

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

**Friday April 1, 2016  
9:00 AM-11:00 AM**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**1. Introductions**

**Members Present:** Larry Brown (Milton), Seth Creighton (Rochester), Beverly Cray (UNH Wildcat), Wallace Dunham (Madbury), Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), Martin Laferte (Farmington), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Carol Macuch (NHDOT), Dianne Smith (Brookfield)

**Guests Present:** Michael Bobinsky (Somersworth)

**Staff Present:** Cynthia Copeland (Executive Director), Rachel Dewey (Data Analyst), Colin Lentz (Regional Transportation Planner), Natasha Leuchanka (Regional Planner), Chris Scheiner (GIS & Technical Analyst)

**2. Staff Communications**

C. Scheiner announced that he will be leaving SRPC at the end of April. He explained that interviews with applicants for two temporary planning positions, as well as replacements for the GIS planner position, have been going well and staff hope to make a decision soon.

C. Copeland thanked Chris for his excellent work at SRPC, expressed her regret at his leaving, and wished him great success in the future.

**3. Action Item(s)**

**3.1. Election of Vice Chair**

J. Hotchkiss explained that elections held in October of 2015 resulted in his election as TAC chair and David Sharples from the City of Somersworth as vice chair. As Mr. Sharples recently left his position with Somersworth, the position of vice chair was vacant. M. Laferte stated his interest in filling the vice chair position as an appointee until the next election. There was general agreement that M. Laferte be appointed to fill the rest of the term as vice chair.

W. Dunham moved to appoint Mr. Laferte as Vice Chair

B. Cray seconded the nomination

Vote – Unanimous in favor

**3.2. Minutes from March 4<sup>th</sup>**

J. Hotchkiss pointed out an incomplete sentence in the minutes. C. Lentz noted the error and said he would correct it immediately following the meeting.

L. Brown moved to accept the minutes with the understanding the error identified would be corrected. The motion was seconded by W. Dunham  
Vote – Unanimous in favor

### **3.3. Recommend TIP Amendment #3 to Policy Committee**

C. Lentz gave a presentation reviewing the proposed changes to projects in Amendment 3 to the 2015-2018 TIP.

D. Smith asked for clarification on the funding changes to the Statewide Pavement Marking program. The proposed change reduced state funds and replaced them with federal funds. D. Smith wondered what funds were being used for match if no state funds were being spent. C. Macuch explained that NHDOT opted to use turnpike toll credits as match for the Pavement Marking Program, which made the program 100% federally funded. She added that the Federal Highway Administration permits states to substitute previous toll-financed investment for state matching funds based on their efforts to improve the state turnpike system. These credits can be used to supplement state funds on other statewide transportation improvement programs.

D. Smith asked multiple questions regarding the Recreation Trails Program [which receives federal, state, and local matching funds, and is administered by the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development]. She was curious why state funds appeared in only one year of the program when multiple funding sources contributed to projects. She asked for clarification about changes to the Recreational Trails Program under the FAST Act. C. Macuch responded that she wasn't aware of any changes but would look up details and contact D. Smith with a full answer. D. Smith requested a more detailed conversation with NHDOT and SRPC staff to occur after the meeting.

L. Brown asked whether the Roadway and Weather Information System (RWIS) could gather information from or track individual drivers. C. Lentz responded that the system does not track individual drivers or vehicles; it is an information system that provides live traffic and weather information to travelers.

J. Hotchkiss asked D. Smith if she was comfortable recommending the TIP amendment to the Policy committee given her questions about the Recreation Trails Program, and what the timeline for approving the amendment was. C. Lentz said if the TAC recommended the amendment, they would ensure that D. Smith's questions were answered prior to the Policy Committee meeting. C. Copeland suggested that SRPC could invite the director of the Recreation Trails Program [Chris Gamache] to give a presentation about the program at the TAC meeting in May.

D. Smith made a motion to recommend the amendment with the understanding that she had outstanding questions about the Recreational Trails Program.

M. Laferte seconded the motion.

J. Hotchkiss requested that a summary of questions and answers regarding the Recreational Trails Program be made available to TAC and Policy members.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

#### **4. Discussion Item(s)**

##### **4.1. Summer Bicycle Counting Equipment & Location**

T. Brown gave a synopsis of a meeting he recently attended with staff from other regional planning commissions to plan for bicycle and pedestrian counting throughout the nine planning regions. He explained that one goal of the meeting was to reserve dates to use bike/ped counting equipment loaned to the planning commissions. T. Brown said he used SRPC's recent analysis of regional bicycle activity data from STRAVA to request the first two weeks in August, which accounted for peak cycling activity in 2014. T. Brown explained that in 2015 SRPC set a bicycle counter and pedestrian counter at separate locations Durham. He described the two pieces of equipment and said SRPC is looking for recommendations from the TAC members about locations to set the bicycle and pedestrian counters in the 2016 data collection season.

M. Laferte thanked T. Brown for the information and asked whether it was a little early to be planning for August. He suggested that SRPC staff re-communicate this information with municipalities later in the summer. T. Brown said he would be reaching out to TAC members and municipal staff again as the data collection season proceeded, but he wanted to let TAC members know as soon as possible so they would have time to identify and recommend locations to set the bicycle and pedestrian counting equipment.

C. Copeland explained that it may seem early to be deciding issues for the summer, but SRPC will likely have its summer work tasks planned and set by the end of April or May. S. Creighton added that it would be good for municipalities to have time to do their homework in identifying candidate locations for the counters.

