

BARRINGTON
BROOKFIELD
DOVER
DURHAM
FARMINGTON
LEE
MADBURY
MIDDLETON
MILTON



NEW DURHAM
NEWMARKET
NORTHWOOD
NOTTINGHAM
ROCHESTER
ROLLINSFORD
SOMERSWORTH
STRAFFORD
WAKEFIELD

**Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization
Public Hearing/Policy Committee Meeting
March 13, 2009
Minutes
FINAL**

MPO Members Present: Chris Skoglund (NHDES-ARD), Dirk Timmons (UNH), Elaine Lauterborn (Rochester), Kenn Ortmann (Rochester), Rad Nichols (COAST), Edmund Jansen (Rollinsford), Bruce Woodruff (Milton), Lou Vita (Middleton), Larry Brown (Milton) and Glenn Davison (NHDOT)

MPO Members Proxy Votes: Caren Rossi (Lee), George Snyder (Somersworth) and Frank Torr (Dover)

SRPC Staff Present: Cynthia Copeland (Executive Director), Myranda McGowan (Transportation Planner), Dan Camara (GIS/Transportation Analyst) and Marilyn Barton (Administrative Assistant)

1. Convene Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee

Chairman L. Brown convened the meeting as the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Committee at 10:13 a.m.

2. Open Public Hearing to Solicit Public Comments on Draft FY 2010-2011 Unified Planning Work Program Scope of Work

Chairman L. Brown opened the public hearing at 10:14 a.m.

M. McGowan stated this is an amendment to our TIP and STIP and went over the various projects in this amendment. M. McGowan noted a lot of the amendment had a lot to do with the funds being received from the economic stimulus.

Chairman L. Brown asked everyone in attendance to give their names and which community they were from and then opened the hearing for any questions or comments.

B. Woodruff asked about details regarding the two Newington projects and what the changes were?

M. McGowan stated as more information is received on the project, smaller portions of the project will be moved out from the larger main project.

G. Davison stated the Newington project is huge and the project is broken into smaller pieces and not into separate projects. G. Davison stated the scope and goal of the project is the same; it's just being managed into smaller pieces. G. Davison stated pieces of a project are based on funding, resources and priority.

B. Woodruff stated his continuing concern was the projects would be broken down into pieces that don't make sense and how it would affect communities. B. Woodruff stated it is the approach parts of the project that was of concern for the region. B. Woodruff noted it was on record with the Advisory Task Force that the project as a whole needed to be completed and not just parts of the project so that it works the way it was intended.

G. Davison stated the engineers are very cognizant of that. G. Davison stated the timing was not changed and that parts of the project were just being broken into smaller pieces for better management of the project.

K. Ortmann asked a question regarding two projects on the Spaulding Turnpike-one that had an increase in funds and the other project had a decrease in funds- where it states an increase and decrease in funding- Isn't this the same result-a shifting of things or fine tuning? M. McGowan stated that was correct.

K. Ortmann asked about the Coast Express bus service and does it specify the range it covers? R. Nichols noted it states Rochester, Somersworth, Dover, Newington and Portsmouth. R. Nichols stated the issue with that project is that it is ineligible for stimulus funds.

C. Copeland asked that for the record of the public hearing what was the outstanding concern for the Coast Express project?

R. Nichols stated there is no logical source of local municipal funding for the project and noted a more logical source would be the State or Turnpike.

K Ortmann stated it was originally anticipated mitigation of work on the bridge as a bus service and asked if that was identical to the bus service or a separate issue?

R. Nichols stated it's the same thing but in the record of decision the service that is supported in that document is expansion of Coast's Spaulding Express concept.

K. Ortmann stated his issue was that signage, detours and building temporary access ramps are all part of a construction project and should be paid for as part of the construction project. K. Ortmann stated it his opinion the COAST Express Service should be treated the same way and should therefore be paid directly out of the contract that associated with the bridge during the course of the year.

B. Woodruff stated the Advisory Task Force endorsed that as well and is on record of decision.

C. Copeland stated it was an original CMAQ application and got absorbed into the mitigation action for the Little Bay Bridges project.

K. Ortmann asked why there was confusion as to where a logical funding source should be?

R. Nichols noted the State, on the record of decision, is only supporting that expanded level of service on the shoulders of what was already outlined for the Spaulding Express.

3. Close Public Hearing

Chairman L. Brown closed the public hearing at 10:26 a.m.

4. Draft MPO Minutes of January 22, 2009

Chairman L. Brown asked for a motion to adopt the Draft MPO Minutes of January 22, 2009 as presented. K. Ortmann made a motion and B. Woodruff seconded that motion. All in favor, motion carried.

5. Draft Amendment #1 to 2009-2012 STIP

M. McGowan handed out revised financial constraint summaries. K. Ortmann asked how this related to the STIP? M. McGowan stated it was background information that would help make an informed decision. Chairman Brown asked if this document was available for review prior to the public hearing? M. McGowan stated it was available on the SRPC website prior to the public hearing and was available for public viewing. Chairman Brown noted the public hearing stands.

M. McGowan handed out information on revised air quality conformity (AQ) and noted it was available on the SRPC website and was part of the paper packet that had been mailed out. M. McGowan stated the STIP meets all AQ conformity and the budget is fiscally constrained.

