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

**Friday February 5th 2016
9:00 AM-11:00 AM**

Meeting Notes

1. Introductions

Members Present: Larry Brown (Milton), Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), Christopher Parker (Dover), John Storer (Rochester), Rad Nichols (COAST), Gretchen Young (Dover)

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

Guests: Tim Blagden (Bike Walk Alliance of NH)

2. Staff Communications:

N. Leuchanka mentioned that Tom Brown (SRPC Data Management Specialist) was at a TransCad training in Massachusetts (TransCad is a program for modeling potential future traffic patterns).

3. Action Item (s)

3.1 Minutes from January 8th, 2016

A quorum was not present at the meeting, so approval of meeting minutes was postponed until the following TAC meeting.

4. Discussion Item(s)

4.1. State-level bicycle and pedestrian planning, advocacy, and policy development (Tim Blagden, NH Bike Walk Alliance)

T. Blagden gave a presentation about the benefits of improving safety and accessibility for bicycles, pedestrians, and other non-motorized modes of transportation. He also described the work of the New Hampshire Bike Walk Alliance to promote state-level policy changes that

improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and to encourage healthier, active forms of transportation.

R. Nichols asked what the Bike Walk Alliance thought about the applicability of Strava data given that most users of the program (see agenda item 5.1) were using it for recreation and personal training.

T. Blagden responded that Strava was the only software developer or bicycle data source that was open to sharing their data. He also pointed out that the software program gives users the option of telling the program whether their commuting or riding for recreation, and that the software developers can usually tell the difference between a commuting or recreational ride based on the general starting and finishing location.

C. Copeland said that SRPC is working on a press release promoting applications like Strava for bicycle activity data collection. The more SRPC can show the level of bicycle activity in the region, the more we all can advocate for support for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

L. Brown asked about traffic light technology for pedestrian safety. T. Blagden responded that new technologies enable traffic and pedestrian signals to sense people in order to give them more time to make it through intersections safely.

5. Project Update(s)

5.1. Applying Strava bicycle data to regional planning

R. Dewey gave a presentation about her analysis of bicycle data recently purchased by NHDOT from the activity mapping software company Strava. Individuals with a smart phone or other device can download a free app to record their bicycle or walking trips and track their own activity or that of other public users. R. Dewey has been conducting in-depth analysis of bicycling activity data and comparing it to safety conditions along popular bicycling routes.

L. Brown asked whether there is any push to require lights and registration for bicycles.

T. Blagden responded that there isn't any effort at the state level to push for more specific bicycle-related requirements. He explained that cyclists are already required to use lights when riding at night (white light in front, red light in back), but there is no push for bicycle registration laws.

R. Nichols asked about the availability of bicycle incident data (more than just crash incidents), and suggested they would be needed for effective level of stress modeling on bike-friendly routes. T. Blagden responded that bicycle crash data are available from NHDOT (SRPC staff confirmed that they have received these data from NHDOT). T. Blagden added that it is important to include bicycle activity data (like Strava) in analysis of crash data to get a full picture of safety. R. Dewey added that incident reporting can make effective analysis difficult because vehicle/bicycle incidents are reported inconsistently. She described a recent fatal incident in Durham where a cyclist hit the open door of a parked car and the incident was reported as a crash, not a bicycle incident.

5.2. Performance Measures update

N. Leuchanka presented the recently published Performance Measures Synthesis Report. The document describes the results of a year-long research effort involving interviews with transportation stakeholders across the state. The research constitutes phase 1 of an interagency effort to develop a performance-based framework for statewide transportation planning.

5.3. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

C. Lentz reminded meeting attendees to look at a handout for basic information about the CMAQ program. C. Copeland summarized the major points of discussion at a meeting of the CMAQ advisory committee she recently attended at NHDOT. Because New Hampshire's air quality is overall good (and has been improving steadily since federal air quality laws were established) the state is waiting for guidance as to geographic eligibility of CMAQ funds in NH for transportation projects that will reduce emissions. C. Copeland explained that the CMAQ advisory committee will be meeting multiple times in the coming fiscal year to discuss funding priorities and review project proposals. She noted that one of the difficulties is that the Ten Year Plan is now fiscally constrained and it is not possible to carry unspent funds into new fiscal years. C. Copeland confirmed that there will be a CMAQ round in the near future – she was unable to confirm when the round would open, but encouraged committee members to be ready to promote the transportation needs of the region and to discuss possible projects with the NHDOT Bureau of Rail and Transit.

6. Other Business

C. Lentz gave the committee a report on two items at the request of a committee member. He explained that the Governor's draft of the Ten year Plan included 4 million dollars for engineering and environmental work on the capital corridor rail project which was not included in the GACIT draft of the Ten Year Plan.

R. Nichols mentioned that COAST recently received 3 mini buses for their para-transit service and 2 more for a demand response transit provider in Rockingham County (part of the ACT network). He also mentioned that COAST has gone out to bid for consultants to help the organization through a strategic planning effort. R. Nichols also mentioned that a hearing for House Bill 1156 has been set for February 16th at 10:00am. The proposed bill would allow traffic signal prioritization for public transit (traffic signals could sense oncoming transit vehicles and remain green until they pass through). He mentioned that this bill is extremely important for COAST because it would help drivers stay on schedule. R. Nichols explained COAST's new business marketing program called "We're on the route". Over 50 businesses have signed up to be part of the new program that will link local businesses, customers, and transit routes.

C. Lentz mentioned a set of bills before the state legislature: HB460 and HB1602. C. Lentz explained that HB460 formed a committee to study alternative approaches to generating revenues for transportation improvements and suggested a fee system based on gas mileage (higher MPGs = higher fees). That bill has been postponed for the current legislative cycle, but HB1602, which proposes an additional fee only for electric vehicles, is still in committee. The general issue facing New Hampshire and the rest of the country is that federal funds for transportation are derived from taxes on fuel. As cars become for fuel-efficient and people look for ways to drive less, less revenue is generated for the Highway Trust Fund. The challenge is to develop a revenue generation model that is equitable and fully supports needed transportation planning and improvements.

C. Parker reminded everyone that Dave Sharples recently accepted a position in Exeter, NH. C. Copeland noted the leadership roles that Dave Sharples had carried out for the TAC, and that everyone wished him great success while acknowledging that he will be missed.

7. Citizen's Forum

No citizens were present at the meeting.

8. Adjournment

L. Brown suggested that the meeting be adjourned; as there was no quorum, official adjournment could not be put to a vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35am

Submitted by,

Colin Lentz, Recording Secretary