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DRAFT

**Salem-Plaistow-Windham
Public Hearing and MPO Policy Committee Meeting
Draft FY 2003-2005 TIP
Minutes**

Wednesday, August 15, 2001
Plaistow Public Library

Members Present: Dick Sunday, Chair, Richard Cooney, and Bill Scott, Salem; Marilyn Senter, Plaistow; Susan Hastings, Hampstead; Paul Sullivan, Atkinson; Tony Komornick, MVPC; Becky Ohler, NHDES; and Bill Watson, NHDOT.

Others Present: Joe Costanzo, MVRTA; Dave Walker, Scott Bogle, Cliff Sinnott, and Roxanne Rines, RPC.

Proxy Votes: Glenn Coppelman, Kingston; and Mary Allen, Newton.

7:15 p.m. PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

1. Introductions

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

ADOPTION OF THE 1999-2020 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (AUGUST 2001 UPDATE)

1. Purpose and Summary of changes to document
2. Public Comment & Questions

Walker stated the current plan expires this month, if that happens without a new plan the MPO's transportation conformity expires which means that no federal transportation projects can move forward. He explained that an interim update to the plan has been developed; all the factual information has been updated, the policies included in the plan are unchanged. The latest adopted TIP was also added.

He continued that approval of the update is needed tonight, so that conformity can remain in place. This will serve as the MPO's transportation plan until a full intensive update is complete in about 18 months. The full update will include significant public involvement, fully looking at revising all of the policies that are included, adding some new chapters (air quality and traffic calming).

Walker and Bogle reviewed the index and spoke about the chapters that had revisions. **Ohler** stated she will give her corrections to Walker. **Walker** stated the appendices are available at the RPC office for anyone who wants them. He continued that tonight staff is looking for a re-affirmation of the plan until a full update is completed. Hopefully, the full update will be completed so that it can be adopted along with the TIP and only one air quality conformity determination will be needed.

After no public comment, Sunday stated final discussion of this subject will continue under item #4. **Senter** commended staff for their hard work on the update.

Motion: **Senter** made a motion to adjourn the public hearing. **Hastings** seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

7:30 p.m. PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

7:30 p.m. POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING OPENED

Sunday stated item #5 would be moved ahead on the agenda.

5. MA-NH Transit Initiatives in the I-93 Corridor, Joe Costanza, MVRTA

Sinnott stated at the last Policy meeting it was decided that Joe would be invited to discuss some of the transit initiatives that are occurring in the I-93 corridor. Specifically, the River Road TMA, with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission and the MVRTA through a CMAQ grant process along with some funding from New Hampshire. There is an attempt to initiative a service that would provide a targeted transit service from park & rides in the I-93 corridor to the River Road employment area in North Andover.

Another reason for Joe's attendance is to explore the possibility of expanding on the above service to include inner-city service that might serve the Salem park & ride (when one exists). **Sinnott** stated the MPO had flexed some highway funding into the transit category to try and subsidize the start-up of transit service on the I-93 corridor, serving Windham, Salem and into Boston. One of the reasons that service hasn't started is because there is no park & ride in Salem, and the operator that was awarded the contract (Concord Trailways) is no longer interested.

Costanzo stated River Road is stuck in neutral, one of the major stumbling blocks is that the TMA did not put enough money on the table for the match. He hasn't yet spoken with them about financing. Another TMA has been formed in another part of Andover, they have done internal surveys and there is around 100+ residence that do live in the Londonderry/Windham corridor who have access to the park & rides and indicate an interest in express commuter service.

Sinnott asked that if a stable park & ride were found in Salem (as in interim, prior to construction) and funds become available for TMA service, what else would be needed to get service started? **Costanzo** stated it depends on the market place. Any carrier would have to be guaranteed a subsidy in order to start service, there needs to be a market.

Sinnott stated he believes some of the problem is that there isn't any competition amongst bus carriers north of Salem. **Costanzo** spoke about the potential for ridership. Further discussion ensued about what type of funds are available and how these could be spent.

Sunday asked about future service to the Woburn Transportation center and into Boston. **Costanzo** stated that Twombly Bus line is talking with the Lowell Junction team about such a service.

Sinnott stated the I-93 study has been looking at enhanced bus service. This means that in addition to the inter-city service an operator might also offer a service that is targeted to employment centers. Staff is interested in getting service started prior to the end of the I-93 construction.

Sinnott continued that there was a meeting at the MVPC and it was discussed that a two-state study be initiated that looks beyond what is being contemplated on I-93. He asked what will happen to deal with the continued growth in that corridor and the need for transportation beyond the capacity of I-93. There needs to be some by-state communication about the problems facing I-93.

Komornick stated that NH has made a request for a by-state study that will look at long-term transit options in the corridor. Secretary Sullivan agrees with the idea; however, he would prefer we wait until both studies are done, before moving forward.