T. Brown also explained that the New Hampshire Bicycle and Pedestrian Technical Advisory Committee has proposed organizing a "statewide bicycle and pedestrian snapshot" event for May 24<sup>th</sup>. The proposed event would require volunteers from communities throughout the state to record bicycle and pedestrian activity at specific locations for a short window of time on May 24<sup>th</sup>. One goal of the effort would be to identify bicycling and pedestrian "hot spots" of activity.

##### **4.2. NHDOT – Non-Metropolitan Public Consultation Process**

C. Macuch explained that NHDOT has posted a draft of their formal public consultation process for a public comment period that began on March 21<sup>st</sup> and will close on May 20<sup>th</sup>. She said NHDOT is updating the process they use to engage rural communities which are not in one of the four MPO regions of the state. They invite feedback on the full public consultation process NHDOT uses to engage the public, municipalities, and other stakeholders during the statewide transportation planning process (including TAC and Policy Committee meetings, GACIT hearings, and interagency consultation between NHDOT, FHWA, NHDES, and MPOs and RPCs). C. Copeland requested that

NHDOT be aware of the several important and concurrent worktasks that MPOs will be processing throughout the summer, and be open to reviewing the scheduling of major tasks with the MPOs (such as TIP updates, data collection, Ten Year Plan, Transportation Alternatives Program, CMAQ, etc.). She also noted that Strafford MPO represents two public transit providers (COAST and UNH Wildcat) who depend on CMAQ funds and participation in the statewide planning process.

M. Bobinsky echoed C. Copeland's request from the municipal perspective; where staff have to manage local construction and planning, as well as statewide programs. He also suggested that all transportation stakeholders, municipalities, and funding recipients would benefit from an annual review of statewide programs.

C. Scheiner agreed that an annual learning session for statewide programs would be beneficial. He also noted that SRPC includes an acronym dictionary in TIP-related documents.

C. Macuch thanked M. Bobinsky and C. Copeland for their input and said she would bring their concerns back to NHDOT supervisors and staff working on the draft public consultation process document.

D. Smith suggested that the public consultation process document could be reduced to a single paragraph: that NHDOT relies on the RPCs to educate municipalities and other funding recipients about the process and opportunities. She asked for clarification about the true goal of the document out for public comment: whether it is for the overall public engagement process, or primarily for non-metropolitan municipalities of the state.

C. Macuch replied that the document is geared for non-metropolitan municipalities, but its primary goal is to formally establish the process NHDOT will use for public engagement in statewide transportation planning.

D. Smith asked for clarification that the TAC has no formal responsibility to recommend or approve the draft public consultation document. C. Macuch confirmed that it was presented for informational purpose and to solicit comments from TAC members and municipal staff.

## **5. Project Update(s)**

### **5.1. SRSMS Forecasting**

T. Brown gave an overview of ongoing work on the Statewide Roadway Surface Management System. He explained that data about the condition of locally-owned roads in the town of Rollinsford were collected in the Fall of 2015. The next phase of the project will be to pilot a forecasting software program that will provide recommendations for roadway management (including paving schedules, techniques, and costs) to municipalities based on data collected. T. Brown emphasized that this process will be done in direct collaboration with communities to ensure that data, analysis, and recommendations will be responsive to local needs.

D. Smith asked if SRPC has access to the SRSMS software. T. Brown said SRPC will have direct access to the software, which will be managed by the UNH Technology Transfer Center. C. Lentz explained that the SADES program, which includes the SRSMS, is part of an integrated information system that is shared among RPCs and NHDOT.

M. Bobinsky said the program sounds like a great tool for balancing municipal budgets, and that it is a good example of science supporting local decisions.

J. Hotchkiss noted that local politics will be a significant barrier to implementing the program. C. Lentz suggested that the process will include presentations and education about the long-term process of road maintenance.

## **5.2. GIS Data Organization**

Chris Scheiner gave an overview of recent efforts by SRPC staff to reorganize in-house Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data sources that are used for routine mapping and analysis for planning. He explained that in general, the data were previously organized by data source; this made it difficult for staff to locate specific data. The new structure organizes data by type (e.g. if a staff member needed to add data about streams and rivers, they only need to go to a folder labeled "water data" and select the appropriate data layers).

## **6. Other Business**

B. Cray explained that UNH will be meeting with the Town of Durham over the next couple of weeks to develop a proposal for a TIGER grant. The grant proposal will include a bundle of projects including bus fleet replacement, the South Drive project behind the Cowell Stadium, and other intersection safety improvements throughout UNH campus and Durham.

J. Hotchkiss mentioned that he had noticed low-flying helicopters near powerlines in the region. He said that he learned Eversource has been using them to check their power lines in response to recent events in Massachusetts when people planted homemade explosive devices to destroy power infrastructure.

## **7. Citizen's Forum –**

No citizens were present to make comments.

## **8. Adjournment**

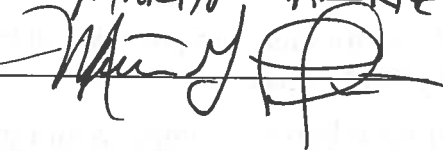
M. Laferte made a motion to adjourn, seconded by L. Brown

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Minutes submitted by,  
Colin Lentz, Recording Secretary

Approved by

Name Printed MARTIN LAFENTE

Signed 

Date: 5-6-16