

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

**Friday, May 4, 2018
9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.**

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

1. Introductions

Members Present: Linda Dusenbury (NHDOT), Marcia Gasses (Barrington), Michael Hoffman (Newmarket), John Hotchkiss (Middleton), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Martin Laferte (Farmington), Diane Smith (Brookfield), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Michael Williams (COAST), Gretchen Young (Dover)

Staff Present: James Burdin, (Regional Economic Development Planner), Rachel Dewey (Data Analyst), Colin Lentz (Regional Transportation Planner), Stefanie Casella (Data Collection and Analysis Assistant), Rachael Mack (GIS Planner)

2. Staff Communications

C. Lentz announced that Jennifer Czysz had accepted an offer from the SRPC Executive Committee to become the new Executive Director. He said Jennifer had met with staff to answer their questions and everyone was excited for her to start the Tuesday after the Memorial Day Holiday.

3. Action Item(s)

3.1 - Minutes from April 6th [VOTE]

M. Gasses made a motion to approve the April 6th meeting minutes as written

Seconded by M. Hoffman

Vote: Unanimous in favor

3.2 - Discussion and Vote on recommendation to Policy Committee - regional highway miles for new designation of statewide Critical Urban and Rural Freight Corridors

C. Lentz presented information about the upcoming designation of freight corridors in urban and rural areas of New Hampshire. He noted that the FAST Act (the current federal transportation law) enables the state to designate 75 miles of highways in urbanized areas and 150 miles of highways in rural areas as new freight corridors. C. Lentz explained that NHDOT had requested input from the RPCs about priority routes in urban and rural areas for designation. He provided information about eligibility requirements and a map of eligible routes in the region.

C. Lentz pointed out several industrial sites in the region that were adjacent to urban and rural routes – including Ossipee Aggregates along the New Hampshire North Coast rail line, and the UPS distribution center in Dover.

C. Lentz noted that the state's apportionment of funding through the National Highway Freight Program was \$4.9 million for 2018. R. Dewey noted that the designation of a route wouldn't only be used to

expand the highway to accommodate more freight traffic. She explained that designation made a route eligible for additional freight funding that could support a range of improvements to primary freight routes – including routes where smaller communities are dealing with conflicts with existing freight traffic.

C. Lentz said he was asking for an initial recommendation from the TAC members for candidate corridors to be promoted to NHDOT for the designation process.

D. Smith asked for clarification on the purpose of the TAC providing a recommendation if the Governor and agency officials will be making the final decision on new designation and the funding levels are so low relative to overall transportation funding in the state. C. Lentz explained that NHDOT is in the process of developing a state freight plan as required by law; part of that process is designating the additional urban and rural corridors. He said NHDOT had asked the RPCs directly to provide input and recommendations. In the future, federal freight program funds could support targeted freight projects on the designated routes.

Members discussed various routes and potential conflicts with freight traffic. They discussed NH routes 202 and 125, where NH202 is significantly restricted by its winding and narrow design. M. Gasses said she was concerned about a possible designation of NH125 that could lead to increased heavy truck traffic on NH125 through Barrington. Members discussed US4 and NH16 as primary freight routes in the region.

L. Levine asked if NHDOT had asked the RPCs to rank or prioritize their recommendations for new routes.

C. Lentz said NHDOT had not explicitly asked the RPCs to rank their route recommendations.

M. Williams made a motion to recommend NH16 and US4 to the Policy Committee for primary consideration, to discourage designation of NH125 and NH202, and to further technical analysis by SRPC staff.

D. Smith seconded the motion.

Vote: unanimous in favor

4. Discussion Items

4.1 - Approach to developing projects for the next Ten Year Plan

C. Lentz explained that in one year, the TAC and Policy Committees would be submitting candidate projects for the next Statewide Ten Year Transportation Plan. C. Lentz noted several issues that need to be considered when developing candidate projects:

- The proposed projects should *not* already fit within existing NHDOT programs (such as Highway Safety Improvement, Bridge or pavement programs, Transportation Alternatives, or CMAQ)
- The projects will likely be scored using a set of criteria agreed upon by the RPCs, NHDOT, FHWA, and NHDES. However, regional and state performance measures will be playing a larger role in the future.
- Projects will be added to years nine and ten of the draft plan so the transportation needs ten years from now should be considered. Additionally, project cost estimates need to be inflated out ten years.

- New priority projects need to be constrained closely to the region’s theoretical funding allocation for new projects. In the past ten year plan round the region was constrained to \$2.5 million for each of the two new years of the draft plan.

C. Lentz proposed forming a sub-committee of TAC and Policy committee members representing small and large municipalities, and transit providers to develop a list of projects that could be developed with regular review and input from both committees. He reviewed the committee members who participated on an ad-hoc version of the proposed sub-committee for the previous Ten Year Plan round and noted the committee members who had volunteered for the proposed sub-committee:

Chris Parker – Dover

Michael Bobinsky – Somersworth

Peter Norse – Rochester

Marcia Gasses – Barrington

Peter Nelson – Newmarket

Michael Williams - COAST

Fred Kaen – Lee

C. Lentz said he planned on meeting with all communities in the region to discuss projects, but he hoped the sub-committee could develop a list of projects that TAC and Policy committee members agree really represents the region’s needs. C. Lentz added that the process could include development of a set of planning and policy priorities that he could communicate to state and agency decision-makers during the Ten Year Plan development process.

