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STRAFFORD
WAKEFIELD

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

November 7, 2008 Minutes

FINAL

Present: Dave Sharples (Somersworth), Rad Nichols (COAST), Stephen Pesci (UNH), Nick Alexander (NHDOT), Melodie Esterberg (Rochester), Larry Brown (Milton), Bruce Woodruff (Dover), Tom Dube (Wakefield), Chris Skoglund (NHDES-ARD) and William Rose (NHDOT)

Proxy Votes: Diane Hardy (Newmarket), Ed Lemos (Barrington) and John Law (Farmington)

Members Not Present: Mark Stevens (Middletton), Michael Clark (New Durham), Patrick Carroll (Rollinsford), Craig Wheeler (Somersworth), Dirk Timmons (UNH), Shelley Winters (NHDOT Rails and Transit), Tom Reinauer (SMRPC), Steve Ireland (NH DOT District 6), Ed Wojnowski (Newmarket) and Wallace Dunham (Madbury)

Staff: Myranda McGowan (Transportation Planner), Dan Camara (GIS/Transportation Analyst) and Marilyn Barton (Administrative Assistant)

Chairman D. Sharples called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. It was noted a quorum was not yet established and adoption of the minutes would be delayed.

1. Introductions

Introductions were made around the table and people gave their name and what town or agency they were representing.

2. Staff Communications

M. McGowan noted the January 2, 2009 TAC meeting was the day after the New Year holiday and wanted to know if everyone wanted to move the meeting to January 9, 2009. It was the

consensus of the members attending that the January TAC meeting would be moved to January 9, 2009, as there were several members that would not be available to attend.

M. McGowan handed out a memo regarding various topics for staff communication. M. McGowan noted The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) has announced a fare increase for the Amtrak Downeaster rail service between Portland, Maine and Boston, Massachusetts. M. McGowan stated comments can be submitted until Sunday, November 30, 2008 and NNEPRA staff will review public comments received in December 2008. M. McGowan noted NNEPRA might implement the proposed fare increase in January 2009. M. McGowan stated the plan recommended increasing one-way fares in some markets up to \$2 and increase multi-ride passes in some markets up to 10%. M. McGowan noted comments could be sent by email – info@nnepra.com or mail – Executive Director, Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, 75 W. Commercial Street, Ste. 204, Portland, ME 04101.

M. McGowan also noted the 2008 Local Government Center Conference is November 12-14, 2008 at the Radisson Hotel in Manchester; UNH GIS day 2008 will be on November 12, 2008 and the next SMPO-Policy Committee meeting would be held at the Barrington Town Hall on November 20, 2008 from 7-9 p.m.

3. Draft Strafford MPO TAC September 5, 2008 and September 25, 2008 Minutes

It was determined a quorum was established at 9:10 a.m. and D. Sharples entertained the notion to adopt the draft Strafford MPO TAC minutes from September 5, 2008. T. Dube made a motion and R. Nichols seconded that motion. It was noted there was one abstention- S Pesci as he had not been in attendance at that meeting. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

D. Sharples entertained the notion to adopt the draft Strafford MPO TAC minutes from September 25, 2008. R. Nichols made a motion and L. Brown seconded that motion. It was noted there were two abstentions - S. Pesci and T. Dube as they had not been in attendance at that meeting. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

4. 2010-2011 Unified Planning Work Program

M. McGowan handed out memos regarding the 2010-2011 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). M. McGowan noted every two years federal requirements state MPO's must complete a UPWP. The UPWP guides transportation planning that the MPO will conduct during the next two years and also details how FHWA, FTA and local funds will be used within the region. M. McGowan stated the memo gave a general overview of planning tasks that SRPC does. M. McGowan also noted the UPWP timeline listed when this will be completed.

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M. McGowan stated this would need to be reviewed by TAC at their January meeting. D. Sharples asked that it be sent to TAC members by January 2, 2009 so they have a week to review it before the January 9, 2009 meeting. M. McGowan stated this would be done.

5. Ten-Year Plan Project Solicitation

M. McGowan handed out a memo regarding the Ten-Year Plan Project Solicitation. M. McGowan noted three important documents were recently adopted related to the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMPO) functions: 2009-2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity Analysis.

M. McGowan stated this item was on the agenda for discussion purposes. M. McGowan noted The Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) will be meeting on Wednesday, November 19, 2008 at 2 p.m. at the State House to discuss policy directives for the next Ten-Year Plan as well as policies and what types of projects, if any, will be added back into the plan. M. McGowan noted the official start of the process of adding any projects would be delayed until after the November GACIT meeting.

