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WAKEFIELD

**Strafford Policy Committee Meeting  
December 19, 2014  
Rochester Community Center, Conf. Rm. 1A, Rochester, NH  
Minutes**

**FINAL**

**SMPO Policy Members Present:** Brian Tapscott (Somersworth), Bill Connor (Somersworth), Tom Crosby (Madbury), Rad Nichols (COAST), Sandy Keans (Rochester), Victoria Parmele (Northwood), Kenn Ortmann (Rochester), Wayne Burton (Durham), Richard England (Durham), Glenn Davison (NH DOT), Brian Tapscott (Somersworth), Steve Pesci (UNH)

**SMPO Staff Present:** Cynthia Copeland (Executive Director), Marilyn Barton (HR Specialist/Events Coordinator), Natallia Leuchanka (Regional Planner), Thomas Brown (Planning Technician), Sarah McGraw (Planning Technician), Chris Scheiner (GIS & Technical Analyst), Liz Durfee (Regional Planner), and Colin Lentz (Regional Transportation Planner).

**1. Introductions:**

Chair B. Tapscott opened the meeting at 9:02 a.m. and introductions were given around the room.

**2. Staff Communications**

C. Copeland said the regional master plan is in review and there is a public hearing on January 7 at 2pm.

**3. Action items(s)-motioned required**

**3.1 Draft MPO Minutes of November 21, 2014**

*R. Nichols made a motion to accept the November 21, 2014 minutes, second by T. Crosby.*

*B. Connor commented his name was misspelled throughout the minutes. VOTE: Unanimous*

**3.2 2015 – 2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Project Listing-- Recommendation by TAC for Policy Committee Approval**

B. Tapscott opened up the public hearing by asking for comments. C. Scheiner gave a description of the TIP projects. He said there had been issues getting the TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) updated properly and asked for comments / questions from the group.

K. Ortmann asked if there had been any comments made to the TIP during the comment period. C. Scheiner said they had received no comments during the comment period. R.

Nichols said he was concerned with the COAST projects in the TIP. C. Copeland said SRPC had taken the COAST projects from the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). R. Nichols said Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) programs were not listed properly. R. Nichols also said American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) projects need to be deleted from the plan. S. Pesci said on page 23 of the TIP, the Durham to Rochester transit project were listed as a Federal Highways project. S. Pesci said Wildcat Transit has the grant through Federal Transit. C. Copeland asked for the two transit providers at the meeting, to submit comments/ concerns in written format as well. C. Copeland said she also was concerned with transit funds in the STIP and suggested deferring approval or consideration for approval until the January meeting.

G. Davison commented delaying approval would delay adopting the new STIP. C. Copeland said there had been major change in the process at multiple levels so the details needed to be right.

R. Nichols asked if the Committee could move forward with leaving room for technical edits.

Glenn said the NHDOT recently changed financial systems. The STIP update came in between updating data systems with information coming from different areas.

R. Nichols commented his preference to move forward with approval with consideration for technical edits.

C. Copeland commented on page 16, table 3 of the TIP, labeled financial constraints. The table shows that at no point in time is the Strafford Region outside financial constraint.

Ken Ortmann asked if aviation should be included in the project listing.

C. Copeland commented that previous TIPS showed every programed project and every source of federal funds. K. Ortmann noted he did not see Skyhaven Airport in the project listing.

G. Davison said if projects were not regionally significant they were not included. S. Pesci said he thought any USDOT funding was included in the TIP.

S. Pesci said smaller projects that are currently included are not regionally significant.

S. Pesci added if a member of the public were to pick up the TIP, they should know all sources of federal highway funding. S. Pesci was concerned that the public is not getting a complete picture of federal transportation funding.

C. Copeland said she understood the position of the DOT experiencing staff turnover as SRPC had as well. C. Copeland said the staff was not able to construct the TIP as before.

B. Connor asked about holding off with technical edits.

S. Pesci reiterated that the TIP was supposed to be transparent to the public and wondered if this was happening to other MPOs.