4.2 - New Hampshire Draft Beneficiary Mitigation Plan for Volkswagen funding

C. Lentz provided an overview of the draft mitigation plan for funding provided to the state through the Volkswagen (VW) settlement. He said the plan for distributing settlement funds was being developed by the NH Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI). C. Lentz explained that OSI would be administering the distribution of approximately \$31 million primarily targeted at replacing older diesel vehicles. He noted that OSI was requesting public comments on the draft plan by June 5th. He reviewed the eligible vehicle replacement types and described the overall funding categories in the draft plan:

- Vehicles
 - Class 8 Local Freight Trucks and Port Drayage Trucks
 - Class 4-8 School Buses, Shuttle Buses or Transit Buses
 - Class 4-7 Local Freight Trucks (Medium Trucks)
 - Airport Ground Support Equipment
 - Light Duty Zero Emission Vehicle Supply Equipment
 - Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) Option
- 50% of the funds will be dedicated to replacing state and municipally owned diesel vehicles and equipment
- 15% will be used for acquisition, installation, operation, and maintenance of electric vehicle supply equipment (e.g. electric vehicle charging stations)
- 20% will be made available to all public and private entities through a competitive solicitation
- No more than 15% may be spent on administrative costs

C. Lentz said the exact role the RPCs would play in the process was not clear at this point in the development of the Settlement Plan.

D. Smith asked for clarification about the timeframe for spending funding.

E. Strachan explained that the state would be able to access 1/3 of the total allocation in each of the first three years of the process. She added that New Hampshire has 7 years to spend down 80% of its apportionment. If a state hasn't reached that goal by the 7th year, remaining funds could be taken back and reallocated to states that have spent 80% or more.

M. Gasses asked if town-owned dump trucks and ambulances were eligible. E. Strachan replied that they were. She added that municipal vehicles that are under contract between the municipality and a third party were eligible (e.g. school buses). E. Strachan explained that New Hampshire also receives funding through the EPA's Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) program to replace older diesel vehicles and engines. She said the state's DERA apportionment for 2019 would be \$280,000 and if they match DERA funds with VW funds the state could receive 50% more DERA funds (approximately \$140,000). DERA funds could be used to replace a wider range of municipal vehicles (e.g. front-end loaders, backhoes, etc.). E. Strachan said she could provide a more detailed presentation to the TAC when the DERA funding becomes available.

5. Project Update(s)

5.1 - General Sullivan Bridge (Newington-Dover project)

C. Lentz explained that he had attended a meeting with NHDOT staff to review proposed alternatives for rehabilitating or replacing the General Sullivan Bridge. He said NHDOT and the project consultant were committed to maintaining and improving the dedicated bicycle and pedestrian link across the Little Bay. C. Lentz reviewed some of the possible alternatives for the project. He said the foundation piers for both the Little Bay Bridge and the General Sullivan Bridge were perfectly aligned. This made it possible to have a diverse range of engineering possibilities because beams could be extended from the existing Little Bay Bridge and connected to the foundations of the General Sullivan to create a stable bike/ped bridge separate from the traffic on the Little Bay Bridge.

M. Hoffman noted that the connection across Little Bay is critical not just for recreation, but for bike commuters. C. Lentz agreed and said he had spoken with NHDOT about ensuring that the selected alternative for the bridge separate users from the roar of the traffic as much as possible to accommodate bike/ped users of all comfort levels.

5.2 - 2019-2022 STIP process

C. Lentz explained that once the draft Ten Year Plan was approved by the legislature and signed by the Governor, NHDOT would identify the projects that would comprise the next Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The draft STIP would then be reviewed by the RPCs. C. Lentz said NHDOT had originally planned to get the new STIP approved by October 2018 or March of 2019, depending on when the Ten Year Plan was finalized and how quickly NHDOT could process the draft STIP. He explained that the ideal process had recently been put on hold for the foreseeable future [The October goal was likely impossible] because of a court case in California concerning requirements for conforming to federal air quality standards.

C. Lentz said he was still learning about the details of the case, but it may require the MPOs to conduct air quality analysis of the projects in any amendment or full update to the STIP before it can be approved. This is a challenge since Strafford MPO has not had to use their computer model for air quality analysis for several years since the state attained the federal air quality standards. C. Lentz said the MPOs and state agencies were in the process of discussing the potential outcomes of the court case and what would be needed to get regional and statewide air quality computer models back in shape in order to conduct analysis for the purpose of the court case.

C. Lentz noted that the case would not impact the current STIP as a whole because it was approved by FHWA prior to the court case. It could impact amendment #4 because it was still being processed and hadn't been approved at the federal level when the court case came to light. He said it was unlikely that any projects in the Strafford region would be impacted by the court case because none of the projects had negative air quality impacts. C. Lentz said he would be meeting with all RPCs and state agencies to discuss the potential impacts, and he would send out information to TAC and Policy.

6. Other Business

7. Citizen's Forum

No citizens brought comments forward.

8. Adjournment

M. Williams made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by J. Hotchkiss

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04am

Minutes prepared by Stefanie Casella and Colin Lentz

Approved by

Name Printed: Michael Williams

Signed: Michael Williams

Date: ~~7/2~~ 7/6/18