Minutes of the
SNHPC MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

April 16, 2020
9:30 AM
Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission
438 Dubuque Street
Manchester, New Hampshire

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT
Mark Connors – Bedford
R.H. Snow – Candia
Andrew Hadik – Chester
George Sioras – Derry
Jo Ann Duffy – Goffstown
Linda Kunhardt – Franconia
Bruce Thomas – Hooksett
Colleen Mailloux (Chair) – Londonderry
Jonathan Golden – Manchester Planning
Todd Connors (Vice Chair) – Manchester DPW
Mark Suennen – New Boston
Tom Clow – Weare
Dean Williams – CNHRPC
Sylvia von Aulock – SNHPC
Nancy Michels – GMCC/GDLC
Linda Dusenberry – NHDOT
Ryan Renaud-Smith – MTA
Mike Whitten – MTA
Fred Roberge – ESNH
Tim White – NHDES

SNHPC STAFF PRESENT
Adam Hlasny, Sr. Transportation Planner
James Vayo, Project Manager
Maddie Dilonno, Assistant Planner
Monique Duchesne, Assistant Planner
Zach Swick, GIS Analyst
Nate Miller, Deputy Executive Director

OTHERS PRESENT
Elizabeth Robidoux – Derry
Laurie Renke – Londonderry
Jamie Pike – Franconia
Leigh Levine – FHWA
Paul Maloney – FHWA
Katie Lamb – North Country Council
Matt Waitkins – NRPC

MEMBERS ABSENT
Bill Herman – Auburn
Dick Gregory – Windham
Ted Kitchens – MHT Airport
Dick Perusse – New Boston
Tim Roache – RPC

1/2. Call to Order/Introductions

Chair Colleen Mailloux called the meeting of the SNHPC TAC to order at 9:34 AM. She read a statement pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04 authorizing the TAC to meet electronically. Motion by Ms. Linda Kunhardt to authorize SNHPC to record the meeting, seconded by Mr. Tom Clow and approved unanimously by roll call vote.

1. Action on Minutes of February 20, 2020

Motion by Mr. R.H. Snow to approve February 2020 minutes, seconded by Mr. George Sioras, and approved by roll call vote. Mses. Kunhardt, Jo Ann Duffy, Messrs. Mark Connors, Andrew Hadik, Mark Suennen abstained.

4.1 Update from the MTA on the Public Transit Impacts of COVID-19

1
Mr. Mike Whitten reviewed how MTA/CART is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by offering demand response service only for "essential" trips (i.e. groceries, pharmacies, medical appointments, employment, and blood banks). Fares have been suspended, and the number of passengers are limited on each vehicle (1 person on vans, 4 people in cutaways). Approximately 22 of MTA's 32 transit drivers are on paid leave. Schools are closed, but 12 school buses are delivering food to students in need and their families on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Mr. Whitten went on to summarize the recent Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Nationwide, $25 billion in federal assistance will go to transit agencies. MTA will receive approximately $6.7 million and CART will receive just over $1 million. There is no local match requirement for these funds, which will pay for employees on administrative leave as well as other essential operational needs during the pandemic.

4.2 Roundtable Updates from TAC Members on Local/Municipal Impacts of COVID-19

Ms. Sylvia von Aulock led a discussion regarding how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted transportation operations for SNHPC municipalities and partner agencies.

Mr. Hadik noted that traffic volumes are down in Chester, but speeds are up. In many cases, police are not issuing tickets to speeders. Mr. Hadik estimates that there is roughly 10 times the amount of pedestrian and bicycle traffic on local roads in Chester. It is anticipated to be a very conservative year in voting for CIP infrastructure projects, especially with the expected drop in municipal revenues.

Londonderry conducted a successful electronic ZBA public hearing last night; its TAP grant, however, has been paused. Ms. Laurie Renke added that the Londonderry Senior Center is closed, and meals on wheels are only being served three days per week.

Mr. Suennen, Mrs. Mailloux, and Ms. Duffy mentioned that local rail trails are being more heavily utilized. The two biggest issues have been with physical distancing due to the popularity of walking on trails and ensuring people with dogs are following proper etiquette to clear their dog's waste.

The MTA New Boston Shuttle is still experiencing poor ridership, just one rider at present. Ridership on the Goffstown and Hooksett Shuttles down roughly 50% from normal times.

4.3 SNHPC On-Call Engineering Contract RFQ Evaluation Subcommittee

Mr. Miller noted that the SNHPC's on-call engineering contract with VHB (signed in 2018) expires on June 30, 2020. Mr. Miller called for three volunteers to form an RFQ Evaluation Subcommittee. Chair Mailloux, as well as Messrs. Snow and Sioras volunteered. Mr. Bruce Thomas volunteered to assist as an alternate.

4.4 Overview of Regional Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled Transportation) Projects for FY 2021

Mr. Miller reviewed the nine elderly and disable transportation activities for which SNHPC will serve as fiscal agent in FY 2021. Mr. Miller noted that the Region 8 Coordinating Council (Greater Manchester) and Region 9 Coordinating Council (Greater Derry-Salem) have merged. The newly merged entity, called the Southern NH Regional Coordinating Council has jointly programmed the Section 5310 funding allocated for both Region 8 and Region 9.
The Section 5310 activities for FY 2021 include:
1. Expansion of the MTA's Goffstown Shuttle service to five days per week.
2. Expansion of the MTA's Hooksett Shuttle service to five days per week.
3. Reconfiguration of the MTA's New Boston service as an on-call service limited to 15 trips per month.
4. Continuation of CART's Derry-Londonderry Nutrition Shuttle service at 45 hours per week.
5. Continuation of Easter Seals' regional demand response service at approx. 30 hours per week.
6. Continuation of the Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels (RNMOW) service to the Vic Geary Center in Plaistow.
7. Continuation of Easter Seals' regional mobility management services (partial support of a Schedule Coordinator and Dispatcher at the Easter Seals Call Center).
8. Continuation of the Easter Seals joint Region 8/Region 9 mobility management initiative.
9. Continuation of the Caregivers (Catholic Charities) volunteer driver recruitment campaign.

4.5 Update on Scenic Byways

Mr. Adam Hlasny gave a brief update on the status of scenic byways locally, statewide, and federally, noting that despite a lack of standalone federal funding since 2012, there continues to be robust interest at all levels. Applications for new National Scenic Byways have recently been opened up by FHWA and are due by May 15, 2020. Announcements of newly awarded byways will occur in Fall 2020. Mr. Whitten mentioned that National Heritage Areas (of which NH only has one which it shares with Massachusetts – Freedom's Way), could be linked to designated byways, and asked if applications for new Heritage Areas could also be applied for. Ms. Renke mentioned that Canobie Lake Park had historical significance (it was opened in August of 1902).

5. Project/Schedule Updates

Motion by Mr. Sioras to table the project/schedule updates, seconded by Mr. Suennen and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

6. Other Business

There was no other business.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Thomas to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Clow and carried unanimously by roll call vote. The meeting stood adjourned at 10:58 am.

Next meeting: May 21, 2020

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee of the Southern NH Planning Commission for April 16, 2020.

Sylvia von Aulock
Executive Director

Minutes Approved: May 21, 2020