

BARRINGTON
BROOKFIELD
DOVER
DURHAM
FARMINGTON
LEE
MADBURY
MIDDLETON
MILTON



NEW DURHAM
NEWMARKET
NORTHWOOD
NOTTINGHAM
ROCHESTER
ROLLINSFORD
SOMERSWORTH
STRAFFORD
WAKEFIELD

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee Meeting SRPC Office, Rochester, NH FINAL

August 5, 2011 Minutes

Present: Paul Lockwood (NHDES-ARD), Don Vachon (New Durham), Dave Sharples (Somersworth), Melodie Esterberg (Rochester), Laurel Cox (Lee), Stephen Pesci (UNH), Victoria Parmele (Northwood), Jamison Cook (NHDOT), Nick Alexander (NHDOT), Steven Ireland (NHDOT-Dist. 6), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Rad Nichols (COAST), Diane Hardy (Newmarket) and Connie Brawders (Barrington)

Members Not Present: Bruce Woodruff (Dover), James Campbell (Durham), Wallace Dunham (Madbury) and Patrick Carroll (Rollinsford)

Staff: Cynthia Copeland (Executive Director) Marc Ambrosi (Transportation Planner) Marilyn Barton (Executive Assistant), Matthew Sullivan (Broadband Technician), Nick Dowhaniuk (Summer Intern) and Zach Kahr (Summer Intern)

1. Introductions

Chairman M. Esterberg opened the meeting at 9 am and introductions were given around the room.

2. Staff Communications

M. Barton noted since the next TAC meeting falls on Friday, September 2, 2011 and due to the holiday weekend the meeting would be deferred to Friday, September 9, 2011. M. Ambrosi noted that TAC meetings would still be monthly per the direction from the MPO Policy Committee; however if there was no business to discuss, there would be times where there were no meetings.

M. Ambrosi stated SRPC Regional Planner, Kyle Pimental, wanted him to mention the NH Broadband Mapping Program is looking to create a Broadband Stakeholders Group and was looking for volunteers in becoming involved to sit in on the committee. M. Ambrosi stated the group would be between ten to fifteen representing a wide spectrum of the community and would meet four times a year. M. Ambrosi stated if anyone was interested to please contact Kyle at kpimental@strafford.org.

C. Copeland introduced Matt Sullivan, the newly hired Broadband Technician at SRPC and noted Matt was doing a great job and welcomed him

3.1 Approval of Draft Strafford MPO TAC June 3, 2011 Minutes

The chairman asked for a motion to approve the draft Strafford MPO TAC minutes from June 3, 2011. D. Sharples made a motion and J. Hotchkiss seconded that motion. All in favor, motion carried.

4.1 Transportation Reauthorization Bills & NH Ten year Plan & GACIT Process

M. Ambrosi stated since September 30, 2009 Congress has been providing federal funding for transportation through a series of short-term extensions to SAFETEA-LU. M. Ambrosi stated since SAFETEA-LU's expiration it has been Congress's charge to create a new authorization for funding transportation that meets the changing needs and realities of our country. M. Ambrosi noted this year two competing bills have been released to fund transportation going into the future. M. Ambrosi noted both bills consolidate the existing one hundred funding categories to closer to thirty categories and provide more flexibility for states to fund activities and programs within those categories and both bills also focus on expediting project delivery and improving how we measure success by creating performance measures.

M. Ambrosi stated as of July 1, 2011 the two-year \$30 dollar registration fee used to generate state revenue for NH's transportation system was allowed to expire with no alternate funding source in place. M. Ambrosi noted a majority of the NH Legislature did not support a replacement revenue source, thus reducing state revenues for transportation by roughly \$45 million dollars annually. M. Ambrosi also noted this amounts to a roughly \$25-\$30 million reduction in project funding per year for NH's TYP.

M. Ambrosi stated the loss of this state revenue source has other implications beyond reducing our TYP funding: Without the cash match (80/20) for our federal dollars, NH is forced into using Toll Credits to provide the 20% match for our federal funding. Toll Credits are generated through the investment of state revenue into federal highways. The caveat with Toll Credits is they have no value other than to allow NH to access federal dollars or in other words they cannot be spent like real money to pay for contractors or road construction. Essentially, the use of toll credits reduces the total funding for transportation in NH by 20%. Without actual state revenue to match federal funding, NH is forced to continually invest in the federal highway system with our state dollars to generate toll credits to be used as the match. Clearly, this pattern is not sustainable and could lead to neglect of our state and local roads.