R. Nichols asked how important was it to attend the meeting November 19 at the State House? S. Pesci stated it was important and asked if this was just a meeting or a meeting/public hearing? N. Alexander stated it was a meeting and not a public hearing to take any actions. M. McGowan asked if they would be accepting any public written comments? N. Alexander stated presumably they would and would be recognized by the Executive Council. D. Sharples stated they have an agenda item called comments by visitors and could be stated there.

S. Pesci thought it would be important to have the MPO there to represent the communities. He stated UNH should be there to represent as well.

R. Nichols stated he would want the MPO there to represent the communities.

D. Sharples asked what the purpose of someone from the MPO going to the GACIT meeting was. B. Woodruff stated it was for the SRPC to advocate there are projects that have been identified as needing to be moved forward and be added back into the plan. B. Woodruff stated there should be a process in place so projects can be moved forward.

S. Pesci stated an example of a project that should be restored into the plan and S. Pesci noted the Durham-UNH 108 Bike Shoulder Project, now delayed twelve years, is viewed as a critical safety need.

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N. Alexander stated the general intent of the upcoming GACIT meeting is to update GACIT of the end of the Ten-Year process and provide guidance to the RPC's on how to proceed. N. Alexander stated the MPO's have five months to work on it and get back to GACIT with a list.

D. Sharples asked if a big picture statement would be more appropriate? S. Pesci stated the person attending this meeting should bring some bulleted big picture items. S. Pesci noted one of the items should be more sustainability/predictable funding for transit systems and another could be regional participation in inner city transit issues.

L. Brown stated there is a need to specify why certain projects have been changed. B. Woodruff stated it should be looked at why projects are being reprioritized the way they are.

D. Sharples asked if it was the request of the TAC committee to have the Executive Director or her designee to attend the November 19, 2008 meeting to represent the Policy Committee with the big picture bulleted items discussed at this meeting? All in attendance agreed. M. McGowan stated she would speak with C. Copeland to see if she was available to attend the meeting.

6. Transportation Enhancement/Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Grants

M. McGowan handed out a memo that gave information regarding the Transportation Enhancement (TE) and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) Grants. M. McGowan stated these were two grants communities can compete for and noted this region in the past has done very well in getting these grants. M. McGowan stated there would be a meeting on December 5, 2008 where communities that have a change in a project scope or needed an increase in funds can go before the Advisory Committee to discuss. M. McGowan stated if anyone had a project that had a change or needed an increase in funding to let her know and she would forward on to NHDOT.

It was noted this meeting with the Advisory Committee might conflict with the next TAC meeting if held in the morning of December 5, 2008. All attendees agreed if this was the case, to move the next TAC meeting to December 12, 2008.

S. Pesci stated UNH would be at this meeting as they have a TE project under way, Project Number 14405, Main Street West. S. Pesci stated this project would be at thirty percent design level in the next couple of weeks and would be asking for an increase in funding.

S. Pesci stated UNH also has a CMAQ request as they are always looking for additional transit needs due the expansion of the Wild Cat Bus system. R. Nichols asked if this was for replacement and S. Pesci stated yes. R. Nichols stated he would be asking for replacement as well as COAST uses federal funds for operation.

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S. Pesci stated there is potential for lapsing in CMAQ funding due to project delays and stated no one wants to lose CMAQ funding. N. Alexander stated there was no lapse.

B. Woodruff stated there are projects ready to go and the CMAQ money just sits waiting. B. Woodruff stated this is not an efficient way of using the funds. N. Alexander stated he would bring those comments back to NHDOT and noted anyone that feels that way could also speak with their executive councilor.

7. Safe Routes To School Grants

M. McGowan handed out a memo that gave background information of the Safe Routes To School Grants. M. McGowan noted the program has completed two rounds of project solicitation from NH's elementary and middle schools to compete for education and infrastructure funding that will encourage students within a two mile radius to walk and bike to school. M. McGowan noted that although the William Allen Elementary School in Rochester did not receiving funding in the previous round, she is currently working with them for the next round. M. McGowan stated she is working with the City of Somersworth. She noted both cities have formed task forces and are in the process of completing surveys.

M. McGowan noted the annual funding is one million dollars a year and N. Alexander stated it is one hundred percent federally funded.

8. October 2008 Monthly Minor Revisions

M. McGowan stated the SMPO staff received a request to approve the October 2008 Monthly Minor Revisions and handed out a memo to those in attendance which gave an overview of the revisions. M. McGowan noted the Executive Director recommended approval of the revisions and discussed it with the Executive Committee at their October 17, 2008 meeting. The Executive Committee concurred with the changes as recommended, with letters sent to the members of the SMPO Policy and TAC.

