



**Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting  
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Conference Rm. 1A  
Rochester, NH 03867**

**Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
9:00 AM-11:00 AM**

**Draft Meeting Minutes**

*The meeting was called to order with a quorum at 9:05am*

**1. Introductions**

**Members Present:** Larry Brown (Milton), Marcia Gasses (Barrington), Michael Hoffman (Newmarket), Jon B. Hotchkiss (Middleton), Martin Laferte (Farmington), John Law (Farmington), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Shanna Saunders (Somersworth), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Michael Williams (COAST)

**Staff Present:** Colin Lentz (Regional Transportation Planner), Rachael Mack (GIS Planner), Cynthia Copeland (Executive Director)

**2. Staff Communications**

C. Lentz explained that Lexi Gozdoff had accepted a new position in Michigan and that SRPC was in the process of hiring temporary planning staff to conduct summer data collection. He said the plan is to have two teams operating to set traffic counts and finish the remaining culvert assessments.

**3. Action Item(s)**

**3.1. Minutes from March 3rd 2017**

M. Laferte made a motion to approve minutes from March 3rd 2017 meeting

Seconded by M. Gasses

Vote: All in favor

**3.2 Coordinated Public Transit & Human Services Transportation Plan – review and recommend to the Policy Committee**

C. Lentz gave a presentation on the draft Coordinated Public Transit & Human Services Transportation Plan. He said that the document (which is currently in public comment) serves as a primary tool for MPOs and Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) working to coordinate demand response and community transportation services. C. Lentz explained that the RCC for Southeast New Hampshire, which is known as the Alliance for Community

Transportation (ACT), is responsible for coordinating the numerous agencies that provide transportation services for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low income residents who need to reach destinations for health care, nutrition, and civic engagement.

C. Lentz mentioned that the Coordinated Plan is a critical tool for ACT when applying for federal funding and working to improve service in the region. He briefly explained the federal funding sources used by public transportation providers. He noted that nationally, median per-capita state spending on public transportation is \$4.20 (not including New York and California). However, New Hampshire only invests \$0.18 per-capita for public transportation, and most of those funds go to supporting intercity bus service.

C. Lentz highlighted census data that illustrated the transportation service needs of residents within the region. He focused on the growing population of seniors (age 65 and older), the location of residents who live in poverty and individuals with disabilities.

C. Lentz described customized surveys that were sent to transportation providers, local welfare offices, and community transportation users, and highlighted some of the results. Most individual respondents said they lived in their own home or an assisted living facility.

C. Lentz said ridership on community transportation is rising, but noted that many respondents said they rely on family or friends for transportation assistance. He reviewed several barriers to use of community transportation and pointed out that respondents said they were either unaware of available transportation services or had other barriers to accessing the services. C. Lentz said since most services are free, cost is not usually a barrier for users. C. Lentz noted that people primarily used community transportation services for medical appointments and grocery shopping. However, survey respondents said they needed more transportation for medical appointments and grocery shopping. The data suggested that transportation services aren't always available when they're needed or don't reach users' required destinations. C. Lentz stated that the region has good coverage for transportation services, but providers are restricted to serving a narrow range of clients. This makes it difficult to provide more comprehensive transportation service, and many people face challenges with personal transportation for critical errands.

C. Lentz mentioned progress made by ACT and highlighted the TripLink ride scheduling system that is being implemented to coordinate transportation providers. C. Lentz stated that local welfare offices noted extensive unmet needs when it comes to transportation for employment. He mentioned that communication barriers exist between transportation providers and state agencies (including NHDOT and Dept. of Health and Human Services).

C. Lentz presented recommendations identified in the Coordinated Plan, including: improving the coverage and diversity of services; finalizing services agreements and drug and alcohol testing protocol; expanding participation in TripLink; identifying cost sharing opportunities; and identifying opportunities to market existing services. He described long-term actions in the plan, including: sustainability and availability for federal and local funding sources; encouraging use of alternative transportation modes; expanding options for local match; and advocating for more support from the state level.

M. Laferte related his personal experience with helping people who lack access to transportation and described how difficult it is to maintain quality of life without transportation, especially in small towns. C. Lentz thanked Mr. Laferte for sharing his story and remarked on the importance of using such stories to communicate the importance of public transportation.

J. Law asked for clarification on how transportation providers acquire matching funds and whether a municipally owned vehicle could be used as a form of match when they are not being used for town business. He suggested that a local vehicle could be added to the TripLink system to schedule rides within a municipality. C. Lentz said he would have to ask COAST and ACT staff whether local vehicles could be donated as match.

M. Hoffman suggested that branding and marketing of public transportation services should be a primary concern. He asked about efforts to make the bus socially acceptable and easier for people to use, noting unfortunate stigma around public transportation. He used UNH and larger metropolitan areas as examples of communities making it easier to ride the bus to daily destinations than driving car. C. Lentz concurred that marketing and image are issues for successful public transportation. He recalled ongoing marketing efforts by COAST, including their "We're on the Route" campaign which improves visibility for fixed routes and provides benefits for local businesses who participate. He also described COAST's efforts to generate revenue through advertising on buses and bus stops. M. Williams explained that fixed routes are usually planned around one of two goals: providing service where high ridership is expected or providing service where there is high need. He said some runs serve dense urban areas with high concentrations of riders [such as Route 2 Rochester, Dover, and Portsmouth], and some serve areas with lower total ridership but with high need [such as Farmington].