Ohler asked if the study is going to include the feasibility of HOV lanes? **Sinnott** stated that the VHB study showed that HOV success further south causes the capacity to be reached sooner because the longer the lane the sooner it will be filled to capacity. **Komornick** stated that the study showed that there would be too many motorist who would want to exit.

Walker asked Costanzo if there are barriers which prevent Massachusetts providers from running local transit service into New Hampshire? **Costanzo** stated it is political, because of the retail implications. Members discussed the same by-state issues concerning Routes 121 and 125.

Motion: **Senter** made a motion that the MPO Policy Committee support the creation of a By-state Transit Alternatives Study of the I-93 corridor and send the above communication to the New Hampshire Congressional Delegation. **Hastings** seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

2. Communications

Walker stated on August 14th, the State released the Draft 2003-2012 10-Year Transportation Improvement Program to the GACIT. A handout was given that listed the SPW regions projects and compared them with the projects that were listed in both the 2001-2010 and 2003-2012 TIP's.

Watson stated the 2003-2012 draft is a lot easier to understand this round and explained the new format of the document. Communications between DOT and planning commissions have increased. Planning Commissions were allowed to view a draft of the plan in the beginning of the year and give their input before the current document was put together. **Senter** stated that the town of Plaistow does not need assistance in extending the water line in project #12359.

Cooney asked what is happening with the Salem bypass, why is it being pushed further out, again? **Walker** stated the project has been re-structured into smaller chunks, some of them have been moved forward and some moved back. It may be on the same schedule, it's just rearranged a little bit. **Watson** stated some of the pieces have been both advanced and delayed.

Sinnott stated that both the TE and CMAQ applications are due to the RPC office by August 31st. **Sinnott** introduced Scott Bogle, the RPC's newest transportation planner and Bill Scott, Salem's Community Development Director and stated that David Walker has been promoted to Senior Transportation Planner.

3. Approval of Minutes from April 4, 2001, Policy Committee Meeting

Motion: **Senter** made a motion to accept the minutes of April 4, 2001, as corrected. **Ohler** seconded the motion. **Senter** stated on page 1, has the wrong date; page 2, item 4 – last word in second line should be Cushing; page 3, first paragraph – personnel; page 2, last paragraph – webpage. **Motion carried with Sunday abstaining.**

4. Review and Adoption of 1999-2020 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN, AUGUST 2001 UPDATE

Motion: **Senter** made a motion to adopt the 1999-2020 Long-Range Transportation Plan August 2001 update, subject to no negative public comments being received. **Hastings** seconded the motion.

Cooney stated he is still unhappy about the Salem bypass being pushed back in years. **Walker** stated the Salem bypass is in the 10-year plan, not this long-range plan. **Watson** suggested that members attend the GACIT hearings to speak about their projects.

Sinnott stated that if the MPO wants to present something to GACIT this is the time to discuss it. One of the items staff looked at is that the project that was added has less priority than some of the others the MPO had ranked. **Scott** stated he is confused as to how both I-93 and the Salem bypass can be constructed at the same time. **Watson** suggested the MPO speak with project manager, Jeff Brillhart.

Ohler asked if the MPO should send a letter to Jeff Brillhart asking him the questions presented tonight and requesting answers prior to the GACIT hearings. **Sinnott** stated the MPO ask whether there is a delay or just a separating of the bypass project. **Motion carried.**

Motion: **Cooney** made a motion that a letter be written to Jeff Brillhart asking for an update and clarification on project #10075, why the delay and invite him to the MPO's next meeting. **Senter** seconded the motion. **Ohler** asked what will the MPO do if the response isn't satisfactory? **Sinnott** suggested staff write a draft response to GACIT based on what the response from Jeff is and circulate that letter to members and find out if they are comfortable with the response. If there isn't a resolution than another meeting can be held.

Walker stated the response from Jeff can also be forwarded to Town representatives on the Committee and they can decide the town wants to respond or it can be looked at from the MPO's response (regional). **Motion carried.**

Motion: **Cooney** made a motion that the response letter be distributed to committee members for review, and that the MPO write a letter to GACIT taking the position that the Route 111 bypass is an important project. **Senter** seconded the motion.

Sinnott asked if the letter should be about only 111 or should it include other projects. It was decided that the letter should only contain comments about Route 111. **Motion carried.**

6. TE & CMAQ Program

A. *Potential projects from the MPO area*

Scott stated Salem has a CMAQ application to conduct an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) for Route 28. The town's intent is to do an analysis from the MA line to 111. It is the hope that this study will determine the type of system that will allow the timing of the lights to respond to peak traffic times and emergencies more effectively.

He continued that the second part of the ITS study is a town wide traffic study, with the development in town, there is an increase at the smaller intersections and also an analysis on the impact fee system which is limited to Route 28.

Scott continued that members of the community want the town to look at a sidewalk project on Veterans from Lawrence Road to Geremonty because the senior center is going to be built in that area. The Salem Chamber is also going to be issuing a survey to the biggest employers asking for employees special needs. He reviewed other projects in town and future needs.

