

**DRAFT**

## RPC MPO Policy

### Minutes

Rye Public Library  
July 29, 2015

**Members Present:** Phil Wilson, Chair, North Hampton; Glenn Coppelman and Peter Coffin, Kingston; Tim Moore, Plaistow; Barbara Kravitz and Fran McMahon, Hampton; Francis Chase, Seabrook; Mark Traeger, Sandown; Don Clement, Exeter; Richard McDermott, Hampton Falls; Joan Whitney, Kensington; Tom McCormick, Rye; Mike Turell and Robert Clark, Atkinson; Mary Allen and Jim Doggett, Newton; Michael McAndrew, New Castle; James VanBokkelen, South Hampton; Stephen Gerrato, Greenland; Brian Deguzis, COAST; Stephen Pesci, UNH; Mark Nelson, CART; Glenn Davison and Bill Oldenburg, NH DOT.

**Staff Present:** Cliff Sinnott, Dave Walker, Scott Bogle, Julie LaBranche and Roxanne Rines.

**6:59 p.m. Policy Meeting Opened**

#### 1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

**Wilson** welcomed all guests. **Sinnott** introduced new Commissioner Tom McCormick of Rye. Attendees introduced themselves and stated what municipality they were from or the agency they represented.

#### 2. Minutes from April 8, 2015, RPC Policy Committee

**Motion: Coppelman** made a motion to approve the minutes of April 8, 2015, as written. **Doggett** seconded the motion. **Kravitz** questioned one item from the minutes and **Walker** reviewed the details. **Motion carried with 7 abstentions.**

**7:15 pm PUBLIC HEARING OPENED**

#### 3A/B. Presentation of TIP Amendment #1 / Questions, Discussion, Public Comments

**Walker** stated the public comment period ended July 28, 2015; and no public comment was received. He then gave a slide presentation explaining the proposed project changes: projects removed; projects with funding reductions; projects added to the TIP; projects facing delays; projects receiving additional funding; and projects changing funding sources.

**Walker** reviewed the TAC Committee's comments: they were concerned about the reduction in funding for many statewide maintenance and preservation programs; concern regarding the intent of the General Sullivan Bridge; amount of CMAQ funding going towards intercity bus replacement, regarding the lack of CMAQ funding available; and the reduction of funding for the Hampton Branch

project (which is being moved from 2018 to 2015).

The final action of TAC was to recommend removal of the changes to Plaistow-Kingston project #10044E from the proposed amendment because of concerns over continuing delays and because of prior MPO policy regarding delays to the 125 Plaistow-Kingston project. Staff received a letter from the Kingston TAC representative expressing her extreme displeasure with the project being removed as the MPO and DOT had committed, in the past, to moving that project forward. Staff has contacted NHDOT regarding this recommendation from TAC and will be working with them to find a solution over the next few days.

**Oldenburg** reviewed and answered TAC's comments from above and discussion ensued.

**Davison** stated NHDOT's intention of the CMAQ funding project is to create an ongoing set-aside for intercity bus fleet replacement that will come out of the funding available each year. **Pesci** stated this is the biggest CMAQ project ever and questioned how the flexing of CMAQ funds for other purposes is allowed. **Sinnott** agreed with Pesci and stated staff also has the same concerns. **Deguzis'** stated COAST also has concerns about public transportation funds and needs. **Davison** stated under MAP-21 there is a provision which allows flexing and explained how it works. Discussion ensued.

**Oldenburg** explained why the Kingston-Plaistow was removed from the TIP. The reason for the removal of PE and right-of-way was to align it with the construction date of 2023-2024. He explained that the design phase is about 40% done and that it needs to be completed and right-of-way land purchased. One rule that FHWA has is the 10/20-year rule, which is if a project is not completed in ten years, FHWA will remove funding for that the project and all federal funds already spent by NHDOT would have to be re-paid to FHWA.

He continued that the reason the Kingston-Plaistow project has been delayed is funding. When the project was first approved in 2007, the total funding was set at \$23 million and now is \$73 million. DOT's budget does not have enough money to allow for the completion of the project, but DOT wants to finish the project.

