

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

**Friday, August 4, 2017
9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.**

The meeting was called to order with a quorum at 9:08 a.m.

1. Introductions

Members Present: Michael Bezanson (Rochester), Seth Creighton (Rochester), Michael Hoffman (Newmarket), Martin Laferte (Farmington), Marcia Gasses (Barrington), Chris Parker (Dover), Mike Rollo (Rollinsford), Shanna Saunders (Somersworth), Michael Williams (COAST), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Glenn Davison (NHDOT), Larry Keniston (NHDOT)

Staff Present: Cynthia Copeland (Executive Director), Colin Lentz (Regional Transportation Planner), Cynthia Plascencia (Transportation Writer).

2. Staff Communications

C. Lentz stated that he and SRPC GIS Planner Rachael Mack attended a two-day National Highway Institute training (NHI) looking at the overall federal and MPO planning processes. He stated that it was good to get an overview of the entire transportation planning process and the interconnected MPO functions. He and Rachael returned with a useful perspective on the role of MPOs. C. Lentz shared that some topics discussed in detail at the training included performance based planning and project development at the MPO level.

3. Action Items

3.1 Minutes from July 7, 2017 [VOTE]

E. Strachan asked for revisions on page 3 of the meeting minutes, to the sentence "Any whole vehicle being replaced must be destroyed." It should state, "Any whole vehicle **and engine** being replaced must be destroyed." E. Strachan also asked for a revision to the last page where it discusses RFPs. She said it should state that the RFP draft for this year is available on the NH Dept. of Environmental Services website and the final RFP will be very similar to the draft.

C. Parker made a motion to approve the July 7, 2016 Minutes, pending edits
Seconded by M. Williams
Vote: All in favor

4. Discussion Items

4.1 CMAQ program update

C. Lentz gave an update on the Governor's Advisory Council on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) process, describing a recent kickoff meeting which included new information on CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program) funding. He explained that at this point, Regional Planning Commissions are not expected to be part of the scoring process for CMAQ proposal projects, and some GACIT members expressed concerns about this. He noted several other issues:

- NHDOT will be following GACIT's directives for project scoring and ranking.
- Projects have been proposed via letters of interest and the majority are infrastructure related.
- The total amount of funding requested for proposed projects is over the amount of CMAQ funding available.

C. Lentz provided printed information from the GACIT presentation on CMAQ and said he would email document to members.

He stated that Strafford MPO is in process of looking at the Strafford region's applications to assist with the scoring process, if requested. G. Davison explained that DOT drafted the criteria and the Executive Council adopted it after offering recommendations. G. Davison elaborated that while RPCs will not have a formal role in approving applications, there will be opportunities for their input. RPCs can support the development of applications to make sure each is as strong as possible. RPCs can also comment on scored applications online and submit comments to the Executive Council. DOT will post scored applications two weeks prior to submitting them to GACIT to allow for RPC input before final selection.

C. Copeland commented that in the past SRPC staff would split CMAQ scoring tasks; where some staff would read applications and provide advisory information to help strengthen them. Those staff would be separate from the scoring process to preserve impartiality. She encouraged members to send SRPC their applications prior to submitting them to NHDOT so SRPC staff could identify areas where the application could gain scoring additional points.

C. Parker asked for feedback on the number of applications a municipality can submit. C. Lentz and G. Davison stated that they were not aware of a cap on the number of applications from individual applicants. C. Copeland added that it has been many years since the last CMAQ round, so a large need has built up.

C. Copeland asked if RPCs will be helping with the air quality scoring. G. Davison replied that there are templates available for municipalities to conduct air quality analyses for their projects. While RPCs will not be scoring projects, municipalities may lean on them for help filling these analysis templates out. C. Lentz stated that Strafford MPO staff would be available to work with municipalities on air quality analyses.

4.2 Ten Year Plan Development Update

C. Lentz shared a bulleted list of primary discussion points from the TAC and Policy Committee meetings. He said he was in the process of contacting MPO partners and NHDOT about setting up a TPC meeting in the future to get transportation planning stakeholders together to discuss how to integrate performance based planning into the Ten Year Plan process, and build support for project development services. Some key issues on the list that had been discussed by the TAC and Policy members about the Ten Year Plan and project development services include:

- A standardized, predictable project selection process is critical for an effective regional project solicitation process
- RPC process needs to focus on more than just gaps in state/regional performance
- Multijurisdictional planning is important. For example, corridor plans and project development are important to show a need along a whole corridor, as opposed to one community. This helps touch on multiple performance goals that the state has to fulfill.
- Penalties for not achieving regional performance targets are still unclear. There are some effects for not reaching statewide targets, but are still in development.