M. Ambrosi noted on top of this shortfall, we are now faced with two competing transportation reauthorization bills, one of which would further impact NH's ability to fund project in the TYP. M. Ambrosi stated if Rep. Mica's bill is approved, NH's federal transportation funding would be reduced by an additional \$50 million per year.

M. Ambrosi stated as is, our Ten-Year Plan is over budget by roughly \$250 million dollars without a replacement state revenue source for the Ten-Year period. M. Ambrosi noted if Mica's bill is passed it will reduce NH's funding for the Ten-Year Plan period by another \$500 million dollars resulting in a situation where we need to cut roughly \$750 million dollars (out of \$1.5 billion) from our Ten-Year Plan.

M. Ambrosi noted this fall we are starting the GACIT hearings to determine which transportation projects will be included in the Ten-Year Plan. M. Ambrosi noted public hearings will be scheduled in communities in our region throughout the fall to review funding realities and gather public input about NH transportation

projects for the 2013-2022 Ten-Year Plan. C. Copeland noted there would be a GACIT public hearing on September 22, 2011 in Durham and another one of October 27, 2011 in Rochester.

4.2 TIGER III Grant Proposals

M. Ambrosi stated the third round of Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants are here and FHWA has authorized \$527 million dollars for transportation projects across the USA. M. Ambrosi noted of the available funding, \$140 million has been set aside for rural grants, up to \$150 million is available for TIFIA credit assistance, and the remaining funding is for grants to projects in urban areas.

M. Ambrosi noted two potential grants coming from our region:

- 1) UNH is seeking funding for their South Drive project to connect Colovos Road to the Main Street Traffic Circle.
- 2) Northcoast Rail improvements: SRPC has been investigating potential Northcoast Rail improvements to submit as a TIGER grant application. After discussing the project with Mark Sanborn of NH DOT it became clear that to provide the best chance of receiving funding while still accomplishing (or moving toward accomplishing) goals outlined in our CEDS document, we would have to change to scope of the project to encompass only rural areas. The revised scope of the work would upgrade the existing rail and reestablish the rail connection with state maintained rail lines north of the Conway Branch Line. This possible project would include North Country Council, Lakes Region Planning Commission, and Strafford MPO as well as, NH DOT and the NH Northcoast Railroad.

S. Pesci gave a presentation of the South Drive project to those in attendance. S. Pesci stated the construction would be a new half mile street segment and utility corridor connecting Main Street to McDaniel Drive on the campus of UNH. S. Pesci noted this was part of the 2004 Campus Master Plan update and was a critical infrastructure link. S. Pesci noted some of the benefits of the project include: reduce traffic congestion, improve access to the southwest quadrant of the campus, support economic development, improve efficiency and demonstrate the use of new low impact materials and techniques. S. Pesci noted UNH is actively seeking funds for this project. S. Pesci noted more information could be found at unh.edu/cmp.

4.3 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program: Amendment #3

M. Ambrosi stated the draft for TIP Amendment 3 has been sent out by NH DOT and NH DOT has requested the MPOs to provide any additional projects in our regions that should be included in this amendment. M. Ambrosi stated if there are any communities or transit agencies that have projects scheduled in the 2011-2014 TIP that need to be modified (changes in construction year, increased/decreased funding, etc.) please submit requests to: mambrosi@strafford.org.

M. Ambrosi noted there are currently no projects from our region that will be impacted by Amendment 3; however we are still required to approve "Statewide" changes for NH. The thirty day public notice period will begin Monday, August 15, 2011 and we would hold our public hearing on Friday, September 16 at the Policy Committee meeting. M. Ambrosi stated the Amendment would be discussed further at the September TAC meeting.

N. Alexander noted now that match is no longer part of the budget, there may likely be additional projects added.

There was also discussion regarding the reduced maintenance effort for state roads in the winter. S. Ireland stated due to the budgetary cuts, during the hours of 9 pm to 4 am, there will be less treatment of secondary roads in the middle of the night. S. Ireland also noted it was also dependent upon the weather and that if a severe winter storm occurred, obviously there would be more treatment of secondary roads and additional information would be out soon.

