bracing, and bearings; deterioration and movement of the substructure; and has outdated mechanical and electrical systems that no longer meet modern design codes and safety standards. Additionally, this bridge, which serves a vibrant beach community and is located on the East Coast Greenway, is too narrow to safely accommodate cyclist and pedestrian traffic.

Due to its age, location in a harsh coastal climate, and desire to provide multi-modal facilities, replacement of this structure is required. A new, fixed bridge will be built to much more efficiently and safely convey vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians over the river and provide increased navigational clearance for marine users. This new proposed bridge will carry two 12’ lanes, 8’ shoulders for bicycle passage, and 6’ sidewalks for pedestrian passage across Hampton Harbor. The new bridge will also accommodate a significantly increased horizontal clearance for marine users, increasing the safety of their transit under the bridge, and will be set at a height that accommodates all know users of the harbor and allows for more for frequent dredging of the harbors by providing clearance for the USACE Special Purpose (dredge) Vessel (S/P/V) *Currituck*.

This proposed new bridge is critically important to the connectivity, economic vitality, and quality of life for coastal New Hampshire residents who rely on this bridge to support beach tourism and recreation, and by allowing access for commercial vessels between Hampton and Seabrook Harbors and the Atlantic Ocean.

The project is consistent with state of good repair plans for NHDOT and is included in New Hampshire’s approved Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan and State Transportation Improvement Program.

You can find letters of support for the project, grant attachments, and additional information on the bridge inspections and public involvement to date on our webpage at <https://www.nh.gov/dot/projects/seabrookhampton15904/index.htm>.

It is important to note that New Hampshire receives the lowest total annual federal apportionment of all the states for transportation, therefore investing in larger projects such as this one limits the Department's ability to address smaller structurally deficient bridge projects elsewhere in the state. This project will help maintain and enhance the quality of life for the area residents and promote economic development, making it extremely important to the State. The Department is also committing a sizeable portion of non-federal funds to the project to leverage the requested RAISE grant for this project. The RAISE grant would be a significant boost towards accomplishing this much needed project, as it would reduce the need for bonding and consequently lower the overall project cost for the State.

New Hampshire is grateful for the opportunity to submit this application and appreciates the consideration of the U.S. Department of Transportation. We look forward to hearing from you upon completion of the review process.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Victoria F. Sheehan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V'.

Victoria F. Sheehan
Commissioner
NH Department of Transportation