

MINUTES

**Rockingham Planning Commission
MPO Technical Advisory Committee
RPC Offices, 156 Water Street, Exeter NH
Thursday, March 27, 2025, 12:00 PM-2:00 PM**

Members Present: S. Kizza (Brentwood); D. Sharples (Exeter); B. Dion (Greenland); J. Lynch (Hampton); P. Coffin (Kingston); C. Cross (Newington); C. Papachristos (Newton); T. Moore (Plaistow); E. Eby J. Harris (Portsmouth); J. Shaw (Rye); S. Connors (Stratham); M. Williams (COAST); M. Bevier (NH DES); L. Levine (FHWA).

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

1. Introductions

Roll call attendance was taken.

2. Minutes of 02/27/2025 Meeting

Minutes of the meetings were approved without discussion. **Motion: P. Coffin; Seconded by J. Shaw. Approved**

3. Transportation Alternatives Program – S. Bogle

S. Bogle provided an overview of the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and the one project application received in the region during the current application round. The project, submitted by the Town of Exeter, includes a suite of sidewalk, crossing and traffic calming improvements on Front Street and Railroad Avenue. This includes 1245' of new sidewalk on the west side of Railroad Ave between Front and Winter Streets, tightening the intersection of Front and Railroad to shorten the crossing distance and add an ADA tip-down on the west end of the crosswalk, building new sidewalk on the north side of Front Street between Agway and Railroad Ave, and adding flashing beacons at the crosswalk on Front Street near Agway. All elements of the project were recommendations from the Exeter Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, completed for the town by RPC in 2024. The total project cost is \$1.3M, of which \$1.08M (80%) is requested in federal funding with a 20% match committed by the town. **Motion to recommend the Exeter proposal as the regional priority for the TAP program. Motion: P. Coffin; Seconded by B. Dion. Approved – D. Sharples, M. Bevier abstained.**

4. MPO Public Participation Plan Update – S. Bogle

Bogle presented on the MPO's Public Participation Plan (PPP) which was updated by staff this winter. The Public Participation Plan is a key planning document required for all MPOs, and describes how the RPC MPO engages with residents, town officials and state and federal policy makers to ensure availability of full information on planning processes and proposed projects, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and early and continuing participation in developing plans. The plan was last revised in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and still

references emergency orders from the pandemic era that have since been repealed. Key changes in the new plan include: updating demographic information for municipalities, summarizing MPO engagement efforts over the past four years, clarifying policy on virtual and hybrid meetings post-COVID, updating federal legislation references, acknowledging repeal by the current administration of Executive Orders related to Environmental Justice, updating TAC and Policy Committee rosters, and acknowledging changes in online platforms used for outreach.

Motion to recommend the approval of the updated Public Participation Plan after a 45-day public comment period. Motion: B. Dion; Seconded by P. Coffin. Approved – M. Bevier abstained.

5. Regional Safety Action Plan – D. Walker

Walker summarized the purpose and content of the Regional Safety Action Plan. The SAP has been in development for just over a year and commits the MPO/RPC to working towards zero traffic related fatalities and serious injuries. The plan includes a number of components including a commitment to zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries, a structure for overseeing and maintaining the SAP, a detailed safety analysis, engagement with the public, considerations of equity, proposed policy and process changes, strategies for implementation, and ways of measuring progress and sharing that with the public. Walker followed up with an overview of the changes proposed for the draft which fall into technical edits, some updates to the crash analysis, and some additional requested strategies. There is also an outstanding issue regarding the Equity Analysis as it is required by the project agreement with FHWA however recent actions by the current administration have revoked many of the policies behind those requirements. Word from FHWA is still forthcoming regarding how to best handle that aspect of the project but it is anticipated to be resolved in the near future. ***Motion to recommend that the MPO adopt the Regional Safety Action Plan including the proposed revisions identified in the draft. Motion: B. Dion; Seconded by P. Coffin. Approved – S. Kizza abstained.***

6. Post Project Prioritization Ten Year Plan Discussion – D. Walker

With only a few minutes remaining in the meeting, the TAC began discussing the recently completed project solicitation and selection process. Walker provided a quick overview of the intention of this discussion and a reminder of the process for those that are new to the TAC. Early discussion included concerns over funding limitations and suggestions to start the project solicitation process earlier to reduce the time pressure at the end. Another concern raised was that feedback from NHDOT Project Review occurs at a point in the process where it is very difficult to choose alternative projects if NHDOT sees the scope as a barrier or the cost is much higher than initial estimates. This conversation will continue at the April TAC meeting.

7. Agency Updates and Announcements

M. Bevier indicated that NHDES will be releasing a new multi-million dollar RFP under the Granite State Clean Fleets grant program (funded by Volkswagen Mitigation Trust) very soon. This will be open to public and private organizations.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Walker, Recording Secretary