C. Copeland said they looked at other MPO TIPS. C. Copeland said SRPC staff had taken great effort and thought to see how the process is done.

C. Copeland noted that when the TIP doesn't get approved, then the STIP doesn't move forward. Federal Highway and Federal Transit then cannot move forward thus there becomes a cash flow issue.

C. Copeland said SRPC is already into the new TIP year.

S. Pesci said it was important the issue gets clarified.

C. Copeland said a full discussion could be held at the next January meeting. She was concerned with the MPO holding up the state.

Glenn noted all the other MPOs have passed their TIPS.

C. Copeland said SRPC had to totally start over with TIP process.

G. Davison said he suspected other MPOS figured out FTA funding using their own sources.

K. Ortmann noted there seemed to be a gray area between what the difference was between technical changes or substantive changes. He said in terms of the public hearing if the Committee votes, to acknowledge the discussion of the current TIP issues. K. Ortmann said the staff changes have resulted in additional challenges, so taking a broader definition of technical edits may be an option now then what would be under normal circumstances.

G. Davison said he does not have a sense of what is allowed to be approved. He noted bad data had been pulled and has to be fixed.

K. Ortmann noted the TIP document should be front and center on the web page and it was important to make sure information gets out.

C. Copeland agreed they have to be extremely transparent.

S. Pesci inquired if regionally significant projects get listed, then the NHDOT should articulate that in writing.

G. Davison said he has to look at what the law says. He said they are trying to meet requirements with the amount staff and time allowed. G. Davison continued that next time the new system will track all the projects in one data source. He said the current issues with the TIP were a unique situation.

C. Copeland agreed the situation got compounded. C. Copeland said at multiple meetings she expressed to NHDOT their interest in working together to create a process for protocol and standards for the preparation of the STIP and TIPs. C. Copeland continued SRPC was willing to go with new system and serve on a committee creating standards and protocols.

G. Davison said the TIP passed around for review for months and was surprised these issues came up so late.

B.Connor asked if by doing extra work now than they would be ahead of curve for the next round.

G. Davison agreed that by learning the process it would be a benefit for the next time.

R. Nichols commented that there is no criticism of any one entity but he was not able to see the document at the previous TAC meeting. C. Copeland said it had been in the office since December 19, 2014.

*K. Ortmann made a motion to close the public hearing, second by B. Connor. VOTE: Unanimous*

C. Copeland asked R. Nichols about ARRA funds in the TIP.

R. Nichols said page 20 and 21 projects labeled ARRA. He had asked for any reference to ARRA be deleted.

*R. Nichols made a motion to approve the TIP as presented with subsequent technical edits with the understanding NH DOT will review and clarify all required federal and nonfederal highway funding sources are correctly included in the TIP.*

Nichols commented there are federally funded projects not contained in the TIP.

C. Copeland said that MAP 21 changed the process and there was a major shift how TIP appears.

*Steve Pesci made a second to the motion. VOTE: Unanimous*

S. Pesci said at a future TAC meeting to report on what happened.

C. Copeland asked to make a motion on the financial section of the metro plan.

*S. Pesci made a motion to similarly approve the 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan chapters thirteen and fourteen, with the same technical corrections and review as the above motion, second by V. Parmele. **VOTE: Unanimous***

#### **4. Discussion Items**

##### **4.1 Annual listing of obligated projects.**

C. Lentz said the obligated projects will be the next phase after finishing up the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and TIP. C. Scheiner added SRPC had received the project listing from NHDOT due by December 30, 2014. C. Copeland added they had received the list just in the past week.

S. Pesci asked if the list include non –federally funded projects.

G. Davison replied the obligated projects are listed by funding source.

##### **4.2 Regional Master Plan –Overview; Transportation Trends & Executive Summary**

L. Durfee gave an overview of the draft regional master plan: *Local Solutions for the Strafford Region*. L. Durfee said the public hearing on the draft version is on January 7, 2015 at 2 PM at the Rochester Community Center in conference room 1A. A final draft will be presented at the January 29, 2015 Commissioner’s meeting. L. Durfee said the comment period for the plan ends on January 11, 2015. N. Leuchanka presented on the transportation sections of the regional master plan. She described the executive summary and regional trends.

