

**Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission
Meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

February 9, 2010 Meeting Minutes
Lebanon Senior Center- Lebanon, NH

Attendees:

Van Chesnut, Chair, Advance Transit
Dave Edkins, Charlestown
Richard Lee, New London
Dick Jones, Lyme
Peter Kulbacki, Hanover
Bruce Temple, Claremont
Tony Bergeron, Sunapee
Aaron Brown, UVTMA
Dean Eastman, NHDOT
Rachel Ruppel, UVLSRPC
Nate Miller, UVLSRPC

Introductions and Approval of January 12th Meeting Minutes

Following introductions, Dick Jones moved that the minutes of January 12th be accepted as submitted. Richard Lee seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Jobs for Main Street Act

Nate Miller provided an overview of the Jobs for Main Street Act recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives. The legislation would provide a transportation funding investment similar to that of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: \$27.5 billion for highway infrastructure, \$8.4 billion for public transit, and investments in rail, airports, and marine ports. The legislation would also extend the provisions of SAFETEA-LU until September 30, 2010 and restore \$20 billion to the highway trust fund.

NHDOT has identified \$200 million in projects that could potentially be funded by the Jobs for Main Street Act. The projects identified are those that NHDOT considers "shovel ready," and include the construction of the "Conway Bypass," portions of the I-93 expansion project, and portions of the Airport Access Road to Manchester Airport. Investments in statewide maintenance and preservation programs are also included.

Nate Miller noted that this legislation is yet to be taken up by the U.S. Senate and could change significantly before it is ultimately signed by President Obama. Nate Miller will continue to update the TAC on the status of this legislation.

Lake Sunapee Scenic Byway Overview

Rachel Ruppel provided the TAC with an overview of her work on the Lake Sunapee Scenic Byway. The Lake Sunapee Byway was designated in 1994. An active, tourism-driven committee successfully completed two significant projects during the mid-to-late 1990s: 1) Interpretive historic and cultural resource signage in the Town of Sunapee; and 2) The

purchase of a caboose in Newbury's Bell Cove, which became a railroad museum. Despite the success of these efforts, a freeze on funding in the late 1990s stymied the committee's work.

In 2007, the Lake Sunapee Byway committee was re-established with active involvement from the three affected communities: New London, Newbury, and Sunapee. The committee had two initial goals: 1) To extend the Lake Sunapee Byway so that it circles the lake and connects the three villages; and 2) To complete a Corridor Management Plan.

The committee has been successful in both efforts. The Corridor Management Plan is nearly complete and the State Scenic Byway Council recently approved the extension of the Lake Sunapee Byway to encircle the lake. Rachel Ruppel noted that the committee is now planning to implement an interpretive trail along the Byway.

Enfield Northern Rail Trail Bridge

Nate Miller reported that the TAC has been asked to comment on the design of the Shaker Bridge replacement project in the Town of Enfield. This project includes work on Enfield's Main Street and will affect the Northern Rail Trail Bridge. There has been much local debate about the future of the Rail Trail Bridge, and after a series of meetings with the community, the current NHDOT design for the project does not include a new Rail Trail Bridge. Rather, NHDOT is proposing an at-grade crossing of Main Street.

The TAC discussed the pros and cons of converting to an at-grade crossing on Main Street in Enfield.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saves a cost of \$1 million (existing bridge cannot be saved and new span over Main Street would cost \$1 million). • NHDOT Bureau of Highway Design would support an at-grade crossing or a grade-separated crossing. • Town of Enfield has taken an official position in favor of an at-grade crossing. • Town of Enfield Police Dept. has stated that no significant safety problems would be created with an at-grade crossing. • Traffic on that section of Main Street averages approximately 1,400 vehicles per day, which is relatively low-volume. • Would slow down snowmobile traffic to safer speeds. • Would improve views of Mascoma Lake on Main Street. • Would improve sight distance for vehicular traffic on Main Street. • Implementing an at-grade crossing design does not preclude the potential for a future trail bridge at the location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade-separated crossings are widely considered to be safer than at-grade crossings because traffic conflicts (in this case, vehicles vs. pedestrians and snowmobilers) are minimized. • Snowmobile and pedestrian traffic on that section of the Northern Rail Trail is amongst the heaviest in the region. • At-grade crossing would require a 5% grade down to road level and then a 5% grade back up to the trail on the other side of Main Street. • NHDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator (in the Bureau of Rail and Transit) opposes an at-grade crossing. • The Friends of the Northern Rail Trail oppose an at-grade crossing. • The New Hampshire Bureau of Trails opposes an at-grade crossing. • Local snowmobile clubs oppose an at-grade crossing. • Earthwork necessary for at-grade crossing would disturb the Northern Rail Trail, which is a statewide historic resource.

Following discussion, Dick Jones moved that the TAC concur with the Enfield Board of Selectmen and endorse the proposed at-grade crossing of Main Street. Bruce Temple seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) Update

Nate Miller provided an update on the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program, noting that NHDOT has submitted letters of intent for three projects that purport statewide benefits:

- 1) Signal optimization at 65 locations statewide;
- 2) New Hampshire rideshare service improvements;
- 3) New Hampshire Traffic Management Center systems improvements.

Nate Miller noted that, because the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee region is in attainment of federal air quality thresholds, there were no letters of intent for projects directly impacting the region. However, the TAC has standing to provide comments on applications that purport statewide benefits. Applications for CMAQ funding are due on April 1st.

Other Business/Updates

Due to Town Meeting Day, the TAC will not meet in the month of March. The TAC scheduled their next meeting for April 13th, 5:00 PM, at the Lebanon Senior Center.

Dick Jones moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 PM. Bruce Temple seconded and the motion passed unanimously.