

August 17, 2009

**DRAFT**  
**MINUTES**

**Governor's Advisory Commission on  
Intermodal Transportation (GACIT)**

**June 17, 2009**

**3:00 PM**

Governor and Council Chambers  
Chamber Room 2007, State House  
107 North Main Street, Concord, NH

Attendees

GACIT

Executive Councilor Raymond Burton, Chair  
Executive Councilor John Shea  
Executive Councilor Beverly Hollingworth  
Executive Councilor Raymond Wieczorek  
George N. Campbell, Commissioner

NHDOT

Jeff Brillhart, Assistant Commissioner  
Bill Cass, Director of Project Development  
Nancy Mayville, Planning and Community Assistance  
Glenn Davidson, Planning and Community Assistance

Others

Candace Bouchard, Chair, House Public Works & Highways Committee  
David Campbell, Vice-Chair, House Public Works & Highways Committee  
Other ( See attached Sign-in Sheet)

Chairman Raymond Burton opened the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) Meeting at 2:30 PM. A brief summary was made of the recent legislative session including:

- HB2 included a funding increase for NHDOT for the biennium that involved raising vehicle registration fees to \$30 for small vehicles, with increases by weight for trucks.
- A legislative commission was authorized to study the long-term finances for highway and bridge funding. The commission will include representatives of NHDOT, Governor's Office, Senate, House, Department of Safety, and the Executive Council.
- Commissioner Campbell noted that NHDOT had been losing \$100,000 per day. The approved budget will provide \$135 million of new revenue: \$50 million from the transfer of I-95 to the Turnpike system, financed by a \$0.50 toll increase at the

Hampton toll; \$70 million in registration fee surcharge; and \$15 million in vehicle fines.

- Commissioner Campbell noted that the commission will be a discussion of highway finances including turnpike/interstate aggregation, gas tax, vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) taxes, public/private partnerships, and bonding opportunities. He thanked all those who contributed to the budget effort that began with a gas tax proposal and resulted in a compromise involving vehicle registration fees that will provide an additional \$17 million to Betterment and \$5 million to Block Grant Aid over the biennium.

The minutes of the GACIT meeting on November 19, 2008 were presented.

Introductions of all GACIT members including the Executive Councilors and Commissioner of the Department of Transportation were made followed by introductions by all attendees.

Commissioner Campbell thanked the Governor and Executive Council for approving the contracts for Regional Planning Commissions.

Assistant Commissioner Brillhart presented the Capital Program as shown in the Ten Year Plan. He noted that the program is very full this year and includes \$300 million of work of which \$85 million was just approved by the Governor and Executive Council. He noted that economic stimulus funds are accelerating the I-93 widening, increasing work on “Red List” bridges, accelerating construction of Manchester Airport Access Road by two years, and increasing the pavement preservation program. He explained that federal funds for future capital projects will be reduced due to increasing indirect additives from 3% to 10% freeing up \$10 million to be used for NHDOT operating costs. He also explained that turnpike toll credit was used last year and this year, so that state match is not needed for the federal program, but in doing so, federal revenue for capital projects does not go as far. He noted that the Senate and House were interested in increasing Betterment revenue for work on the secondary highway system and emergencies. The program is usually \$21 to \$22 million/year but will increase by \$2 million in FY 2010 and \$15 million in FY 2011. The Department proposes to increase paving by 500 miles/year from the recent average of 250 miles/year. He commented that in the Turnpike program, the widening of the Spaulding Turnpike in Rochester is doing very well; Newington-Dover is progressing in design and permitting with a target of advertising the first project in FY 2010; and 15 red list turnpike bridges are under design or construction. He noted that work on “Red List” bridges has resulted in eighteen bridges being replaced, twenty-five under construction, and twenty-two will be under construction in the next two years. There are 137 “State Red List” bridges with 87 being addressed through the Ten Year Plan. Commissioner Campbell commented that the “Pink List” includes another 250 bridges that need attention. He said that at I-93 Exit 1, seven bridges are being taken off the red list and 19 “Red List” municipal bridges were addressed through the State Aid Bridge program.

Councilor Wieczorek asked how many miles are on the state highway system. The response was 4300 miles including I-93 and Turnpikes. It was noted that in year 2000 and before DOT typically paved 500-600 miles/year, but recently paved only about 250

miles/year. Commissioner Campbell explained that resurfacing should be an eight to 10 year cycle. Assistant Commissioner Brillhart noted that economic stimulus funding has been enormously helpful and the additional funding in FY 2010 and 2011 should keep the boost going. There was discussion that the overall federal transportation funding program received from Congress gave \$8 billion in FY 2008 that was needed to address a revenue shortfall and may give \$12 billion in FY 2009 to address a similar shortfall as a result of the federal revenues decreasing. Commissioner Campbell noted that approximately \$550 billion is needed for the next federal reauthorization while the previous reauthorization (SAFETEA-LU) provided \$250 billion.

