

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

Meeting Minutes

**Friday, November 1st 2019
9 – 11 a.m.**

The meeting began at 9:05am

1. Introductions

Members: Chris Parker (Dover), Dirk Timmons (UNH Wildcat), Rad Nichols (COAST), Linda Dusenbury (NHDOT), Kelley Collins (Wakefield), Michael Hoffman (Newmarket), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Bruce Woodruff (Milton)

Staff: Colin Lentz

**The Chair and Vice Chair were unavailable for the meeting so Chris Parker from Dover volunteered to lead the meeting

2. Staff Communications

3. Action Item(s)

3.1. Minutes from September 6th 2019

B. Woodruff made a motion to accept the minutes as written
Seconded by R. Nichols

3.2. Review and recommend proposed changes in Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #2 to the Policy Committee

C. Lentz gave a presentation on the proposed changes to projects as part of the second amendment to the 2019-2022 TIP:

- Dover – Rochester (project # 29440)
- Dover-Rochester-Somersworth (project # 29604)
- Lee (Project # 41322)
- Newfields – Newmarket (project # 28393)
- Newington - Dover (project # 11238-S)
- Program: Rehabilitation of Tier 2 highways
- Program: maintenance of high-investment bridges
- Statewide (Project # 41756)

M. Hoffman asked if there were going to be bicycle access and safety improvements on the Newmarket-Newfields project. C. Lentz responded that NHDOT is conscious of the need for safety improvements for bicycles on the bridge.

L. Dusenbury noted a change in the scope of the Newington-Dover project. The materials presented showed “rehabilitation” of the bridge, but the project was actually to remove the current bridge superstructure and replace it with a new alternative. C. Lentz confirmed that this was the project scope. He said he believed the project information was directly from an export from NHDOT that he incorporated into the SRPC database, but he would check to make sure the correct information was in the database.

B. Woodruff made a motion to recommend the proposed changes in TIP amendment #2 to the Policy Committee for their review. Seconded by K. Collins.

4. Discussion Items

4.1. Review draft TAC mission statement and goals

C. Lentz recapped TACs recent discussion about the role of the committee. One of the highlights of the discussion was that the committee doesn’t have a formal mission statement or any explicit goals. He reviewed a draft vision and set of goals for the committee’s that had been sent with the pre-meeting packet and asked for the committee’s feedback.

C. Parker said the mission statement was trying to pack too much into one sentence; it could be broken into two or more distinct thoughts. He said the goals seemed to cover the range of the TAC’s work and suggested that C. Lentz could adjust the mission statement send an updated draft for additional comments from the committee.

B. Woodruff asked C. Lentz to expand on the draft goals that discussed emerging challenges, and regional data and trends in the list. C. Lentz said he would do that in the next draft. He explained that his focus in developing the goals was to help the TAC become more proactive in planning for the region and municipalities, rather than being reactive to funding opportunities.

4.2. New service concept for COAST transit routes

R. Nichols presented COAST’s redesigned route system which was proposed to be implemented at the end of June 2020. He explained that because of continued changes in demand for various types of transit service in the seacoast (including rising demand for service for seniors and people with disabilities) and resulting cost increases, COAST had to take a detailed look at the future of its service. A major factor in the decision to update the route system was the impending completion of the Newington-Dover project including the Little Bay Bridges and adjacent interchanges in Newington and Dover. This project had included funding for additional transit service during the peak morning and evening travel periods to relieve traffic congestion while the bridge was under construction. The project has lasted over a decade, and during that period COAST’s operating costs have increased far beyond what was expected back at the beginning of the project. The loss of the additional funding for peak service represented a crisis that needed to be addressed.

R. Nichols described COAST’s service concept that was developed in response to input from a comprehensive public outreach process over the past year. It was focused around a central “spine” of express routes that used the Spaulding turnpike to feed local connectors. R. Nichols demonstrated how the proposed system was more efficient and responsive for riders and

reduced operating costs overall. He thanked NHDOT for their recent approval of \$3.6 million in CMAQ funds that, when paired with FTA funds and local match, will make it possible for COAST to launch the service concept and fund it through 2023. He emphasized that COAST still has to work with municipalities in the service area to secure the required local match for the next three years.

R. Nichols summarized that he was excited to implement the new service and thanked Michael Williams and other COAST staff for working so hard to develop it with input from riders and the public. R. Nichols noted that it will be critical over the next three years to continue a conversation with NHDOT, other New Hampshire transit providers, and state decision-makers to secure sustainable funding for public transit to ensure that COAST service continues through 2023 and beyond.

C. Parker commended COAST staff on the redesigned service. He said they had done an excellent job incorporating public input and addressing complicated tradeoffs.

E. Strachan pointed out that COAST had also recently introduced a smartphone app that allowed riders to see exactly where their bus was and when it would arrive at a given stop. R. Nichols said that was a recent service that provided a great tool for riders.

C. Lentz asked if R. Nichols had a sense for how the 2020 Census could affect COAST's allocation of FTA funds. R. Nichols said it didn't seem like there would be as much impact from the northward expansion of the Boston urbanized area as in previous years.

5. Project Updates

5.1. 2019 data collection season summary

S. Cassella provided a summary of the 2019 data collection season. She noted several accomplishments:

- Road Surface Management System (RSMS) assessments and pavement maintenance forecasting in Wakefield and New Durham
- SRPC expected to complete all 109 traffic counts assigned by NHDOT. This had required police details for safety at several high-traffic intersections in Dover
- Supplemental traffic counts in several communities including Rochester, Barrington, and New Durham
- Turning movement counts for a CMAQ project in Rochester
- Pedestrian counts for community events in Rochester and Dover
- A parking study in Farmington
- SRPC was almost finished with a complete assessment of Rochester's sidewalks. This effort had been started in 2017

Committee members congratulated S. Casella and SRPC staff on a busy and successful season.

6. Other Business

E. Strachan reminded the committee that NHDES had a current solicitation for applications for funding through the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA). The program was designed to help

municipalities and other agencies replace older diesel engines and whole vehicles. E. Strachan outlined the types of vehicles that were eligible and encouraged people to visit the NHDES website for additional details. She said the application deadline was November 12th.

C. Parker complimented C. Lentz on a letter he had sent regarding regional planning priorities and a specific request regarding CMAQ funding. The letter comprised comments and requests from the Strafford MPO Policy Committee and had been sent to members of the Governor's Advisory Council on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) as part of their deliberations on the draft Statewide Ten Year Transportation Plan.

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**

B. Woodruff made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by R. Nichols
The meeting was adjourned at 10:20am