

DRAFT

Salem-Plaistow-Windham Technical Advisory Committee Minutes

Friday, August 25, 2000
Salem Town Offices

Members Present: Ellen Faulconer, Kingston; Dick Lemieux, FHWA; Marilyn P Senter, Plaistow; Ram Maddali, NHDOT; Kathleen Brockett, NHDES; Steve Laurin, Newton; and Jim Turse, Salem.

Others Present: Patricia Monfet, Greater Derry/Salem Transportation Council; Linda Harvey, Salem; Eric Twarog, Windham; Tony Komornick, MVPC; Thomas Jameson, NHDOT; Dave Walker, Maura Carriel, and Roxanne Rines, RPC.

Meeting opened at 9:26 a.m.

1. Introductions

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

2. Communications

The communications file was distributed.

3. Approval of the minutes from February 4, April 25, and June 30, 2000 meetings.

Motion: Senter made a motion to approve the minutes of February 4, 2000, as written. **Laurin** seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

Motion: Faulconer made a motion to approve the minutes of April 25, 2000, as written. **Senter** seconded the motion. **Motion carried with Senter and Brockett abstaining.**

Motion: Faulconer stated the meeting was at the Library not Town Hall. **Senter** made a motion to approve the minutes of June 30, 2000, as amended. **Faulconer** seconded the motion. **Motion carried with Brockett abstaining.**

4. Review and Recommendation of 2001-2003 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Walker distributed hand-outs: a map showing all of the projects physical locations with a brief description on the back and a list of comments and questions sent to DOT with their response.

He continued with a brief background, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) lists all the federally funded projects in the region along with significant state funded projects. Each planning commission develops a local TIP and then they are combined to form the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP is a three-year document from 2001 to 2003.

Walker stated the STIP is also part of the 10-year program currently up for adoption. He started with page 4 the projects contain brief changes requested by the DOT. **Laurin** noted a decimal error with project #10075. Walker stated that some of the descriptions were cut off; however, the full description is in the database.

Senter stated that the town of Plaistow has respectfully declined to take over the management of construction on project #13110, because the towns portion of the funding is split between two years. **Walker** asked if a letter from the town had been sent to DOT. **Senter** replied the committee meets next week.

Walker stated the new projects that showed up were state funded, they do not necessarily need to be included, DOT added them as a courtesy. **Walker** reviewed the handout.

Falconer questioned the delay on project #10044B, will the consultant/right-of-way issues delay construction? **Maddali** stated he understands that it will not, construction is still scheduled for 2003.

Walker continued with page 2. **Turse** spoke of project #12334, the town has acquired the old Getty station, which is located at the project intersection. **Walker** stated that DOT is going to cover the match on project #13119, the park & ride, and that they are currently looking at other possible sites. **Turse** spoke of the Conservation Commissions opposition to using the Rockingham Boulevard site due to wetland issues. Discussion ensued about past concerns and problems with the Rockingham Boulevard site. **Maddali** stated the Rockingham Boulevard site is still an option.

Walker stated five projects on page 2 concern various aspect of the I-93 widening. **Turse** stated the EIS component has the attention of the Salem Chamber of Commerce. He understands there has been a commitment on behalf of Senator Smith to assist with the EIS streamlining. He asked Walker to expound. **Walker** stated streamlining is a federal government effort to bring all the environmental players together at an earlier juncture in the process.

Turse stated Salem's chamber representative would like to have a contact person from the I-93 Advisory Task Force, he asked Walker if he would be that person? **Walker** stated not that he is aware of; however, he will check into it.

Brockett stated DES has given their comments on the EIS scope of work. She continued that DES has been involved with the I-93 project involving air quality conformity determinations; however, there are other DES divisions that do not get involved until later, i.e. water commission.

Komornick asked if VHB is involved with the I-93 project? **Maddali** stated project #'s 10418 and 10408 A & B are dependent on #10418C, he's not sure who the consultant is. He continued that there is going to be coordination between FHA, EPA, and DES. The draft EIS is expected to be completed by September 2001.

Lemieux stated that VHB is the consultant, they are now working on traffic projections, 3 alternatives for rail, etc. **Turse** stated that VHB is not known for guiding the environmental process.

Faulconer stated that DOT should not hire a firm that takes six months to complete a contract. If VHB is that busy, DOT should look at different engineering firms. **Senter** agreed with Faulconer. **Faulconer** stated VHB has caused delays twice with the 125 project and it is unreasonable.