C. Lentz encouraged members to email him with additional thoughts on the list, or additional items to add.

M. Laferte discussed that while selectboards know what SRPC is, local residents may not. He stated that there should be an effort to improve contact between SRPC and municipal residents. He suggested having the SRPC staff participate in more community activities and events. C. Lentz agreed and stated that he and James Burdin plan to meet with municipal boards, officials, and resident a year ahead of the next Ten Year Plan process so they can be informed about the process and so project proposals can be fully developed prior to submission to NHDOT.

4.3 Bicycle & Pedestrian project development, implementation, and management – Larry Keniston NHDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Program

Larry Keniston, NHDOT Intermodal Facilities Engineer, gave a presentation on pedestrian and bicycle access and safety, and opportunities related to pedestrian and bicycle projects. He stated that the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is the primary federal program used to build infrastructure for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. He discussed the amount of funding spent on pedestrian and bicycle projects, with less than half of one percent of NHDOT's total annual budget going towards this sector (3.5 million out of 750 million). L. Keniston stated that it is rare for the state to maintain any bicycle or pedestrian facilities, for example bike lane markings. If a municipality builds bicycle or pedestrian facilities, it is generally a municipality's responsibility to maintain them.

L. Keniston gave an overview of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program website (www.bikeped.nh.gov) which has documents and information related to NH local bicycle/pedestrian activity, maps, news and events, and traffic safety. He also mentioned the NHDOT Complete Streets Advisory Committee, previously known as the Bike and Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee.

TAC members discussed issues with bicyclists riding two abreast, including how they could interfere with the flow of traffic and increase safety issues. L. Keniston explained that if there is a winding road, bicyclists might deliberately ride two abreast to prevent a potentially passing car from colliding with oncoming traffic. He stated that there is a myth that bicyclists do not pay their fair share for maintenance of the road. L. Keniston refuted this, explaining that bicyclists still own and operate automobiles and pay registration fees. He added that bicyclists allow for more room on the road for other motorists, and leave more parking available.

L. Keniston gave examples of various barriers to pedestrian and bicycle accessibility, such as unplowed sidewalks and bike lanes that are too narrow. Several examples he presented have led to fatalities. He provided copies of a guide called *Your Guide to Promoting Walking and Bicycling Accommodations in NH*. The guide gives citizens and businesses tools to identify what kind of facilities are applicable to highway improvement projects. Members discussed the challenges that arise from extending road width to accommodate for bike lanes and sidewalks, such as moving utility poles and drainage. L. Keniston presented several examples of projects that addressed pedestrian and bicycling issues given multiple engineering challenges.

5. Project Updates

C. Copeland announced that SRPC's Public Participation Plan is available for review during a 45 day public comment period from Tuesday, August 1st to Thursday, September 14th.

M. Gasses stated that current Barrington culvert project funded through FEMA grant funding is continuing, and paving will be happening soon. She said that if other municipalities are considering applying for a FEMA grant, she is available to share their experience. C. Lentz suggested putting together a summary for a future meeting, and M. Gasses replied that she would. She mentioned wanting to connect with the City of Concord to compare experiences as well.

C. Parker asked if C. Lentz had an update on the policy regarding holding TAC meetings without a quorum. C. Lentz responded that it was SRPC's policy to hold meetings even if a quorum is not present for the purpose of disseminating information, but that no official business or voting actions would be addressed in such cases.

6. Other Business

M. Laferte mentioned that the September 1, 2017 TAC meeting fell on the Friday before Labor Day weekend. C. Lentz replied that the September meeting would be moved to the following Friday (September 8th).

7. **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.

8. **Adjournment**

G. Davison moved to adjourn

Seconded by M. Hoffman

Vote: All in favor

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Colin Lentz and Cynthia Plascencia

Approved by

Name Printed: MARTIN G. LEEFERTS

Signed: 

Dated: 10-13-17