5.1 Intern Updates by Nicholas Dowhaniuk and Zachary Kahr

Summer interns, Nick Dowhaniuk and Zach Kahr gave an informative PowerPoint presentation of what they have been working on during the summer. N. Dowhaniuk noted the RPC's work with NHDOT to collect counts: 115 per year and twenty requested by communities. N. Dowhaniuk noted these traffic counts are used by SRPC for transportation projects and the Travel Demand Model. It was noted traffic counts have been completed in Dover, Barrington, Rollinsford, Madbury, Nottingham, Northwood, Middleton, Wakefield, New Durham and Farmington and need to be completed in Rochester, Milton, Brookfield, Durham and Newmarket. Z. Kahr discussed the culvert town-wide inventory they have been collecting on public roads. Z. Kahr noted this information is provided to the Public Works and Planning departments in a database format with photos, GIS shapefile and maps. It was noted the ultimate local goal is to repair and replace culverts to reduce the chance of future road wash-outs, property damage and road closures. The interns spoke about the equipment used for this work, which includes: depth rod (at least 10 ft), laser range finder, digital camera, waders and survey laser level. The interns also discussed the type of data collected and noted the following communities have been completed: Rollinsford, Somersworth, Barrington and Madbury and the future goal is to have this information for the entire region.

5.2 SPR 5304 Park and Ride Study

M. Ambrosi stated SRPC, CNHRPC, and SWRPC convened the first steering committee meeting for our Park and Ride Study. M. Ambrosi noted the meeting was held to introduce the scope of work for the project to our steering committee and to receive feedback about the scope, including comments about our approach and fine-tuning for goals. M. Ambrosi stated it was a successful first meeting and the group seemed enthusiastic about the project.

M. Ambrosi noted the goals for Phase I of the Park and Ride Study:

- 1) Identify communities who are interested in participating in a Park and Ride development Case Study. In the second year we hope to work with 3 communities to develop a park and ride using the guidance developed for our Toolkit.
- 2) Draft an outline and gather resources to develop the Park and Ride Toolkit
- 3) Determine common legal issues that act as barriers to establishing a Park and Ride (maintenance, liability, operations, funding)
- 4) Create an inventory of baseline Park and Ride data in our region

There was also discussion a park and ride location in Lee-northeast of the Lee Traffic Circle. M. Ambrosi stated SRPC thought it was good location to have the park and ride and has been in touch with NHDOT.

5.3 ITS Consultant Selection

M. Ambrosi stated SRPC has initiated a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an update to the Strafford-Rockingham Region Intelligent Transportation Systems Architecture and Strategic Plan in order to stay on track with the maintenance schedule set forth in these documents. M. Ambrosi noted the IBI Group and VHB Inc. were the only two firms to submit proposals and the proposals have since been reviewed and scored by Strafford and Rockingham MPO staff. M. Ambrosi stated we are now in the process of negotiating a contract with one firm to complete the necessary update.

M. Ambrosi stated we will be seeking TAC input throughout the update process and hope to have volunteers for stakeholder meetings/interviews as well as a Working Advisory Group (WAG) to discuss possible ITS projects throughout the region.

M. Ambrosi stated if you are interested in reviewing the current Strafford-Rockingham ITS Architecture, Plan and Final Report please follow this link <http://strafford.org/transportation/transdocsList.php>

6. Other Business

M. Ambrosi stated it was noted there are a few tasks missing in the UPWP, such as rail projects and there would be updates in the September or October TAC meetings.

S. Pesci noted on Tuesday, August 9, 2011 there would be a visit from Mark Sanborn and Patricia Quinn and they would be riding between the Exeter and Dover train stations to discuss rail stations and issues.

S. Pesci stated on September 30, 2011 UNH would be hosting a GSCC meeting in the morning and there ribbon a cutting ceremony for the new CNG station S. Pesci stated on yesterday there was a visit from FHWA and DOT at the new CNG sight. L. Levine brought up the point it would be a public station. S. Pesci noted it was a public station and could be used by other CNG vehicles and stated they were working on third party billing and to contact Dirk Timmons for more information. S. Pesci noted they were working on the use of credit cards for the future.

R. Nichols stated COAST was interested in STIP Amendment #2 to be approved because projects that affect COAST's Rts. 2, 40, 41, trolley buses and the Wildcat expansion. R. Nichols stated he spoke with Kit Morgan and the last two years of the project would be one hundred percent funded by turnpike revenues, which is a significant announcement and would be a lead time of a year for additional buses. R. Nichols noted the Federal Gas Tax Reauthorization ends on September 30, 2011.

7. Adjournment

The Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 a.m. J. Hotchkiss made a motion and D. Hardy seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Barton, PHR

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Recording Secretary

Melodie Esterberg

Melodie Esterberg

Technical Advisory Committee Chair