

Notes from Interagency Meeting – 06/13/2024

Present:

Salem Quinn (NHDOT)
Glenn Davison (NHDOT)
Christine Mendoza (FTA)
Jack Wade (NHDES)
Nicholas Altonaga (NCC)
Matt Waitkins (NRPC)
J.B. Mack (SWRPC)
David Tilton (SNHPC)
David Jeffers (LRPC)

Bill Watson (NHDOT)
Fred Butler (NHDOT)
Leigh Levine (FHWA)
Eric Rackauskas (EPA Region 1)
Colin Lentz (SRPC)
David Walker (RPC)
Nate Miller (SNHPC)
Vincent Pagano (CNHRPC)

Roll Call

- Salem Quinn conducted a roll call of attending members.

June Minor Revisions

- New estimates were received for Enfield Project #44286 and the BRDG T3/4 M&P Program, which will be forwarded to interagency partners following the meeting.
- The Bridge T3/4 M&P project was revised to reflect the shifting of funds to align with the project schedule in the PE and CON phases.
- Projects NTS5310 and NTS5339 had incorrect revision remarks attributed to each project, that error has been corrected and the correct revision remarks are now linked to the proper projects.
- The original revision remarks advised that Lebanon Project #40794 had an increase in funds for the construction phase of the project. This was incorrect and construction phase funding will actually be decreased. Updated revision remarks will be sent to interagency partners following the meeting.

2023-2026 STIP Amendment #5 Update

- Amendment #5 has been approved.

2023-2026 STIP Amendment #6 Discussion

- Additions have been received by NHDOT and the agency will be sending out revised Amendment #6 materials reflecting those new projects and changes made to existing projects.
 - Bedford #44814 was revised based on questions received.
 - Manchester #44857 and Wentworth #44858 were added. These are new Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) projects.
- Matt Waitkins inquired when the MPOs would see the fiscal constraint documentation for Amendment #6. Salem Quinn stated that the fiscal constraint documentation will be coming and that NHDOT normally waits until all project changes are finalized following Interagency Consultation before sending out fiscal constraint. Matt Waitkins explained that NRPC is in its public comment

period now and asked if any additional projects would be added in the NRPC region. Bill Watson responded that there is a CDS project in Nashua. However, NHDOT has reached out without success to Nashua to determine how they were going to use their funding and phasing. The project either needs to go in Amendment #6 or Nashua will have to wait for the STIP update to add the project. Bill Watson suggested that if NHDOT and NRPC both reach out to the City of Nashua and explain the situation, it may help bring them to the table. Bill Watson advised that he will coordinate with Matt Waitkins on this following the meeting.

- Salem Quinn asked the RPCs when their public comment period would be opening and closing for this round. The RPC responses are below:
 - NRPC – Opens on 6/7 and closes on 6/17 with a public hearing scheduled for 6/19.
 - SRPC – Opens on 7/9 and a public meeting is scheduled for 7/19.
 - RPC – Public hearing scheduled for 7/10 with the comment period going from 6/28 – 7/9.
 - SNHPC – Public comment period from 7/8 – 7/19 with a public hearing on 7/23.
- Nate Miller noted that Bedford is in the air quality orphan area and the Bedford 44814 project will require a CAA code. The current list of exemptions do not appear to directly address EV charging projects. The project is exempt, but interagency partners should reach a consensus on how these types of projects should be coded in the future. Erik Rackauskas stated that NH is the only state in the country using CAA codes, and these codes may not be needed in the future. Leigh Levine stated that he felt that the CAA codes are useful when determining if a project is exempt or not. Following discussion, it was agreed that NHDOT would create a new “E-Other” (or similar) code encompassing exempt projects that do not fall within the existing list of codes.
- Leigh Levine asked the group if the Bedford 44814 would trigger a conformity determination. Nate Miller stated that the 44814 project was exempt and interagency partners concurred that there is nothing in Amendment #6 that would trigger a conformity determination for the SNHPC region.
- Leigh Levine mentioned that Hudson #42108 in the NRPC region is shown as an engineering study, which is being removed in the TIP amendment. Leigh Levine noted that, if the project was the removal of a non-exempt capacity project with phases beyond PE, then we would need to discuss a conformity determination. However, this project is a PE phase study being removed. Interagency partners agreed that the removal of the Hudson #42108 project would not trigger a conformity determination for the NRPC region.
- Salem Quinn mentioned that upon request, NHDOT can send project estimates and revision remarks. NHDOT feels that they email many documents to the RPCs every month and did not want to add additional documents to the pile but will fulfill requests that are submitted.

