

## RPC TAC MEETING

### Minutes

July 28, 2016

RPC Conference Room

**Members Present:** Art Ditto, Chair, Rye; Richard McDermott, Hampton Falls; Robert Clark, Atkinson; Joan Whitney, Kensington; Steve Gerrato, Greenland; Juliet Walker, Portsmouth; Tavis Austin, Stratham; and Chris Jacobs, Hampton.

**Staff Present:** Dave Walker, Scott Bogle and Roxanne Rines, RPC.

**Meeting Opened at 9:02 a.m.**

#### 1. Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves and stated what municipality they were from or the agency they represented.

#### 2. Minutes of May 26, 2016, TAC Meeting

**Jacobs** stated there was a spelling error on page 2.

**Motion: McDermott** made a motion to amend and approve the minutes of May 26, 2016.  
**Jacobs** seconded the motion. **Motion carried with abstentions.**

#### 3. SHRP2 Performance Based Planning Grant Update

**Walker** stated that SHRP2 is the Strategic Highway Research Program 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, it is a Federal program run through the Federal Department of Transportation, which will allow the state's MPOs to create Performance Based Planning. He reviewed how the above task will be completed and the timeline. As work is completed it will be presented at TAC meetings for feedback.

#### 4. Long Range Transportation Plan – Current Status and Schedule Update

**Bogle** reviewed the updated work that has been completed since January 2016, while incorporating new requirements under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. He continued that the adoption date is scheduled for April 2017. There will be limited set of amendments to the Long Range Plan, that will need to be adopted at the October 2016 Policy Committee meeting.

He stated staff will continue to bring draft elements as they're completed to the TAC meetings for review. Bogle then reviewed the remaining elements of the Long Range Plan that still need updating.

Discussion ensued with members about the timeline; how staff will complete the work needed; corridor studies; traffic concerns and road issues in the region; and using UNH engineering students for some of the work.

## **5. Finalized Metropolitan Planning Rule and proposed MPO Coordination and Planning Area Reform Rule**

**Walker** gave a powerpoint presentation. He stated the Finalized Metropolitan Planning Rule adds two new planning factors to the Transportation Planning Process; they are: i) improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and ii) enhance travel and tourism.

He reviewed changes that will also need to be made to the Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program and Performance Based Planning.

**Walker** stated the proposed MPO Coordination and Planning Area Reform Rule was a surprise to many agencies. **Walker** reviewed that the goal and intent of the rule is to “promote more effective regional planning by States and metropolitan planning organizations”. The rule states that MPO boundaries should follow urbanized areas, which will produce unified planning documents for each urbanized area (UZA), as defined by the Census, even if there are multiple MPOs designated within that urbanized area.

He explained that the current RPC region includes portions of two UZAs; the Portsmouth Urbanized Area and the Boston Urbanized Area. Both UZA’s will extend into communities that are parts of other MPOs and into both the states of Maine and Massachusetts.

Staff feels it would be important for the MPO to make comments in opposition to the proposed rule. It appears that there is little support for the proposal by State DOTs and MPOs. Both the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO); the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO); and several MPOs have sent a letter asking for the comment period be extended past 60 days; it also outlines some initial reasons why they believe the rule is a bad idea. **Walker** reviewed concerns included in the letter which can be read at ([www.ampo.org](http://www.ampo.org)) and current urbanized areas within the state.

**Walker** stated staff has drafted comments about the proposed rule with comments from Commissioners, input from staff of other MPOs and comments from other agencies. The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) analysis was included in the packet.

Draft comments center around four basic arguments:

- UZAs are not a sound basis for Transportation Planning
- It creates inefficiencies and additional complexity in New Hampshire
- It will be confusing for the general public
- It disregards current coordination efforts

**Walker** stated once a set of comments have been finalized, staff will look to both TAC members and Commissioners to submit comments to further reinforce the concerns.

Discussion ensued about the injustice that will happen if boundaries would be changed to include smaller NH towns with larger MA communities; comments made from other agencies; and how staff needs to include possible solutions in their comment letter. Before the final comment letter is sent, it will be distributed to TAC members and Commissioners for their comments and/or changes.

**Walker** stated staff will create a generic community letter for towns to send voicing their concerns about the rule change.

## **6. Transportation Alternatives Program**

**Bogle** reviewed the program and stated letters of interest were due July 1<sup>st</sup>. Two pre-application workshops will be held and each community that submitted a letter was notified of the dates. No date for final application has been set, but will most likely be late summer. He then reviewed the thirteen projects from 11 communities that were submitted totaling \$6.8M and gave a brief description of each.

## **7. Project Updates**

A handout was distributed with other project updates and discussion ensued. **Walker** distributed a handout from DOT explaining their changes to the Road Safety Audit program and reviewed the document.

Meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne M. Rines  
Recording Secretary