Bill Cass, Director of Project Development, summarized the economic stimulus program as presented in a copy of a powerpoint presentation handed out to attendees. Nationwide \$789 billion was available through the American Recovery and Re-investment Act (ARRA) with \$30 billion designated for transportation. New Hampshire received \$129.4 million for highway and bridge projects, \$14.5 million for public transit projects, and \$5.6 million for airport projects. In addition NHDOT is pursuing additional funding through two programs: 1) a competitive program for rail for \$8 billion available nationwide, with NHDOT seeking funds for the Capital Corridor; and 2) discretionary grants, from a competitive program for \$1.5 billion nationwide for significant projects, with NHDOT seeking funds for the Portsmouth-Kittery bridges and port.

Bill Cass noted that with the ARRA funds, the federal program of highway and bridge projects had doubled in FY 2009. New Hampshire has been leading the nation in obligating ARRA funds. Commissioner Campbell thanked Bill Janelle and the Executive Council for their efforts contributing to New Hampshire's success in handling the ARRA projects. The major projects were noted to include: \$27 million for I-93; \$3 million per district for resurfacing; \$29 million for 35 municipal projects in the State Aid Bridge program (22 bridges projects), State Aid Highway program (4 projects), and Transportation Enhancement program (9 projects). All projects must be ready or near ready to start construction. Mr. Cass explained that ARRA funds were put into one large DOT project (Lebanon I-89 Exit 20) that made equivalent federal funds available for the municipal projects. He also noted that this helped move up projects in the State Aid Bridge program which is now funding new project 6 or 7 years in the future.

Councilor Burton asked who makes the decision on the discretionary grants. Commissioner Campbell explained that the final decision is made by President Obama and Secretary of Transportation LaHood. He further explained that the Capital Corridor from Nashua to Concord to Montreal is a high speed rail corridor as designated by former President Clinton. NHDOT is working with Vermont and Massachusetts who are supportive of a New England regional plan and ARRA application. Commissioner Campbell recently had a conference call on the application with all of the US Senate staff in New England, two Federal Rail Authority people, staff from Representative Hodes' and Shea-Porter's offices, and all DOT Secretaries. He acknowledged that they are competing against California and the West Coast for funding in the \$8 billion program. He explained that President Obama's position is that rail is to his administration what the Interstate was to former President Eisenhower. Commissioner Campbell noted that he is working aggressively on this effort and needs a grant writing firm to assist at a cost of approximately \$90,000. He noted that Deputy Commissioner Chris Clement is working

with Senator Burling, Chairman of the Rail Authority, and Mike Izbicki, Executive Director of the Rail Authority.

Councilor Hollingworth asked about aeronautic funds relative to New Hampshire, specifically can the \$5.6 million designated for aeronautics be applied to rail projects. Commissioner Campbell responded that stimulus funds came down in categories including rail and aeronautics. Aeronautic funds will be applied to projects at airports at Manchester, Pease, Keene, and Nashua which contribute to the state's economy. He explained the application for rail funds is for \$250 million out of the \$8 billion for rail. The other application for \$125 million in discretionary funds is for a project of significance at Portsmouth-Kittery to include improvements to Memorial Bridge, the State's #1 Red List bridge, the Sarah Long Bridge, the State's #17 red list bridge, and improvements to the port. He noted that Governor and Council recently approved a contract to inspect the two bridges with a report available in four weeks regarding the conditions of the bridges. Maine owns half of each two bridge and supports the project, but does not have a Ten Year Plan, so that their legislature sets the priorities. As a consequence Maine's support is more difficult to gauge.

Councilor Burton explained that the purpose of stimulus funds is to create jobs. Councilor Hollingworth noted that in her district she sees people paving on Sunday on Route 101 and expressed thanks for these people working. Councilor Burton noted that if he goes five miles, he bumps into a project and loves it. Commissioner Campbell stated that he was concerned that stimulus funds would just provide for one year, but with the increased Betterment funds the increased highway and bridge improvements can continue. He also talked about work-zone safety and the recent press conference with other state agencies. We need to get the work out, but safety in the work zone and at tollbooths must be a priority.

Commissioner Campbell noted that federal re-authorization is in process and if anyone is pursuing earmarks, they are communicating directly with the Congressional delegation who sent out a solicitation in April/May.

