

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

FINAL Minutes

**Friday February 17th 2017
9:00 AM-11:00 AM**

1. Introductions

Members Present: Victoria Parmele (Northwood), Bill Connor (Somersworth), Tom Crosby (Madbury), Michael Williams (COAST), Sandra Keans (Rochester), Robert Jaffin (Rochester), Peter Nelson (Newmarket), Carol Machuch (NHDOT), Fred Kaen (Lee), Michael Williams (COAST), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), Elena Piekut (Dover), Steve Pesci (UNH), and Mike Avery (Madbury)

Staff Present: Cynthia Copeland (Executive Director), Lynn Cherry (Regional Planning and Communications Assistant), Rachael Mack (GIS Planner), Colin Lentz (Regional Transportation Planner), Alexa Gozdoff (Transportation Planning Assistant), and James Burdin (Regional Economic Development Planner)

Guests:

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

2. Staff Communications

3. Action Items

3.1. Minutes from January 20th 2017

T. Crosby made a motion to approve the January 20th 2017 Meeting Minutes

Seconded by P. Nelson

Vote: Unanimous in favor

**3.2. Review and approval of repeal letter for Chair signature and submittal- MPO
Coordination and Planning Area Reform Final Rule**

C. Lentz explained that a final rule was recently proposed by Federal Highway Administration which mandates the combination or specific coordination of MPOs that share urbanized areas. He said the underlying goal of this rule is to improve MPO coordination, but that the overwhelming response from MPOs, federal and state legislators, and other transportation stakeholders across the country was that the proposed rule would only add burdensome new requirements. For instance, under the rule Strafford MPO would have to merge with the Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation System (KACTS) MPO in Southern Maine, or develop a single Metro Plan, a single TIP, and a unified set of performance measures for the whole urbanized area. C. Lentz noted the concerns shared by the other MPOs in the state regarding

developing projects that provide improvements in multiple planning sectors would also likely make projects more competitive for funding.

C. Lentz explained that he and J. Burdin wanted to begin a discussion with Policy members about improving the project development process, and identifying the regional development goals that link communities within the region.

P. Nelson referred to a passenger rail stop project on the existing Amtrak Downeaster line that was discussed at the recent Newmarket meeting as an example of this type of project. He said that this project would have regional implications and that he wants to see the process move forward. T. Crosby asked where the station would be located. P. Nelson responded that it would be located on a parcel on Cedar St near the town hall. S. Pesci asked if this project is feasible considering a similar project in Plaistow that had dissolved. He also urged the Commission to avoid compartmentalizing projects. C. Lentz responded that there are fewer projects of regional significance on the list of long-range projects but that staff heard greater support for regional corridor studies at recent project solicitation meetings. S. Pesci suggested that C. Lentz create a regional project list to present to TAC and Policy for discussion. C. Lentz responded that he was in the process of assembling such a list for the April TAC and Policy meetings. J. Burdin noted that it is important for communities to be talking with each other to develop projects that share resources and avoid missing opportunities for funding and implementation. V. Parmele followed up by saying that communities do not always think of new projects in regards to economic development but that it is crucial for that connection to be made during the solicitation meetings. R. Jaffin said that communities are often deterred from participating in regional projects and that they should be engaged about promoting regional interests by Commission staff. S. Pesci encouraged Commission staff to continue discussion with Commissioners, municipalities, and NHDOT on regional projects. He suggested that SRPC staff should take the lead in continuing discussion and project development throughout the region. C. Lentz agreed and gave the Dover-Somersworth-Rochester project as an example of a regional project that has been developed collaboratively between SRPC, the three cities, and NHDOT since the beginning. C. Copeland stated that she appreciated the discussion and that she wanted to emphasize that the transportation planner and economic development planner were working together to solicit projects within communities. She noted that it was the first time such an approach had been taken, and that it immediately broadens the conversation at the local level to go beyond project development solely for the Ten Year Plan. C. Lentz affirmed this concept with an example of their meeting in Brookfield, where discrete transportation projects are a lower priority than expanding access to high-speed internet. R. Jaffin added that complete streets is an example of combining transportation and economic development.

C. Copeland stated that it is important to look for connections at all levels (especially in the federally mandated "core functions" for MPOs) in order to create more value within the planning process and for communities. R. Jaffin noted that the federal government is trying to move toward this way of thinking (through the MPO Coordination and Planning Area Reform Final Rule). C. Lentz added that working with municipalities and the neighboring MPO in Maine on regional projects is a goal for the future regardless of the decision on the Rulemaking.

on the SHRP2 process. L. Cherry added that SHRP2 received a project extension through September. This was requested because the project experienced a 9-month funding delay startup and unexpected staff turnover.

5.3. Ten Year Plan Project Solicitation

C. Lentz reiterated that he is currently soliciting projects and that he will have the list ready to send to NHDOT in April with the input of the TAC and Policy Committees.

6. Other Business

B. Connor asked for staff members to elaborate on material he had received regarding a Plan NH workshop. C. Copeland explained that Plan NH is a non-profit that has been working to help communities update their housing ordinances. She said that they are holding a workshop in Wolfeboro the following week.

S. Pesci said UNH Wildcat Transit had been awarded funds under the FTA5339 program that will be used to replace bus maintenance lifts, review the feasibility of a new bus washing and maintenance facility, and install new shelters. He also mentioned that there will be an update to the UNH/Durham traffic model. This will expand the model to include peak travel periods in the morning and evening. C. Copeland asked if they used RSG. S. Pesci confirmed that they did. C. Copeland asked if they had completed a Household Travel Survey. S. Pesci responded that they had not done a local one, but that the regional survey was used to create the original Durham model. The updated model will be based on land use and parking data.

C. Lentz explained that Senate Bill -134, will be going to the full senate on February 23rd. He explained that the bill was introduced by David Watters and would enable NHDOT to install all-electronic tolling along the Spaulding Turnpike in Rochester, Dover and other locations. S. Pesci asked why other mainline highways were not included in the language. C. Copeland responded that she thought "all-electronic tolling" meant that there would be no booths for cash. C. Macuch responded that it could be an issue of right-of-way availability; she said she was not sure and would get back to the committee with an answer. P. Nelson asked if there have been economic analyses of what is the best option for the Dover Toll facility. C. Macuch said that NHDOT has begun a study to address this issue. C. Lentz said he would be working to track bills as they moved through the legislative process in order to inform committee members.

P. Nelson asked if NHDOT could provide a status update on the NH 108 project. C. Macuch said that she would send information to P. Nelson.

E. Strachan announced that NHDES still had DERA funding available for the replacement of old diesel engines. The application is on the website and she is available to answer questions over email. V. Parmele asked if that included the Volkswagen settlement money. E. Strachan answered that the funding sources were separate. She said that the VW money is not available yet because a national Trustee had not been selected. V. Parmele asked if this money could be

used for hybrid car charging stations. E. Strachan responded yes and that the DERA funding is more for replacing old diesel engines.

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

M. Williams moved to adjourn

Seconded by J. Hotchkiss

Vote: All in favor

The meeting was adjourned at 10:09 am.

Minutes submitted by,
Colin Lentz & Alexa Gozdoff

Approved by
Name Printed: Victoria Parnelle

Signed Victoria Parnelle

Date: 3/17/17