M. McGowan noted some of the projects listed in the STIP, the funding may not be accurate because part of the economic stimulus package includes a possibility of gaining additional funds from states that don't obligate their funds within a certain amount of time.

K. Ortmann stated that the basic intent of the fiscal constraint summary is to say we are not proposing a value of projects that is not consistent with financial resources we anticipate will be available within those time frames.

M. McGowan stated it's to show for our non-attainment region that we do meet our budget for all the amendments to the TIP. K. Ortmann asked does this mean we are allowed to pollute to a certain point and that is the budget? M. McGowan stated that was correct. K. Ortmann asked if we go over the budget, what happens? C. Skoglund stated as he understood it, if we go over the budget we can't have a STIP that is accepted by Federal Highways and therefore lose funds and we have to create projects that will bring our pollution levels down and allow us to create a STIP that conforms. C. Skoglund gave more information on the term budget and how it affects the STIP.

R. Nichols asked if we were close to going over budget? C. Skoglund stated with this revision there were administrative errors identified and noted although we are close this year; outer years saw a dramatic drop off.

C. Skoglund also explained the EPA was revising the eight hour ozone non-attainment area and that DES was working with the EPA on this.

C. Copeland asked C. Skoglund to explain what happened with the non-attainment designation. C. Skoglund stated on December 30, 2008 DES received a letter from the EPA requiring by March 12,

2009, that DES submit a revised, proposed eight hour ozone non-attainment designation that would take into account boundaries for protecting air quality in NH. C. Skoglund noted the eight hour standard changed to a more stringent standard. He explained EPA wanted to expand non-attainment area to other communities in the state and include Massachusetts and Rhode Island. He noted we would not hear back from the EPA until November 2009.

B. Woodruff asked if we increased the non-attainment area? C. Skoglund stated no, in order to keep the expansion as small as possible. B. Woodruff asked where the locations of the air monitoring stations were? C. Skoglund stated there were two in the Seacoast and one in the western region of the state.

C. Skoglund stated proposed new boundaries included ten towns in the SRPC region and that is partly due to monitoring stations are exceeding standard. C. Skoglund stated projected growth is expected in the northern section of the seacoast. EPA is making sure appropriate action is being take to protect air quality and it does make those ten communities eligible for CMAQ funds. B. Woodruff asked if we were pulling in Carroll County? C. Skoglund stated the expansion was being kept as small as possible.

Chairman L. Brown asked for a motion to approve draft 2009-2012 STIP Amendment #1. K. Ortmann made a motion; B. Woodruff seconded. All in favor motion carried.

6. Transportation Projects and Regional Priorities Solicitation

M. McGowan stated that communities are being contacted to set up meetings and is going very well and if anyone wished to be involved in this, to please let her know.

K. Ortmann stated we need to be cognizant of the fiscal constraints that if a community wanted a new project on the TIP, than an existing project on the TIP would need to come off as he understood it for a zero-sum gain and T/E and CMAQ and long range projects are not zero-sum funding.

C. Copeland stated transit providers were being met with such as the Downeaster and C&J.

7. Potential Prospectus Revisions

C. Copeland stated the Executive Committee asked her to do research and analysis in for a revision to the Prospectus regarding dues paying members.

C. Copeland noted dues are voluntary but are used for mandated local match and is looking for a policy for those communities that don't pay. C. Copeland stated she is still researching the issue and noted she looked at a variety of financial mechanisms other MPO's were using and they were not doing too well. C. Copeland stated it needs to be a financial tool that can be used to secure local match for the MPO and it needs to be legal, sustainable and long-term.

B. Woodruff stated member communities could use a points value in which a dues paying community would receive points that a non-paying dues member would not and this would be a huge be a huge incentive to pay dues.

C. Copeland stated there is a need to look out side of dues for the fiscal tool and look at some type of user fee based mechanism.

8. Project Updates

M. McGowan stated there is a meeting in Concord NHDOT on March 13 from 2-4 p.m. regarding potential projects that could be funded with economic stimulus funds and handed out a listing of projects and noted not all projects would be funded with the stimulus funds.

D. Camara stated the 2010 census would be submitted on March 13 and noted only three communities had changes and SRPC should hear back right away if they have questions but most likely will hear from them in Fall 2009 and noted everything went smoothly.

R. Nichols stated as a region, 5.5 million dollars in ARRA funding was received for public transit. R. Nichols stated on the flip side was the DOT budget was slashed by seventy five percent and that it funds ten different transportation systems in the state. R. Nichols noted this may cause 5.3 fewer hours that COAST can operate and may inconvenience evening commuters and noted this reduction in funds has had a drastic impact.

R. Nichols stated SB136 stated a higher fee on vehicle registration and has been tabled and noted HB 644 gas tax increased gas by five cents a year for the next three years received very strong support and wondered what the status was now? E. Lauterborn stated HB 644 has passed the House and now goes to the Senate.

9. Other Business

There was no other business.

10. Adjournment

Chairman L. Brown asked for a motion for adjournment at 11:10 a.m. E. Jansen made a motion and B. Woodruff seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Marilyn Barton
Recording Secretary



Larry Brown
Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee Chair