Commissioner Campbell talked about the upcoming Ten Year Plan update for 2011-2020. NHDOT has received input from the regional planning commissions. The NHDOT intends to discuss the 2011-2020 Ten Year Plan in August. The next meeting of GACIT is proposed for August 24 to begin the Ten Year Plan process. The Department will be setting up the GACIT Ten Year Plan hearings for September and October with the goal of providing the schedule to GACIT at the August 24 meeting. The goal is to have a new Ten Year Plan by July 1, 2010.

Councilor Burton asked representatives of each regional planning commission to speak. Cynthia Copeland, Executive Director of Strafford Regional Planning Commission, noted that they went to all communities, ranked local priorities, to that the top five local priorities and top five regional priorities were identified including public transportation, bridges, and preservation. Ultimately, they agreed with the existing projects in the current Ten Year Plan, and requested no changes.

Mike King, Executive Director of North Country Council, explained that they corresponded with all communities seeking projects and priorities, and if a new project was proposed, the proponent needed to move another project out. They got some input, but not a lot. The information was reviewed at the NCC TAC and submitted to NHDOT. He noted that Fred King proposed an amendment to the plan regarding a red list bridge in Stewartstown, but NCC did not comment on red list bridges believing that DOT prioritizes them.

Tim Murphy, Executive Director of Southwest Regional Planning Commission, welcomed the opportunity to re-evaluate the Ten Year Plan, making some cuts from the 2009-2018 TYP and refreshing their priorities. They proposed to add five new projects with a value of \$14.5 million and to drop an equivalent value of projects. Their priorities still needed to go to their TAC.

David Preece, Executive Director of Southern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission, said they asked their communities to review the local and regional transportation projects in the existing Ten Year Plan. He noted the projects that had been taken out previously included NH 101 in Bedford and Exit 4-A/I-93 in Derry/Londonderry. They also identified new projects, Pettengill Road in Londonderry, as important to economic development for the region and State. This project was put forward for economic stimulus, but was turned down. They ranked the project.

Commissioner Campbell replied that \$177 million is going to Manchester Airport Access Road which was originally proposed to include a connector through Londonderry, but was rejected by the town. He suggested that Londonderry consider a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district to pay for Pettingill Road..

Kerrie Diers, Executive Director of Nashua Regional Planning Commission, commented that they also took input on regional priorities in the Ten Year Plan, and found no changes. The rail project is important to the region and, Broad Street Parkway is still a priority, as well as Routes 101A and 101. Commissioner Campbell replied that the Department appreciates their work on the rail project. He also noted that a pending issue is what to do with the land bought for the Circumferential Highway since the project (like parts of the Conway bypass project and others) are in limbo. NHDOT will work with GACIT on making a decision on what to do with these projects, i.e. whether to surplus the land or reserve it for a future project. The projects include land owned by the Department with a value of \$20-30 million on which in many cases taxes are not paid.

Cliff Sinnott, Executive Director, Rockingham Planning Commission said that his region went through a process of: 1) affirm what is in the current Ten Year Plan that is important, including I-93, Newington-Dover, Memorial Bridge, Route 125; 2) identify needs not being met long-range, i.e. 20 years out; and 3) provide priorities for large statewide, regional and local bridge and transit projects, all of which were prioritized within the categories. Commissioner Campbell expressed his appreciation for their work on east-west transit.

Kim Koulet, Executive Director of Lakes Region Planning Commission, commented that the region had been hit hard in the last Ten Year Plan process and lost \$88 million in projects with only \$30 million left in the Ten Year Plan. He said that it was difficult for them to decide priorities. The TAC re-did their criteria and applied them to new projects. They made two decisions, to not touch anything in the current Ten Year Plan, and if possible add to list in two more years. He also commented that they would like to see the shoulders paved on Route 106.

Nate Miller, Transportation Planner of Upper Valley- Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, said that their process included updating their criteria, identifying a priority of system preservation and maintenance, and not looking at expanding capacity, but encouraging public transit over increasing capacity. He noted that they have 25 projects, of which 16 will move to construction in one to two years, and eight will be constructed in the future. They did not propose to add or swap any projects. Their #1 priority is to rehabilitate the bridges carrying I-89 over the Connecticut River. He said they are seeking an appointment by GACIT for someone to join them in planning for a new passenger terminal facility that will have bi-state impact and benefit. The group will guide siting and scoping the project. They anticipate a one year process with nine meetings in the early evening that will start in July.

Councilor Burton concluded the meeting noting that the GACIT Ten Year Plan meetings are being set up, and the next meeting of GACIT will be Monday, August 24 at 10 AM at NHDOT headquarters.

Councilor Burton asked if the GACIT had any remaining issues. Since there were none, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 PM.