K. Ortmann asked about the consumption of gasoline. He said trends the described trends could be caused by more fuel efficient vehicles vs vehicle miles traveled (VMTs). N. Leuchanka said they had talked about VMTs and other projects from Office of Energy and Planning.

B. Connor asked if there were charts about abandoned rail lines. N. Leuchanka said they do not have that at the movement. S. Pesci said to look at Rails to Trails organization.

S. Pesci asked about the Wildcat Transit system involved in the data. S. Pesci suggested showing Wildcat Transit along with COAST bus to get a regional snapshot of public transit.

K. Ortmann pointed out they need to specify fixed route service vs other types of services. L. Durfee said they did not get that data from COAST but from the statewide data collection information but will go back and find out where the numbers came from.

C.Scheiner noted the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) opened a public comment period on a new proposed rule for ozone standards so SRPC will find out if they are in or out of attainment.

K. Ortmann said some transportation information in the plan is statewide and regional. N. Leuchanka said some information they were not able to get on a regional level. K. Ortmann suggested emphasizing statewide vs regional information.

S. Pesci commented on use of base year data and said he has up to date information He added it was better to give natural gas figure in gallon equivalents instead of BTUs.

K. Ortmann commented on the East West express and includes data on that route.

There was also discussion on the use of warm mixed asphalt which reduces emissions.

## **5. Project Updates:**

### **5.1 Performance Measures Updates**

N. Leuchanka said there was a meeting on Monday December 15 where members of NH MPOs discussed performance measures and creating a rough action plan.

W. Burton said it would be good to use the regional plan in public testimony. He said it would be nice to take parts of the plan to Concord.

K. Ortmann asked where the plan could be printed out. L. Durfee said it could be printed out and it is also available at all the public libraries in the region.

K. Ortmann commented on the importance on the use of the plan rather than leaving it on the “shelf.”

R. England thought that the UNH section of Local Solutions should be expanded. He said UNH employees live throughout the region and the UNH system is exporter of education services. R. England also commented that UNH is recruiting regionally as well as internationally.

S. Pesci noted where it says on the plan that 20% walk bike take transit to work was important to consider. S. Pesci also commented on the use of the word public transit. He explained Coast versus Amtrak versus C&J is public versus private. He suggested differentiating on the use of public transit.

C. Copeland said she found an example where a city used “passenger service.”

S. Pesci said it was important for legislators to understand how “transit” rich the region is.

W. Burton discussed the cost of going to UNH and how he is working to making it more affordable by offering degrees through community college system.

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**6. Other Business**

S. Pesci gave an update on transit in Rochester. He said Wildcat Transit is doing a full analysis of all the transit routes. He said the Rochester route is entering into its second year. The Rochester route started out with 7 runs but trimmed to 5 runs. He added ridership is reported at 60 passengers a day round trip and 35-40 % of riders being students.

S. Pesci also reported that UNH is taking a delivery of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) infrastructure. S. Pesci left a flyer on UNH wildcat transit updates.

W. Burton noted with construction of student apartments there will be impact on transportation.

S. Pesci said with the increase in student housing on campus there will be less wildcat transit and more campus connector use.

K. Ortmann said thank you to staff for work on the master plan. He suggested making it more attractive easier to pull out useful information from. *K. Ortmann made a motion to adjourn, second by T. Crosby. VOTE: Unanimous*

**7. Citizen's Forum:** There were no members of the public to make public comment.

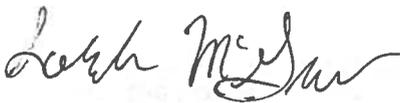
**8. Adjournment:**

*K. Ortmann made a motion to adjourn, second by T. Crosby. VOTE: Unanimous*

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am.

Minutes submitted by,

Sarah McGraw  
Recording Secretary



Brian Tapscott  
SMPO Chair

