

BARRINGTON
BROOKFIELD
DOVER
DURHAM
FARMINGTON
LEE
MADBURY
MIDDLETON
MILTON



NEW DURHAM
NEWMARKET
NORTHWOOD
NOTTINGHAM
ROCHESTER
ROLLINSFORD
SOMERSWORTH
STRAFFORD
WAKEFIELD

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee Meeting

Friday, June 19, 2015 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Strafford Regional Planning Commission
150 Wakefield Street, Conference Room 1A
Rochester, NH

FINAL MINUTES

1. Introductions

Members Present: Leigh Levine (FHWA), Paul Lockwood (DES), Kenn Ortmann (Rochester), Bill Connor (Somersworth), Marcia Gasses (Dover), Bob Jaffin (Rochester), Dirk Timmons (UNH), Steve Pesci (UNH), Suzanne Huard (Rollinsford), Sandra Keans (Rochester), Judy Nelson (Rollinsford), Brian Tapscott (Somersworth), Victoria Parmele (Northwood), Bill Watson (NHDOT)

Staff Present: Tom Brown (Planning Technician), Colin Lentz (Transportation Planner), Chris Scheiner (GIS & Technical Analyst), Liz Durfee (Regional Planner), Sarah McGraw (Planning Technician), Cynthia Copeland (Executive Director), Natasha Leuchanka (Regional Planner)

2. Staff Communications: None

3. Action Item(s)

3.1. Draft MPO Minutes- May 15, 2015

*K. Ortmann moved to approve the minutes from May 15, 2015, second by B. Connor.
VOTE: Unanimous*

3.2. Review of Park and Ride Toolkit [Motion to approve]

L. Durfee and S. McGraw gave a brief presentation on the contents of the Park and Ride Toolkit. At the end of the overview, Policy Members were asked to provide input and ask questions related to the toolkit.

B. Connor asked when a lawyer should enter into the process and take liabilities into account. L. Durfee pointed to tool 16, Legal Considerations, Land Acquisition, and Construction.

S. Keans commented about the environmental considerations for the park and ride lots. L. Durfee said there is site design section but mentioned this is an area that could use improvement.

B. Conner asked about safety in the parking lots for users at night, for those who may be alone, and for rural areas. D. Timmons commented on parking lots in remote lots on the UNH campus. He said UNH encourages people to stay in their cars at night and flash their lights at incoming buses. D. Timmons said that buses could possibly wait until people enter their cars before driving away. B. Watson commented there are security cameras in some park and rides but not so much in the rural areas. He said he could ask NHDOT about security considerations.

S. Pesci said that the remote UNH lots have safety phones but most students use their cell phones. D. Timmons added that UNH staff walk through the parking lots annually to look for lighting and safety improvements. He mentioned that vehicles in downtown areas are more prone to break-ins than the remote lots on campus.

L. Durfee asked additional discussion questions for the Committee:

What are the biggest challenges communities face when planning and implementing park and rides?

P. Lockwood commented that the toolkit is an impressive document and covers a lot of ground. He asked when someone uses the tool, if they had already decided to build the park and ride. He suggested something at the beginning of the document that makes an argument for why to build a park and ride.

L. Durfee responded that the toolkit is a resource and guide to be used to investigate the feasibility of constructing a park and ride and the user does not have to be dedicated to constructing a park and ride lot.

Real or Perceived Barriers

K. Ortmann asked how the discussion begins. He noted that the way to address barriers to park and rides is to make sure the information is available for those who are thinking about building a park and ride.

L. Durfee said that a fact sheet could be created to briefly explain the toolkit and resources available.

P. Lockwood commented on tool 24, gathering location information. He suggested asking users how long their trips would have been if they had not used the park and ride.

B. Conner asked if safety could be considered for the park and rides.

K. Ortmann commented that the toolkit could be used as a model for other kinds of facilities, groups or services. V. Parmele suggested using the same toolkit in identifying rest areas.

B. Watson said that the NHDOT is waiting for the toolkit to be finished. He said that the comments have to be addressed with the two other planning commissions that participated in the toolkit development. B. Watson said that the NHDOT could not finance more time to work on the toolkit.

K. Ortmann asked if the Policy Committee would be endorsing the toolkit. C. Copeland said they were looking for comments from TAC and Policy to move the toolkit forward as an endorsement.

K. Ortmann made a motion to approve the Park and Ride Toolkit with comments provided in a report, second by S. Pesci.

S. Pesci added that some comments made at the meeting are standard and do not necessarily need to be incorporated into the toolkit. B. Jaffin agreed with K. Ortmann and V. Parmele that the information could be used when building a rail station.

B. Tapscott asked for a vote on the motion and the motion was carried unanimously.

4. Discussion Item(s)

4.1 Final Report 2014/ FHWA/FTA Strafford MPO Planning Review

L. Levine gave a presentation on the 2014 MPO Planning Review. He presented the results and recommendations for the Strafford MPO. No corrective actions were required for Strafford MPO. L. Levine explained that FHWA is waiting on the final rule making from MAP-21, and additional actions will be required for every MPO through FHWA & FTA initiatives.

B. Connor asked about Planning and Environmental Linkages related to the required statements in project databases necessary to acquire funding. L. Levine said the requirements are related to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process - that is, impacts on environmental resources for any project receiving federal funding.

