

BARRINGTON  
BROOKFIELD  
DOVER  
DURHAM  
FARMINGTON  
LEE  
MADBURY  
MIDDLETON  
MILTON



NEW DURHAM  
NEWMARKET  
NORTHWOOD  
NOTTINGHAM  
ROCHESTER  
ROLLINSFORD  
SOMERSWORTH  
STRAFFORD  
WAKEFIELD

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

**Friday August 5<sup>th</sup> 2016  
9:00 AM-11:00 AM**

**MINUTES**

*The meeting was called to order with a quorum at 9:02am*

**1. Introductions**

**Members Present:** Michael Bezanson (Rochester), Michael Bobinsky (Somersworth), Larry Brown (Milton), Wallace Dunham (Madbury), Diane Hardy (Newmarket), Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), Martin Laferte (Farmington), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Carol Macuch (NHDOT), Tony McManus (Dover), Peter Nelson (Newmarket), Stephen Pesci (UNH), Chris Parker (Dover), Victoria Parmele (Northwood), Michael Rollo (Rollinsford), Dianne Smith (Brookfield), John Storer (Rochester), Tim White (NHDES), Gretchen Young (Dover)

**Staff Present:** Lynn Cherry (Regional Planning and Communications Assistant), Rachel Dewey (Data Analyst), Colin Lentz (Regional Transportation Planner),

**2. Staff Communications**

No staff communications were brought forward.

**3. Action Item(s)**

**3.1. Minutes from June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016**

M. Bobinsky made a motion to approve the July 8<sup>th</sup> 2016 Minutes as written

Seconded by D. Smith

Vote: All in favor

**3.2. Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Recommendation to Policy Committee**

C. Lentz gave a presentation and preliminary overview of progress on the upcoming 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He said NHDOT had originally planned to distribute required information in time for review and approval of the draft TIP in September, but that timeline was going to be pushed back. C. Lentz said NHDOT would be providing full project

funding information at the September Interagency meeting, with anticipated approval prior to December 31<sup>st</sup>.

S. Pesci asked if the funding information presented was the most recent. C. Lentz said it was the most recent, but that he would be receiving updated information in September. S. Pesci said it would be helpful to include a report on the total project costs to-date for the Newington-Dover/Little Bay Bridges project and give an update on its progress. C. Lentz said he would include information about the project in the TIP and at future meetings.

M. Bobinsky asked about a slide in the presentation that showed the 10% portion of New Hampshire's federal transportation funding allocation that is theoretically reserved for projects in the Strafford region. The slide was based on incomplete funding information, but showed that the amount programmed for regional projects was lower than the theoretical federal funding levels reserved for the region. He asked if it implied that the region was not fully utilizing its allocation. C. Lentz responded that there is regional capacity for developing and proposing projects for inclusion in the Ten Year Plan and TIP (and that he will be working to assist municipalities in this effort during project solicitation). He stressed that the 10% allocation is theoretical.

L. Levine said the theoretical allocation (10% for the Strafford region) is more accurately a revenue estimate that MPOs and DOTs use to financially constrain regional and statewide plans.

S. Pesci said it was important to show the different funding sources for the Newington-Dover project – that it has used turnpike funds and federal funds and is a high-investment project that is critical for the region. C. Lentz agreed and said he would include more detailed information on the project in the TIP. He said the project has primarily used state turnpike funds.

### **3.3. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Application Scoring Committee**

C. Lentz gave an overview of the upcoming Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding round. He said Dover, Somersworth, and UNH/Durham have sent letters of interest to NHDOT and they will shortly be submitting full applications to NHDOT, which are due by September 2<sup>nd</sup>; NHDOT will review the applications and send them to respective RPCs for review and regional scoring, which will be conducted by the TAC and approved by the Policy committee. The regional scores will inform the NHDOT scoring process and final decision by the NHDOT commissioner. C. Lentz said for the previous TAP round two members of the TAC volunteered to be on a sub-committee to score regional TAP applications.

D. Smith asked how the state will be evaluating applications. C. Lentz said the state TAP Technical Advisory Committee would be meeting to discuss scoring criteria that would be used in a computer-based scoring model. D. Smith asked if the number of applications exceeded the amount of available funding. C. Lentz said NHDOT received 56 letters of interest and that the process would be highly competitive.

M. Bobinsky asked if there were a conflict of interest for a community to serve on the scoring sub-committee if they applied for funding. C. Lentz said it would be a conflict of interest. He added that the criteria and template for regional scoring is in-place from the last round, and that he was open to more discussion about the scoring approach.

S. Pesci said he didn't think it was necessarily a conflict of interest if the whole TAC participated in the scoring process. He said this approach was used for previous funding opportunities like CMAQ, and it was a great way to encourage participation from TAC members. G. Young said it would be good to know what approaches other RPCs are using for project scoring. The TAC members expressed overall support for a group scoring approach and C. Lentz said he would develop a process for it.