**Coppelman** stated if the project was completed in the original timeframe there wouldn't have been any need to keep delaying sections. **Oldenburg** stated the project was originally underestimated. **Coppelman** asked why the construction phase could not be moved forward to meet the PE and right-of-way timeframe? **Oldenburg** stated there just isn't enough funding. **Moore** asked if the project could be split into smaller sections? **Oldenburg** stated it's almost too late because there isn't enough time and explained.

**Sinnott** suggested that findings from the corridor study be reviewed before the project has its final design completed. Traffic count numbers are substantially below what they were forecast to be in the corridor study. He stated first and foremost the Town of Kingston needs to be included in any changes in design or any update to meet actual needs. **Dogget** thinks there will be opposition for the current design.

**Oldenburg** suggested the committee approve the amendment and then have a discussion with DOT about the projects inclusion in the 10-year plan.

**Walker** concluded that the plan is financially constrained, according to DOT; all of NH is currently in attainment; and that the notice meets the RPC's Public Participation Process. RPC staff recommends that the Policy Committee approve the 2015-2018 TIP Amendment #1 as presented by DOT.

**Wilson** stated that if the amendment is approved with the exemption that the Kingston-Plaistow project be included, then the committee is essentially not approving the amendment. **Walker** stated that is correct.

**Wilson** asked what the consequences will be if the amendment is not approved. **Walker** stated there would be a substantial number of projects statewide that could not be advertised; and transit projects that need to be approved before the current fiscal year ends (or they will not receive any funding) would lose access to that funding.

**Sinnott** stated that if the RPC finds the amendment objectionable, DOT can choose not to include just this MPO projects in the STIP (state TIP). That scenario almost happened once in the past. **Wilson** stated the ultimate outcome is that no projects in the region would move forwarded.

**Davison** stated he knows that project is very important to the region; however, the moving of any funds would cause the document to potentially become not fiscally constrained. Discussion ensued.

**Pesci** stated Wildcat Transit needs the amendment to be approved by August or they will lose one-half million dollars in funding. Not all the impacts would be theoretical. **Bogle** stated both COAST and CART would be in the same situation as Wildcat.

#### 8:15 pm PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

#### 4. Action on 2015-2018 TIP Amendment #1

**Motion:** **Whitney** made a motion to approve the 2015-2018 TIP Amendment #1 as presented with a stipulation that the Kingston-Plaistow project be kept in the 10-year plan process. **Doggett** seconded the motion.

**Motion:** **Pesci** made a friendly amendment to the motion that the Policy committee also raise the PO's objection to the flexing of CMAQ funds in the transmittal letter. **Whitney and Doggett** accepted the friendly amendment. **Motion carried with Coppelman, Coffin and VanBokkelen opposing.**

#### 5. Proposed Memoranda of Understanding between NH MPOs, NHDOT and Transit Agencies regarding roles and responsibilities

**Sinnott** explained the "urbanized area" partitioning of New Hampshire, the relationship between Planning Commission boundaries, MPO areas and urbanized areas and then reviewed the changes being made to the structure and content of the Memorandum of Understanding. Discussion ensued.

**Motion:** **Doggett** made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding. **Turell** seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

**6. Tides to Storms – Coastal Vulnerability Assessment from Sea Level Rise and other Coastal Flooding Hazards – Initial Maps, Analysis and Findings**

**LaBranche** distributed a handout that included her powerpoint presentation, which explained the project and results of the Tides to Storms project. Discussion ensued. She made an abbreviated presentation of the study, focusing on recommendations to communities, and impacts on transportation infrastructure.

**7. Status of State 10 Year Plan Recommendations; Update Schedule**

**Walker** distributed a handout with draft recommendations from DOT for the 10-year plan, which include five of the MPO's top projects and an update to the schedule. **Sinnott** thanked both DOT and staff for their collaboration to improve the 10-year plan process.

**Davison** thanked staff for all of their hard work. DOT's GACIT presentation of the 10-year plan is available on line.

**8. Project and Program Updates**

A handout was distributed. **Bogle** stated the Scenic Byway report has been completed and there will possibly be a full presentation at the October MPO meeting.

**Walker** stated the new RPC website is underway. The Long Range Plan will be ready for adoption in the fall of 2016.

**Sinnott** stated the final phase of the CTAP project is expected to get underway in the early fall, an RFP to eligible communities and transit agencies will be sent out soon.

**9. Other Business; Public Comment**

None.

**10. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne M. Rines  
Recording Secretary