B. Watson said the role of NHDOT is to work with FHWA, and the NHDOT needs to think more about planning studies. He said the process may work best for larger projects than for local projects. Prior to a project being selected for funding, planning efforts inform how the process will move forward and address future problems that may arise.

V. Parmele asked about a household diary survey mentioned in the review. L. Levine said that the information is used for travel demand forecasting capacity.

B. Jaffin asked about any work with the NH Department of Homeland Security and FEMA to tie transportation to environmental linkages. L. Levine said the model used to streamline the planning process could be used for other planning efforts.

K. Ortmann asked how the Strafford MPO's review compared with other MPOs whether there are ways that Strafford MPO could do better. L. Levine said that Strafford MPO has taken a leadership role in certain projects, such as the Performance Measure initiative.

4.1.Presentation- UNH Route Productivity Analysis

S. Pesci and Dirk Timmons from UNH Wildcat Transit presented the route productivity analysis. The productivity analysis is a review of the Wildcat Transit system including the Campus Connector. The study is intended to be a benchmark with annual updates. The study looked at factors such as ridership, cost, and changes in housing.

5. Project Update(s)

5.1.TAC Sub-committee on economic benefits of transportation investment

C. Lentz said that sub-committee is working on one page informational sheets on the benefits of investment in transportation infrastructure. The sub-committee will hold a

face-to-face meeting in July. C. Lentz highlighted Somersworth's downtown improvements and business tax incentives. S. Pesci said the group has a list of other projects to highlight.

5.2. Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Outreach

C. Lentz said staff are working on an update to the Strafford Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Performance measures will be the backbone of the plan. Making the plan useful and accessible are two of the goals for updating the plan.

5.3. Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)/ Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Process

C. Scheiner reported that SMPO's transportation project database for managing the TIP is complete. B. Watson said the integration of the old NHDOT project system to the new STIP management system has been a challenge. He added the amendment process will get better with every cycle. B. Watson said that despite the challenges, all of the data are now in one place, staff are making sure the financial constraint reports are correct, and staff are reporting out on information to the inter-agency group. The goal is to ensure that anyone can read and comprehend the project information. NHDOT is allowing for shorter public comment periods on the amendments. B. Watson said the goal is to have a turnaround period in late July for amendment #1.

C. Scheiner asked how SRPC can get the amendment through the approval process. B. Watson explained that the federal fiscal year ends in September, so amendment processing needs to be completed in August by NHDOT staff.

C. Copeland said that the TAC will be meeting on July 10, 2015 to recommend TIP amendment #1 and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) among the MPOs in the State on the issue of urbanized areas and cooperation. The Policy Committee would approve both items at the July 17, 2015 meeting. S. Pesci said UNH will have a new amendment involving fleet replacement funds. C. Lentz said that the TIP amendment is almost complete, and the MOU is going through final edits with the MPOs and transit providers.

5.4. Performance Based Planning

N. Leuchanka reported that performance measures are in the stakeholder and content assessment process. N. Leuchanka said she is reaching the end of the interview stage and is entering the analysis phase. The interviews were transcribed by N. Leuchanka and a company, Transcribe Me. The transcriptions need to be prepared to enter into the NVivo software. N. Leuchanka explained how the software will help interpret the major themes of the interviews.

5.5. Scenic Byways

S. McGraw and N. Luechanka have secured appointment letters from all communities but Madbury (Mills Scenic Byway) and Wakefield (Branch River). Sarah also attended the most recent NHDOT State Scenic and Cultural Byways meeting. Work continues on both Corridor Management Plans with greater emphasis on finishing the Branch River

Strategic Marketing Plan by the fall of this year. The next Mills Scenic Byway is June 24, 2015 at the Rollinsford Public Library in the Lower Mills of the Mills at Salmon Falls at 5:30. The next Branch River Valley Trail Meeting is July 15th at 5:30 at the Union Rail Road Station.

5.6. Data Collection

T. Brown reported that data collection season is currently in full swing. The list of NHDOT requested traffic counts for this year includes count locations in ten municipalities including; Dover, Durham, Farmington, Lee, Milton, Northwood, Rochester, Rollinsford, Somersworth, and Wakefield. The DOT counts for Lee and Rollinsford are complete with Milton, Farmington, and Wakefield being wrapped up by the end of the month (weather permitting).

Several staff members recently attended a pedestrian infrastructure assessment training held by the UNH Technology Transfer Center. Staff members learned how to assess the condition and accessibility of sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps using the methodology set forth in the SADES Data Collection Specifications Guide. The training also included instruction on how to use the Apple Ipad in the collection of data for each feature. SRPC plans on working with the Technology Transfer Center (T²) to assess the condition of state sidewalks throughout the region.

6. Other Business

No business brought forward.

7. **Citizen's Forum:** No citizens present.

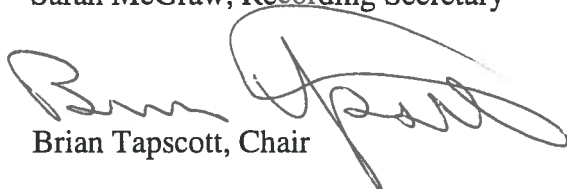
8. Adjournment

K. Ortmann motioned to adjourn, second by B. Jaffin VOTE: Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 am.

Minutes submitted by,


Sarah McGraw, Recording Secretary


Brian Tapscott, Chair