C. Lentz gave a general description of the three projects.

- Somersworth's project proposed improvements to pedestrian infrastructure connecting the middle school and high school to the intersection of High St and Memorial Drive, as well as a trail through a city-owned park connecting the high and middle schools to the elementary school.  
Dover's project proposed an extension of the community trail that would parallel the Bellamy River and connect two existing segments of trail.
- UNH/Durhams proposal focused on sidewalks and pedestrian safety on the south side of Main St. from the North Dr. roundabout to the intersection of Sage Way (just before the railroad overpass).

#### 4. Discussion Item(s)

##### 4.1. National Proposed Rulemaking - Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform

C. Lentz provided updated information about the National Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on MPO coordination about planning area reform submitted by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. He reviewed the changes proposed in the NPRM and showed a map of the NH Seacoast area to illustrate the extent of urbanized areas, and how those areas could affect the borders and relationships between the three MPOs in the region (SRPC, Rockingham Planning Commission, and the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission). C. Lentz asked for comments on a draft letter addressing concerns by SRPC staff, committee members, and regional partners, which would be submitted to the NPRM comment docket. He said all comments to the docket are due by August 26<sup>th</sup>.

D. Hardy noted that Newmarket is currently part of the Portsmouth-Kittery urbanized area, but has always been a part of SRPC and its MPO planning process [per agreement between RPC, SRPC, and the Governor]. She asked if the NPRM could potentially shift Newmarket to RPC. C. Lentz responded that SRPC and RPC are not considering changing their existing boundaries, and that both organizations have drafted language in letters to the NPRM expressing how disruptive the rulemaking would be.

L. Brown observed some typographical errors in the NPRM language and asked if the Portsmouth-Kittery urbanized area was likely to absorb the urbanized area of Dover-Rochester-

Somersworth and Berwick, ME. He also asked why there isn't one single MPO for the Seacoast region. C. Lentz responded that the NPRM does not propose a single merged MPO for the whole ME/NH Seacoast, but specified each MPO needs to encompass a single urbanized area. He said there used to be a single Seacoast MPO, but as populated urban centers grew, it made sense to create two separate MPOs - one for the Portsmouth urbanized area, and one for Dover-Rochester. This was in part because each urbanized area exceeded a population of 50,000.

S. Pesci suggested that the NPRM presented an opportunity for the two MPOs to look back at the past decade and assess whether they are doing better, more effective planning compared to when there was one Seacoast MPO.

D. Smith said she thought the NPRM was more appropriate for very large MPOs such as Boston, but not appropriate for smaller MPOs like Strafford or Rockingham. She said there should be language in the letter submitted by SRPC addressing the issue of scale. C. Lentz said there was language in the draft letter directly addressing concerns with scale.

C. Lentz noted that the changes in the NPRM would likely go into effect in 2018, just as the U.S. Census would be starting work on the 2020 census. This could potentially redraw and expand the extent of urbanized areas in the region.

M. Bobinsky described the difficult changes that the Portland, ME MPO went through when it expanded from an MPO to a TMA [once population exceeded 200,000]. He said it increased competition among member municipalities for funding and reduced the amount of focus the TMA could provide to individual communities. M. Bobinsky asked what the next steps were for finalizing the response letter. C. Lentz said he would appreciate any comments from committee members over the next week and would be finalizing the letter in preparation for approval by the Policy committee.

M. Bobinsky asked if residents of the Maine communities included in the Dover-Rochester urbanized area would join the SRPC committees if the NPRM went into effect as it is currently written. C. Lentz said that was only likely if the MPOs merged. He said the exact level of coordination between neighbor MPOs was not clearly defined in the NPRM. He said the NPRM does specify that MPOs which opt not to merge will be required to develop a joint Metro Plan, TIP, and set of performance measures.

V. Parmele said she liked the draft letter and suggested that it could expand existing language addressing how the NPRM could affect participation by non-urbanized or peripheral communities. C. Lentz said he would expand that language.

C. Lentz thanked the committee for their input and said he would continue working on the draft response letter so that it reflected the comments and concerns of the TAC and Policy committees.

5. Project Update(s)

5.1. SHRP2 workgroup meeting

L. Cherry gave the committee an update on the SHRP2 project. She said the primary workgroup partners met in Concord to review potential performance measures, learn more about the Plan Works implementation framework from FHWA, and prepare for the next phases when the workgroup will select specific performance measures and targets. She said the MPOs would be meeting in August to discuss criteria for selecting performance measures, and said copies of the Phase 1 synthesis report were available for TAC members.

6. Other Business

S. Pesci explained that UNH and Durham had recently submitted a joint application for funding through the TIGER program, but their project was not selected. He added that unfortunately no NH projects were selected for this round.

D. Hardy announced that the Newmarket downtown pedestrian safety project is underway. She said the project had been going more slowly than anticipated, but the Town was working out details with NHDOT and the maintenance district. They expected the project to be moving forward within a week. She said the project has taken seven years to complete, but she expects it to be completed before UNH students arrive in September.

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*

8. Adjournment

M. Laferte made a motion to adjourn,

Seconded by M. Bobinsky

Vote: all in favor.

*The meeting was adjourned at 10:12am*

Minutes submitted by,  
Colin Lentz, Recording Secretary

Approved by

Print Name: MARTIN G. LAFERTE

Signed: 

Date: 10-22-10