Senter stated Plaistow has a sidewalk project that is included in the current TIP; however, the scope of the project needs to be changed because the Public Library has changed locations.

Sullivan stated Atkinson will be re-submitting a sidewalk project from 1999 to connect the town hall, elementary school, library (when built) and fire station. The Selectmen support the application.

Sinnott stated staff is considering submitting a second application asking for an amendment for the MBTA extension into Plaistow. Staff is awaiting a rationale and cost estimate report from David Fink for double tracking. **Sinnott** asked Watson if the Policy Committee should submit a second application or write to the committee saying the scope has changed and why? **Watson** stated submitting a revision.

Sinnott stated staff has an idea to develop an implementation guide for communities for bike and pedestrian facilities. It would be a guide to help in the how to plan and how to go through the grant process. There was discussion about other programs or money that would be available for the above project.

B. Evaluation Process

Sinnott stated that the SRPC wants to change the evaluation process. The first couple of rounds projects were evaluated by regional planning commission boundaries, not MPO boundaries. Within the last two rounds the process was changed to reflect MPO boundaries, just as transportation projects for the TIP are completed.

SRPC is thinking is that the Seacoast MPO is so large (35 communities) and the SPW MPO is so small (9 communities) that the smaller communities in the seacoast get lost. **Sinnott** stated a way to better balance the odds is to go back to regional planning boundaries. However, when the RPC Executive Committee met they were not so sure it was a good idea because of the transportation connection.

Sinnott stated he doesn't think it makes a big difference as to how the projects fair, because the RPC's priorities are but one of the many items that the state committee bases their decision on. Sinnott continued that if the outcome is to return to the planning commissions boundaries, than both CMAQ and TE projects would come from the 27 towns within our region. The current bulk of the TE and CMAQ projects come from the seacoast MPO.

7. Project Updates

A. I-93 Expansion Projects

Sinnott stated roadway design is the most active component right now and there has been a series of meetings with towns. The key issues are: noise, water and drainage (flooding); other issues are: lack of a serious study of a rail alternative, and the location of the exit 2 park & ride. There is an ongoing secondary impact study to try to use an innovative technique called an expert panel or a delfi method. Get a group of experts together that can help answer a question that has no precise answer.

He continued that the DOT has decided not to pursue a rail study as part of the EIS, the EPA and DES have taken a contrary view on their comment on the scoping report that say that those elements should be included in the EIS.

B. Greater Derry/Greater Salem Regional Transportation Council Transit Plan

Bogle gave an overview of the organization. He continued that the RPC and the Council submitted funds to conduct a planning study to develop an approach to best meet the needs to the region, in terms of transit. What is needed is a means of better coordinating the various para-transit providers that are out there. Also the goal is to provide a coordinated scheduling and dispatching service, so the vans can serve several agencies at once.

Bogle stated there is a kickoff meeting on Thursday, September 20th, at the Derry/Salem Elks on Route 11.

C. Regional Bike Maps

Bogle showed a schematic of what is proposed to be on the back of the map. This will include intermodel connections, bike shops in the area, places to stay, sites to see, etc. Print date is set for March 2002. Routes

are decided upon; however, they are still looking for the symbols and notations for the maps and what additional information should be included. He concluded that the maps are available for review at the RPC office.

Sullivan asked if signage along the bike routes will be posted warning motorist of the path? **Bogle** stated there isn't signage planned for every route, just like proposals for shoulders, it is upto the towns to apply for funds with TE or CMAQ money.

D. Portland-Boston Rail Service

Sinnott stated the lease agreements between the state and Guilford are been signed, this was a major hurdle. There is still some negotiating between NEEPRA (the operator of the service) and MBTA about times of arrival. The safety outreach programs are continuing, the next phase is they are going to have two driver training seminars.

E. MPO Website (<http://www.rpc-nh.org/SPW>)

Bogle stated there is now an spw website, you can either use the above address or there is a link from the rpc website to both the spw and seacoast sites. He showed a preview of the website. There is also a link to the online version of the regional transit guide and also information about federal tax incentives for alternate commutes.

8. Other Business

Ohler stated that a single monitoring station has to exceed the one-hour standard three times within a three-year period to be considered in violation of the ozone standard. Until last week all monitors had measured clean data without a single violation. The violation happened in Massachusetts, all of our serious non-attainment areas are tied to the Boston/Lawrence MSA.

Sinnott stated that the MPO is a member of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) and they have asked us to reaffirm our voting representation in the organization. He continued that the MPO has never designated a voting representation to the AMPO. The AMPO's bylaws state that it must be a member of the Policy committee, although a staff person can be named as an alternate. He recommended to the committee that he be named as an alternate, but someone else needs to be named as representative.

Sinnott continued that the duties would be very minimal, an annual meeting and voting.

Motion: Cooney nominated Richard Sunday to be the AMPO representative and Cliff Sinnott to be the alternate. **Senter** seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

9. Adjourn

Motion: Ohler made a motion to adjourn at 10:30 p.m. **Senter** seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne M. Rines, Recording Secretary