9. MPO Planning Funds

M. McGowan stated this was up for discussion as the next authorization starts in 2009. SAFETEA-LU will be ending and the next authorization will start and is something the TAC should be thinking about.

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R. Nichols asked if they cut the planning funds are they expecting better projects? N. Alexander stated it was not a cutting of PL funds, rather a rescission. He stated there is a certain amount of money given and not all can be spent and noted sometimes money is given back.

S. Pesci noted it isn't just a reauthorization but a completely new transportation budget and will look completely different.

N. Alexander stated it has a potential to affect all MPO's, as no one is happy about rescissions. N. Alexander noted there are a few avenues through the department and that is why NHDOT has representatives attend meetings in the communities such as TAC to hear feedback from the MPO's. He also stated there were two advocacy groups, AMPO and NEARC that would advocate for the MPO's.

B. Woodruff stated that perhaps the committee should draft something and forward to the Policy Committee for their approval.

S. Pesci stated that another big issue is state transportation funding.

D. Sharples asked M. McGowan to contact AMPO for information on this and those in attendance agreed it should be monitored.

10. Project Updates

D. Camara gave a handout from the U.S. Census Bureau regarding the 2010 Participant Statistical Areas Program. D. Camara noted this was used as new criteria for the census track block. He stated he would be attending a workshop next week on how to use software to update. He stated the software is compatible with GIS; however, they want their software used. He stated he would go into more depth at the next TAC meeting.

M. McGowan handed out a memo that gave an overview of the various projects and at what stage they were at.

M. McGowan stated she had attended the CMP workshop and showed a map that showed the Boston Urbanized areas. M. McGowan noted the pink area on the map was the Boston Urbanized area that went as far north as Exeter. M. McGowan stated this pink area is called the Boston Transportation Management Area (TMA), which is a region with a population of 200,000 or more. M. McGowan stated this requires an additional step in the congestion management process. M. McGowan noted three other MPO's in the region are part of this TMA and working with Boston currently. M. McGowan stated although our MPO is not in that region, there are things that could be incorporated in our plan for the future.

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N. Alexander stated discussion from the CMP workshop stated the first step in the CMP process was to define what congestion is.

D. Camara stated the annual traffic count summary was available on the SRPC website on the transportation page.

M. McGowan stated a group called Alliance For Community Transportation (ACT) is a non-profit health and human services organization responsible for establishing a transportation brokerage system for the Seacoast region. M. McGowan noted they are organizing a Transportation Summit on Tuesday, December 9, 2008 in Concord and would like each region to invite individuals that play an important role in transportation within our region. M. McGowan also stated they are interested in having representatives from the Towns of Brookfield and Wakefield to participate as that is a part of the region that has not been focused on.

M. McGowan gave an update regarding the Farmington Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. M. McGowan noted she is currently recruiting members for the Task Force and Dan and Kyle are doing final data edits on the sidewalk related data for the study.

M. McGowan stated she is organizing the first meeting of the Bike/Walk To Work Day 2009. M. McGowan stated she will let everyone know when the first meeting will be and if anyone is interested in attending to let her know.

M. McGowan gave an overview regarding the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects and stated SRPC is required to publish a listing of obligated/deobligated projects from the previous fiscal year. M. McGowan stated projects include federal highway, public transportation, pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities projects. M. McGowan noted this document contains transportation funds that have been obligated in the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2007 (October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007).

S. Pesci stated he hoped the MPO's that sponsored the rail forum earlier this year, would do a follow up on that meeting. He stated it was important to stay on issue of long-term sustainability and if we lose the successful service, where would we be? S. Pesci stated we need to get back on track with this and do follow up.

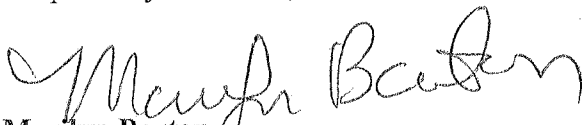
N. Alexander thanked TAC for getting the Plan and TIP updated and the drafts should be starting a public comment period, based on what was received, within the next week.

11. Adjournment

D. Sharples entertained the motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 a.m. T. Dube made a motion and S. Pesci seconded the motion. All in favor; motion passed unanimously.

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Respectfully submitted,



Marilyn Barton
Recording Secretary



David Sharples
Strafford MPO Technical Advisory Committee Chair

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