

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

Meeting Minutes

**Friday, September 6th 2019
9 – 11 a.m.**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05

1. Introductions

Municipalities:

Scott Kinmond (New Durham), Michael Williams (COAST), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Michael Hoffman (Newmarket), Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Shanna Saunders (Somersworth), Christopher Parker (Dover), Dirk Timmons (UNH Wildcat)

Staff: Colin Lentz, Jennifer Czysz, Rachel Dewey

2. Staff Communications

C. Lentz explained that Gordon Lewis and Stephen Geis had completed their time as SRPC data collection interns. In addition to data collection (such as traffic counts and sidewalk assessments) they were both instrumental in several ongoing planning efforts. He added that Stephen will be continuing with SRPC on a part-time basis as he continues his undergrad program at UNH.

C. Lentz said Marcia Moreno Baez had resigned as SRPC's GIS planner to take a position at University of New England, but her replacement – Jackson Rand – would be starting in the next couple of weeks.

C. Lentz reminded members that he would be presenting at GACIT hearings in Dover and Rochester. Dover's hearing will be at the McConnell Center on Tuesday, September 10th and Rochester's will be at the Frisbee Memorial Conference Center on October 2nd. Both meetings will be starting at 6:00pm. C. Lentz said his and NHDOT's presentations would be significantly shortened to ensure the majority of time would be dedicated to public comment and discussion.

3. Action Item(s)

3.1. Minutes from August 2nd 2019

M. Hoffman moved to accept the minutes as written

M. Williams seconded the motion

Vote: unanimous in favor.

4. Discussion Items

4.1. CMAQ project scoring process tasks between now and October TAC meeting

- C. Lentz explained that five applications for CMAQ funding had been submitted from the region:
- Rochester is proposing improvements to a local intersection for traffic flow
 - UNH Wildcat is requesting funds to replace diesel buses from 2006 with new natural gas and biodiesel buses
 - NHDOT is proposing two projects: a park and ride at US4 and NH125, and several traffic signal improvements at locations throughout the state
 - Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority is proposing improvements to the track siding in Dover that would allow trains to travel faster and more efficiently

C. Lentz explained that the RPCs have two primary roles in the process for selecting projects for funding through the CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement) program. He provided a schedule of next steps for the CMAQ process and a sheet of the scoring criteria NHDOT will be using to rank projects. NHDOT will use to RPC priority criteria to assign each RPC's top project 10 points and their second ranked project 5 points.

C. Lentz explained that TAC members could adjust the weighting of each criterion if they thought some were more important than others. He would take that information and develop a scoring spreadsheet similar to the Ten Year Plan process. He said he would also compile information from each application and air quality analysis results so TAC

| Scoring Criteria | Maximum points |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Project Readiness | 15 points |
| Financial Readiness | 15 points |
| Stewardship | 25 points |
| Air Quality Benefits | 35 points |
| RPC Priority | 10 points |
| | Total = 100 |

members could review projects and preliminarily score them to be reviewed and confirmed at the October TAC meeting. Members discussed the various points values for individual criteria.

J. Czysz specified that the TAC's purpose was to discuss and define what was important for the region to make sure the "RPC priority" criterion accurately reflects the region's priorities.

C. Parker said he thought the current weights [NHDOT's point assignments] were already pretty good. Air quality benefits should be the most important criterion for projects that were meant to improve air quality, and stewardship should probably be the second most important. He suggested that project readiness and financial readiness go hand-in-hand and any project proposed should have strong financial footing and be maintainable by the applicant. If an applicant doesn't have financial support and ability to maintain the infrastructure, why are they applying? C. Lentz suggested that TAC members could choose to make the project and financial readiness categories "threshold" criteria and shift their potential points to stewardship and air quality benefits. He said he would develop an excel sheet or online survey so each TAC member could assign weights for project scoring. J. Czysz suggested several potential bullet points that could help TAC further define "regional priority":

- Is the project supported in the Strafford MPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan or another regional or local plan?
- Does the project further the regional planning priorities developed by TAC and Policy committee members? How many does it correspond with?
- Does the project improve regional network connectivity or support a regional transportation planning objective?
- How many communities will the project benefit?
- Is the project on a state route or public transit route?

C. Parker said the regional network connectivity was a critical piece – how many communities are potentially impacted (positively) by the project and does it contribute to a better regional network? M. Williams agreed adding the example that replacement transit buses would have a large regional impact, but most local plans don't specifically prioritize transit bus replacement. E. Strachan noted that any air quality improvement from a project will have regional benefits because air is not localized.

J. Czysz said she and C. Lentz would summarize the discussion and bullets for TAC review with the scoring criteria exercise.

5. Project Updates

E. Strachan explained that NHDES would be holding a new round of funding through the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) program managed by EPA. She said usually around \$250,000 in base federal funding is available, but \$700,000 is available this round because additional match is being included from NH's Volkswagen settlement funds, which generates an additional bonus from EPA. NHDES is finalizing budgets but has a tentative date of October 1st to begin accepting proposals. She will be updating the application and posting it on the website soon. E. Strachan outlined eligibility requirements and project types:

- The primary purpose is to replace older diesel engines or whole vehicles with new models
 - Can include retroactive exhaust controls and idle reduction
 - Can be stationary engines and heavy equipment
 - Generators must see at least 500 hrs of use per year to be eligible
- State and local government (including schools and contracted school bus companies), and businesses are eligible applicants
- Local match requirement depends on type of project but applications for engine replacement or exhaust control will get more DERA funding than for a full vehicle replacement

E. Strachan handed out a flyer and said Jessica Wilcox at NHDES is the primary contact for information. She noted several successful applications from the past including Waste Management replacing old diesel garbage trucks with new compressed natural gas trucks. She said as long as the program keeps getting proposals for the available funding, NH Office of Strategic Investments is interested in continuing to invest Volkswagen funding to increase matching funds.

C. Lentz noted that work had begun on the deck replacement of the Interstate 95 bridge between Maine and New Hampshire so traffic will be intermittently delayed.

C. Lentz said the statewide bike and pedestrian plan is still in the public outreach phase and he would be at the Dover farmers' market from 10:00 to 2:00 on Sunday [September 8th] with members of the consultant team and NHDOT to talk to Dover residents about the plan and get their input.

C. Lentz reminded TAC that SRPC was working on a regional project to research public transit in the seacoast – economic impact, needs assessment, and future improvements planning. He said Gordon Lewis had conducted literature review and compiled an annotated bibliography. This will be used to develop next steps for the project.

6. Other Business

J. Hotchkiss noted that a new cell tower had recently been installed in Middleton that would provide improved service for the surrounding area.

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 before the committee.

8. Adjournment

C. Parker made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by M. Hoffman

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45am

Minutes approved by

Print _____

Signed _____ Date _____