- Nate Miller noted that the federal funding amount programmed for the Bedford 44814 project was higher than the discretionary award amount. NHDOT had advised that figures would be updated for that project, but those figures weren't reflected in the updated docket. Bill Watson responded that the updated estimate was processed the night prior and will be reflected in the revised documents that will be sent out after the meeting. Nate Miller asked if NHDOT would be supplementing the project with other federal funding sources. Bill Watson replied that NHDOT is looking at committing other federal funds to cover the differences in cost.
- Nate Miller inquired about the OHSS (Overhead Sign) program having an attainment code suggesting that the project is only taking place in attainment areas of the state, which is likely not the case. Nate Miller suggested changing the code to "All" unless the program is only happening in the northern and western portions (attainment areas) of the state.
- Nate Miller asked why the STBG to FTA transfer is being dropped for FY 2024. Fred Butler advised that the intent is each year, when the transfer happens, that STBG line item is zeroed out and funding is applied to the corresponding FTA programs. Glenn Davison advised that the funds would appear in three FTA programs (FTA 5307, FTA 5310 and FTA 5311), which will be reflected in an upcoming minor revision.
- Matt Waitkins posed a general question regarding a scope only change for the Amherst Rail Trail project. The scope was removed from the STIP and then was reintroduced as an Amendment. Matt Waitkins noted that the scope is back in, but the Amendment has not been formally completed. Salem Quinn stated that this has inadvertently happened to a number of projects. Manually inputting the scope is the temporary solution and putting the change in the Amendment is a way to make sure that the change is made permanent.
- Nate Miller asked Bill Watson if NHDOT had everything needed from Manchester for their CDS project and if SNHPC help was needed in any way. Bill Watson responded that Manchester has received two earmarks, one for Elm Street and one for the signal improvements. A different federal agency is overseeing the signal improvement project, so it does not need to be reflected in the TIP or the STIP. Leigh Levine suggested adding it for informational purposes only. Manchester project #44857 (Elm Street) has been added to Amendment #6 and the revised amendment will be sent to the group after the meeting. Nate Miller noted that, if the Elm Street project is a sidewalk project, it would be exempt. But, if there is any question about the project, he will coordinate with NHDOT and FHWA to see if the project would trigger a conformity determination.

Agency Updates

- EPA – none
- DES – none
- FTA – NEPTA Conference will be held at the end of June. FTA will be attending and will be part of a panel on the 27th.

- FHWA – Leigh Levine sent an email on 6/3 with agency updates. Note that NOFO for CFI Discretionary Grant is out for projects that support charging and fueling infrastructure. Applications are due by 8/28 and notices considering past applications are due to FHWA by 7/1. This allows for applications that were considered but not awarded to be reconsidered.
- NHDOT Bureau of Rail and Transit – none
- NHDOT Bureau of Planning & Community Assistance – Bill Watson gave an update on the Ten-Year Plan process. A Committee of Conference between the House and Senate has resolved an issue related to Continental Boulevard in Merrimack and the Ten-Year Plan bill will be voted on today. The RPCs recently had a meeting with NHDOT and NHDES to finalize the methodology for calculating the air quality benefits of EV-related CMAQ projects. Bill Watson noted that there is a Transportation Planners Collaborative meeting scheduled for next week. Bill also noted a recent discussion with the RPC Executive Directors that may result in changes to the traffic counting program in the future.
- NRPC – Matt Waitkins told the group the NRPC is in the process of shifting its public meetings to allow for more flexibility with its meeting schedule to better accommodate TIP process needs.

Other Business

- None

The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 p.m. The next IAC meeting is scheduled for July 11th at 1:00 p.m.