

MINUTES
Rockingham Planning Commission
MPO Technical Advisory Committee
RPC Offices, 156 Water Street, Exeter NH
December 7, 2023

Members Present: B. Dion (Greenland); C. Cross (Newington); D. Sharples (Exeter); J. Lynch (Hampton); P. Coffin (Kingston); E. Eby (Portsmouth); J. Lavacchia (Hampstead); V. Partington, (NHDES); L. St. John (NHDOT); L. Levine (FHWA).

Staff: D. Walker (Assistant Director); S. Bogle (Senior Transportation Planner)

1. Introductions

Roll call attendance was taken. Walker indicated that the chair was not attending and that he would run the meeting.

2. Minutes of 4/27/23, 8/24/2023, and 10/26/2023 Meetings

Minutes of the meetings were approved without discussion. Motion: P. Coffin. Seconded by E. Eby. Unanimous with no abstentions.

3. Annual Highway Safety Performance Targets – D. Walker

Walker provided an overview of the five Federally required annual Highway Safety Improvement Program Performance Targets. These cover fatalities, serious injuries, fatality rate, serious injury rate, and total non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries. In addition, the MPO considers an annual performance target for motorcycle fatalities in the region. Walker discussed the historic numbers for each and the current trends being observed in the state and the region. Also discussed that this will likely be the last year that the MPO supports the state targets instead of setting their own. The development of a Safety Action Plan for the region as part of the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant requires that declining targets be set for fatalities and serious injuries with a future goal of zero, so MPO annual targets will need to reflect that in the future. Motion to recommend that the MPO support the State HSIP targets for 2024 and set a motorcycle fatalities target was put forward by P. Coffin and seconded by B. Dion. Unanimous with no abstentions.

4. Regional Transit Safety Targets – S. Bogle

Bogle provided an overview of public transit safety measures defined by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that must be tracked by public transit agencies as well as private intercity transit operators if they receive federal operating assistance. Measures include both the absolute number of, and the rate per 500,000 vehicle revenue miles for, fatalities, serious injuries, safety events, and system reliability. Each of these measures must in turn be tracked

separately for fixed route bus service, demand response service and intercity bus service given the different characteristics of each service type. MPOs must adopt regional targets based on an aggregation of the targets set by transit operators in the region. In the RPC MPO region these operators include COAST, MTA/CART, and Boston Express Bus Service which received federal operating support for their intercity commuter service on the I93 corridor. Agency targets must be updated at least every three years, though agencies can update targets annually. In the MPO region COAST and Boston Express update their targets annually while MTA/CART updates theirs every three years. Bogle reviewed targets for each agency and a proposed set of combined regional targets and asked for a motion that the TAC recommend adoption of these targets to the MPO Policy Committee at their December meeting. Motion by P. Coffin. Seconded by D. Sharples. Unanimous with no abstentions.

5. Regional Safety Action Plan Development

Walker compared the HSIP performance targets with Safety Action Plans and discussed how the MPO will need to adjust the HSIP targets to meet Safety Action Plan requirements. One of the primary requirements is that Safety Action Plans include declining targets towards a future goal for zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries. This is compared to HSIP targets which look at historic performance and current trends to set targets. Walker showed examples of how the longer-term targets of zero fatalities and serious injuries might be reflected in the annual regional HSIP targets and how that may be different from the State targets for the year. As part of the Safety Action Plan development, the MPO will need to establish a goal year for zero fatalities and serious injuries. Examples included setting 2035, 2045, and 2050 as the goal year.

6. Improving TAC Participation – S. Bogle

Bogle reviewed recent staff work to improve participation in the TAC. We have regular, active participation from eleven of the 25 towns currently eligible for voting seats. Three towns currently have no appointee, while eleven towns have either an appointee or a contact for TAC mailings but have not participated in 2022-2023. Three of the eight agency members with voting seats have also not attended a meeting during 2022-2023. While the 11 active communities and the active agencies constitute a quorum for doing business, at times we've had difficulty getting enough members physically present as opposed to tuning in via Zoom. Staff are currently contacting TAC members who have not been active recently, and communities with no current appointee to ensure that inactive seats are filled. The group discussed providing food as an incentive to attend in person, including moving the meeting to lunchtime and serving pizza as NRPC does with their TAC. There was also brief discussion of adding more outside speakers, so meetings provide more opportunities to learn about transportation topics, beyond just managing the mechanics of the MPO process. Topic suggestions included EVs, the new Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) that set new sidewalk and crossing accessibility requirements for municipalities, and traffic management/adaptive signal control.

7. Agency Updates and Announcements – Multiple TAC Members

Sharples described the Downtown Parking and Traffic Study currently being completed for Exeter by Stantec. Key recommendations include bringing back paid parking in the downtown to manage demand, and reconfiguring the intersection at the Bandstand into a four way stop with Water Street, Front Street and String Bridge. Some recommendations from the Stantec study will be integrated into the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan that RPC is currently finishing for

the Town. Cross shared discussions happening in Newington regarding a senior housing development proposed at Exit 4 on the Spaulding Turnpike, and work on trail building to provide non-motorized connections in the village. Eby discussed a recent Federal Rail Administration grant to address railroad crossings in Portsmouth as well as work to study options for the Bartlett Street bridge.

8. Project Updates

No project updates were provided due to lack of time

Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Walker, Recording Secretary
