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Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee Meeting

Friday, May 15, 2015 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Strafford Regional Planning Commission
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Conference Room 1A
Rochester, NH

FINAL MINUTES

1. Introductions

SMPO Policy Members Present: Suzanne Huard (Rollinsford), Judy Nelson (Rollinsford), Kenn Ortmann (Rochester), Paul Lockwood (NHDES), Sandy Keans (Rochester), Tom Crosby (Madbury), Bill Connor (Somersworth), Beverly Cray (UNH), Victoria Parmele (Northwood), Brian Tapscott (Somersworth).

SMPO Staff: Cynthia Copeland (Executive Director), Sarah McGraw (Planning Technician), Chris Scheiner (GIS & Technical Analyst), Natasha Leuchanka (Regional Planner)

2. Staff Communications

C. Copeland reminded the Committee about the SRPC Annual meeting on May 28, 2015 at the Madbury Town Hall. SRPC will be celebrating its Economic Development District Designation. The theme for the meeting is Training and Recruiting a Talented Workforce in Seacoast NH.

3. Action Item(s)

3.1. Minutes from April 17, 2015

K. Ortmann moved to approve the minutes from April 17, 2015, second by B. Connor. VOTE: Unanimous

4. Discussion Item(s)

4.1. Ten Year Plan Projects Update

C. Scheiner reported that the list of projects were sent to the NHDOT on April 29, 2015. Projects on the list were new projects for the Ten Year Plan. Projects already in the ten year plan were not touched. A few projects were not included on the list because the NHDOT used financial information as a prerequisite. C. Scheiner said that SRPC will work with communities to get on the list for next round or find other funding sources.

C. Copeland commented on the Spaulding Turnpike project. C. Copeland said they are working with Senator Waters on this project. The Turnpike was not part of the conversation with NHDOT on this round of Ten Year Plan Projects but that SRPC is still thinking about it.

4.2. Safety Analyst

C. Scheiner reported on the Safety Analyst Software provided by the NHDOT. C. Scheiner said one purpose for the software was for the Ten Year Plan project ranking. SRPC plans on using it in the future for focused analysis such as financial cost recommendations on safety improvements. T. Brown has been working on learning the program. T. Brown added that the software can assess safety issue hot spots to analyze a road network. T. Brown explained some of the issues related to the Safety Analyst. NHDOT manages the software.

C. Scheiner explained that the information used for crash data is reported from police departments

Leigh Levine asked if the software uses road geometry and number of vehicles or is it just safety data. T. Brown said the road geometry segment isn't part of the system but has to be added by the user.

4.3. Metropolitan Transportation Plan -- Outreach

S. Sylvia said she had been working with Colin. The first action was to create a survey on complete streets. Title IV goals were taken into account.

J. Nelson asked for an explanation of complete streets. C. Scheiner said that Complete Streets is the concept that a street is not just for cars but that all users are taken into account.

5. Project Update(s)

5.1. Performance Based Planning

C. Copland reported that SRPC has conducted 21 stakeholder interviews .There will be about 26 interviews by the end of May made up of about 50 stakeholders. SRPC purchased analytical software to conduct qualitative analysis of the focused interviews. N. Leuchanka attended a workshop at the NVivo headquarters. The MPOs and other federally funded transit programs are mandated to complete performance measures. N. Leuchanka has submitted to present on performance measures at the AAMPO conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. The purpose of the software is to have a way to provide transparency to the analysis of the interviews.

5.2. Scenic Byways

S. McGraw reported her and N. Leuchanka have been meeting with both the Mills Scenic Byway and Branch River Scenic Byway groups. They are just starting to form Advisory Committees and start writing corridor plans.

V. Parmele asked how the State Scenic and Cultural Byways Council is running. S. McGraw said that the Council meets twice a year and that at the meeting other byway groups were present to ask questions. The Council is currently going through a building stage with input from the other byway groups.

W. Burton suggested emailing him the information to share with the Durham Town Council. B. Connor suggested staying clear of transportation advisory groups. W. Burton commented that at the previous Scenic Byway meetings in the past, there was a police presence due to threats made. C. Copland said that they have not been present at current meetings.

5.3. Rail Working Group

S. Sylvia said that the Rail Working Group met on April 30 at the UNH Dairy Bar. The group discussed projects that could be used for a TIGER grant in the future. The next meeting will be at the Union Grange on April 16. B. Connor asked what type of projects will be applied for. S. Sylvia said some areas of interest are crossings in the region and a piece of track in Northern New Hampshire not state owned. Copeland said the idea is to develop a portfolio of projects to use for future grants. S. Keans asked if there are dollar amounts on the projects. S. Sylvia for an urbanized area there has to be a match and for rural areas no match is required.

6. Other Business

6.1 Data Collection

T. Brown said that data collection season has started. Traffic Counts have started as requested by the NHDOT. Counters have been set in Durham, Lee and Somersworth. SRPC is working with the RPCS and DOT to get bicycle counters in the field. SRPC was the first to try out the bicycle counter. B. Tapscott asked how a pedestrian counter works. T. Brown said it is passive infrared. He said there are restrictions on where it can be set up in the field. The bicycle counter was purchased by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Technical Advisory Committee (BPTAC). Other data collection efforts include the Roadway Surface Management System to assess roadway condition, sidewalk assessments of state owned roadways and culverts.

K. Ortmann asked how to calibrate the bicycle/ pedestrian counters. T. Brown said that it is built in to a degree but staff are working on ways to make the data more accurate.

W. Burton reported on the Eversource transmission line project in Durham. W. Burton had asked if SRPC has taken a position on the project. Meetings with Eversource in Durham had been difficult due to discussion over publicly taping the presentations. W. Burton discussed intervenor status for certain projects. Durham can determine what type of towers and Eversource agreed to put the line underground. B. Connor asked if there had been alternatives presented. W. Burton received documents with alternatives from Eversource after requesting them.

S. Keans said that Rochester had not been alerted to similar projects in Rochester. B. Connor asked if Durham was seeking Regional Impact Status. W. Burton said they need more data on power consumption.

W. Burton talked about the requirement for every town to allow for accessory apartments (SB 146) which has to do with workforce housing and elderly housing.

C. Copeland said that on March 25 Eversource and Normandeau met with SRPC to ask what the best approach to use in Durham. SRPC had told Eversource that they need to have full disclosure and transparency. C. Copeland said that Eversource is not doing a view shed analysis that may address the concerns people have about the view. W. Burton said the law does not require Eversource to answer questions.

C. Scheiner said he is a primary contact for mapping projects and maintainer of tax parcel data. SRPC is adjusting to how staff accept mapping requests. Because of the time and quality requirements, C. Scheiner said a letter will be going out, stating to keep in mind the time restraints.

7. Citizen's Forum – No public present.

8. Adjournment

K. Ortmann moved to adjourn the meeting second by T. Crosby. VOTE: Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 am.

Minutes Submitted By,

Sarah McGraw, Planning Technician



Brian Tapscott, Chair

