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

**Friday March 4, 2016
9:00 AM-11:00 AM**

MINUTES

1. Introductions

Members Present: Michael Bezanson (Rochester), Michael Bobinsky (Somersworth), Larry Brown (Milton), Brian Deguzis (COSAT), Wallace Dunham (Madbury), Marcia Gasses (Barrington), Dianne Hardy (Newmarket), Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), Martin Laferte (Farmington), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Dianne Smith (Brookfield)

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

2. Staff Communications:

No staff communications were brought forward

3. Action Item (s)

3.1 Minutes from January 8th, 2015

As the February meeting did not reach a quorum (due to inclement weather), that meeting's proceedings were recorded as notes and did not require approval.

M. Laferty moved to accept the minutes from January 8th, 2016, second by W. Dunham

Vote: Unanimous with one abstention from Brookfield representative.

4. Discussion Item(s)

4.1. FAST Act updates: Leigh Levine – Planning and Development Supervisor, FHWA New Hampshire Division

L. Levine gave a presentation covering recent updates to the federal funding authorization (Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act – "FAST") for transportation that will support the next five years (2016 to 2020). His focus was on the federal highway program, but he covered proposed funding apportioned to various programs in the Federal Highway Administration and a wide range of issues covered in the act. Specifically, L. Levine discussed funding apportionments for the *National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)*, the *Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)*, the *Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)*,

the *Railway Crossing's Program*, the *Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)*, *Metropolitan Planning*, and the *National Highway Freight Program*. He highlighted the expanded freight program in the FAST act, with increased funding for state freight networks. He noted that states are required to have statewide freight plans in place in order to receive funds and that NHDOT is currently developing a freight plan.

D. Smith asked about the difference between the overall funding authorizations and statewide appropriations (e.g. FY 2016 comes with a 6 percent increase in funding (over current levels) which is an authorization. Leigh explained that authorizations are estimates that are useful for planning purposes.

M. Gasses asked about funds for bridge resurfacing: whether federal funds in the FAST act would be available for local bridge improvement projects. L. Levine responded that prior to the FAST act, any bridges on the federal highway system would be eligible. Now any bridge on a federal or state highway that is categorized as a "principal arterial" (usually high-speed, high-capacity) in the Federal Functional Classification system is eligible.

L. Brown asked if port improvements in Portland, ME had any implications for rail and port improvements in New Hampshire. L. Levine said he was unsure of interstate implications but that New Hampshire is working on improving access to its port, and that could improve capacity for "short-sea shipping between ports in the Northeast.

M. Bobinsky asked if individual freight providers are eligible for funds to improve local and regional freight access and safety. L. Levine said it's too early to tell how exactly funds will be distributed, but that it was reasonable to assume that federal funds will flow through the state departments of transportation that will select projects for funding.

D. Smith asked for clarification on the FASTLANE program. L. Levine explained that FASTLANE is a competitive grant program for discretionary funds, and focuses on freight and shipping projects of regional or national significance.

C. Lentz asked about a provision in the FAST act that allowed representatives from ports and airports to join Metropolitan Planning Organization boards and committees. L. Levine confirmed that the FAST act increases participation from ports and airports in the MPO process.

N. Leuchanka asked about programs to develop Clean Freight Corridors that might focus on alternative fuels for freight shipping. L. Levine said he was unsure of such details but would follow up.

M. Bobinsky asked about a stipulation in the FAST act that allowed more flexibility for municipalities to select engineering design manuals of their choice (other than state-designated manuals) for projects on state routes. He referred specifically to the Dover-Somersworth-Rochester complete streets project along NH108 and whether the municipalities would be able to propose designs from other manuals. L. Levine responded that the state still maintains final

decision authority on projects concerning state-owned routes, but the law opens the door for more flexibility and collaboration between municipalities and the state.

C. Lentz asked L. Levine to give a general overview of the processes by which municipalities can receive federal funds for local transportation projects. L. Levine explained that funds are available for certain projects through competitive processes such as CMAQ and HSIP, and for general highway improvements through the Statewide Ten Year Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.

D. Hardy asked whether Newmarket could partner with the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development to apply for a grant through the Transportation Alternatives Program to improve accessibility at Rockingham Junction. C. Lentz said he wasn't sure if the agency responsible for administering the program could partner with an applicant, but he would find out and follow up with the town.

D. Smith asked about the Draft Statewide Ten Year Plan and how transportation projects and planning might be affected by the additional funds made available in the FAST act. L. Levine explained that the Draft Ten Year Plan is currently over-programmed, but with additional federal funds, NHDOT now has programmed funding for all projects in the plan. He added that all projects have to go through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) process for fiscal constraint. This means that any additional federal funds from the FAST act being applied to existing projects, or new projects added to the STIP, would have to go through the established amendment or update procedures.

D. Smith asked about the update schedule for the TIP and STIP.

C. Lentz said that the TIP gets a full update every 2 years (the next update will be done before the end of calendar year 2016) with roughly quarterly amendments and monthly minors.

5. Project Update(s)

D. Hardy informed the committee that the town of Newmarket has a request-for-bids out for a downtown pedestrian improvement project and will be reviewing submissions soon. The project was previously advertised in 2015 but the town received no bids. D. Hardy said they have received bids and was hopeful that the project will be completed near the end of summer.

B. Deguzis explained that COAST had recently proposed discontinuing Route 20 express service from the Rochester Park N' Ride to Pease due to low ridership. The service will end in early April.

M. Laferte reminded the committee that town meeting season was beginning and encouraged everyone to participate in the important process of town government and decision-making.

C. Lentz said that staff are currently working on final edits to the 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. He explained that a 60 day public comment period is scheduled to begin on April 4th, and end with a public hearing at the June 17th Policy Committee meeting.

6. Other Business

No other business was brought before the committee.

7. Citizen's Forum

No citizens were present at the meeting.

8. Adjournment

M. Laferte moved to adjourn the meeting, second by L. Brown

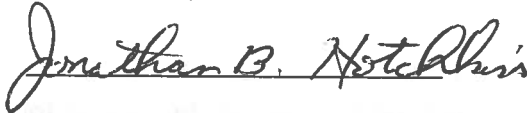
VOTE: Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20am

Minutes submitted by,

Colin Lentz, Recording Secretary

Jon Hotchkiss, Chair



Date: 1 APR 2016