J. Law suggested the possibility of scheduling specific bus routes to provide service for grocery shopping, and asked if there were examples of partnering with grocery stores to support services. C. Lentz said he had asked a similar question in the past and recalled that grocery stores were generally unable to afford to support such partnerships.

L. Brown noted that there is predictable spike in grocery sales following the distribution of welfare checks. J. Hotchkiss added that he remembered when stores delivered pre-ordered groceries to people's homes.

M. Gasses asked if any local housing authorities in the region had in-house transportation to help residents of public housing (who are more often disabled or have low incomes) reach their destinations. M. Williams said housing authorities generally do not have their own transportation service, but many in the region coordinate with COAST and ACT to provide transportation to their residents.

M. Williams made a motion to recommend the draft Coordinated Public Transit & Human Services Transportation Plan to the Policy Committee for their review.

Seconded by L. Brown

Vote: All in favor

### **3.3 Ten Year Plan Project Scoring - review and recommend to the Policy Committee**

C. Lentz explained that he was in the final stages of the project solicitation process and that there were only 2 towns remaining for meetings. He directed people to a comprehensive list of projects that had been scored and ranked according to standardized criteria that had been weighted by TAC and Policy Committee members. He said he was looking for comments on the organization of projects and a recommendation to send the list to the Policy Committee for their review.

He gave an overview of several groups of projects that he will be sending to NHDOT: an overall project list; a list of possible rail projects, a list of transit projects, and a list of corridor studies.

C. Lentz described how he used the weighted criteria to rank projects. He used traffic volume data, safety data, and GIS data to evaluate each project objectively and give each a total score. He noted that the ranking resulted in a wide range of community types [e.g. that larger communities didn't appear to have an advantage over smaller ones].

C. Copeland noted that many bridge and culvert projects were ranked lower on the list. M. Gasses explained that because bridge projects generally focus on the infrastructure condition, rather than physically expanding roadway capacity, they get ranked lower because the benefits are so focused. C. Lentz concurred and said he would be contacting staff at NHDOT who specialize in bridges to discuss and promote regional projects.

M. Gasses said that studies have been done on what communities could do to prepare for and respond to major flooding events. She noted that smaller communities often don't or can't afford to save money for emergency infrastructure repair or replacement, and can't provide local match for grant programs.

C. Copeland asked if C. Lentz had been working with NHDOT staff to develop costs estimates for individual projects. C. Lentz said he had, and explained the difficulties of generating preliminary cost estimates for projects with unknown variables that will be completed in 10 years. He said he was communicating with NHDOT staff about individual projects and that they are also working on a template for developing estimates.

C. Copeland asked L. Levine if that approach sounded reasonable to Federal Highways. L. Levine answered that they had encouraged NHDOT DOT to develop tools for generating

cost estimates. C. Lentz said NHDOT definitely sees the value in such project development tools and are actively working with MPOs.

M. Gasses described local Barrington projects that had much greater costs than originally estimated once the actual construction work began.

C. Copeland asked if there been any change in federal enabling legislation that could allow other sources of funding to be used for corridor studies in addition to State Planning & Research funds. L. Levine responded that STBG has been eligible for planning and that it is challenging for FHWA to divert funds for planning that could be used for critical capitol improvements.

M. Gasses made a motion to recommend the Ten Year Plan Project ranking list to the Policy Committee.

Seconded by L. Brown

Vote: all in favor

#### **4. Project Update(s)**

##### **4.1. 2018-2019 UPWP Agreement**

C. Lentz gave an brief update on the 2018-2019 UPWP agreement and said that it is in the final stages. He mentioned he and C. Copeland recently had a productive meeting with DOT and FHWA staff. He noted that DOT is working with RPCs to develop consistent structures for UPWP agreements. C. Lentz said they're making good progress on finalizing the draft UPWP and will be sending it to DOT very soon.

##### **4.2. SHRP Workgroup**

L. Cherry gave an update on SHRP2 project. The group had recently held their tenth workgroup meeting. She stated that the work group would like one more meeting to wrap up the project in June. She mentioned that at this point in the project they are currently setting performance targets and finalizing methodologies. L. Cherry said she would be giving a presentation on the work of the SHRP2 workgroup to TAC and Policy at their May meetings. She reminded members to contact her or other members of the SHRP2 team if they had any questions.

**5. Citizen's Forum** – Citizens of the Strafford region are invited to speak on the subject matter of the meeting. Statements shall be limited to three minutes  
No citizens brought comments forward.

#### **6. Adjournment**

M. Leferte made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by M. Williams

Vote: all in favor

*The meeting was adjourned at 10:17am*

Minutes submitted by,  
Derrick Bartlett & Colin Lentz

Approved by

Print Name: Jonathan B. Hotchkiss

Signed: J. B. Hotchkiss

Date: 22 JUN 2017