Walker continued reviewing the changes. **Maddali** stated project #10418E is now #10418F. **Walker** stated the handout only includes the projects with changes the full document contains all of the projects.

Harvey asked if the engineering for both the Salem Depot and the Route 111 Bypass are going to include future rail trails? **Walker** stated he is unaware. **Harvey** asked Walker to please find out.

Discussion continued about project #10044B. **Walker** stated construction is still scheduled for 2003, Hunt/Newton Junction Road intersection. The right-of-way has been delayed from 2000 to 2001, due to difficulty getting a contract with the consultant. **Laurin** asked if right-of-way means actual acquisition? **Walker** stated it probably means both right-of-way engineering and acquisition. **Maddali** stated DOT is working with the consultant on a fee proposal, then the consultant will do the design and engineering, a public hearing will be held and then the right-of-way acquisition will begin.

Faulconer stated in June VHB had some issues to work out, it is now September and the issues are still not worked out. She asked about the advertising schedule, what is DOT advertising for? **Lemieux** stated future construction work.

Senter stated she spoke with the Plaistow Fire Chief about project #10044B, and asked if the town can add water pipes when the state is doing their construction? **Maddali** stated yes, he will let the project manager know of the towns request.

Walker reviewed the minor changes on page 4 of the Draft Final 2001-2003 STIP. **Turse** questioned project #12666, the project is underway, it is stated that construction is split between 2000 and 2001, the project should be complete this year. **Walker** stated he would check it out, maybe funding is spilling over after October (which is the end of DOT's fiscal year).

Motion: **Laurin** made a motion that the TAC Committee send the 2001-2003 State Transportation Improvement Program to the Policy Committee for adoption along with the recommended changes on page 4 of the handout entitled "MPO Analysis of changes in the Draft Final 2001-2003 STIP. **Turse** seconded the motion. **Motion carried with Faulconer opposed and Brockett abstaining.**

5. Rail Safety Education Outreach

Carriel stated the planning commission initiated some public safety outreach program, in advance of the passenger rail start up. The idea is to work with communities (local officials, interested citizens) and offer two forums where the community and representatives from Guilford, Amtrak, and Operation Lifesaver can meet. Citizens will be able to air concerns, ask questions

and get information on the details of the service, and improvements to rail that will be made. Staff spoke with their counterparts in Portland, Maine, and their idea is to organize and coordinate a two state effort, so that scheduled meetings aren't a conflict for Guilford and Amtrak staff.

She continued the RPC is going to have two meetings this fall. She attended the Operation Lifesaving training and is now certified as a presenter. There have been flyers sent out to schools making them aware that there is an Operation Lifesaver presenter available to make presentations.

Carriel stated there is also an incident management training program that some towns officials have attended. Two community forums will be held in the SPW region; however, locations and dates are not finalized yet. In the Seacoast region three forums will be held.

Senter and **Laurin** spoke of their concerns with the railroad crossing in Plaistow and Newton.

Harvey stated the above rail service has said that they will accept bicycles. She continued that when train service begins on I-93 she would like them to consider accepting bicycles.

Komornick asked how the I-93 service will connect to the south? **Lemieux** stated they are looking into connecting at Lawrence. **Turse** stated that connection will not afford the timely service needed for this corridor. The Lowell station has a much higher level of service. **Lemieux** stated the service is still years away and the connection will not be decided until that time.

Walker stated there also has been talk of using the Woburn connection.

6. Project Updates

A. I-93 Advisory Task Force

Walker stated this subject has been discussed and he does not have a lot to add. The Advisory Task force has been meeting monthly to discuss issues. At the September meeting discussion will focus on traffic volume projections. Some of the options they are looking at are three lanes with an HOV, four lanes without an HOV, and what could happen when rail service and a bus station is operational.

Senter stated there should be a constitutional amendment on the ballot to change the highway fund to a transportation fund. Alternative transportation projects can not touch the highway fund.

Brockett asked who facilitates the Advisory Committee meeting? **Walker** stated Jeff Brillhart (DOT), Sinnott is now the interim chair of the committee. **Maddali** stated the next meeting is September 14, at the McLaughlin Middle School in Manchester. **Komornick** stated they are having trouble finalizing a contract with VHB and by September there should be an I-93 Advisory Committee on the MA side of the border.

B. NH125 Corridor Study

Walker stated this subject was discussed and he does not have any information to add. **Senter** asked **Komornick** how the Louis Berger study is going? **Komornick** stated it is on schedule with recommendations due by the end of January 2001.

7. Other Business
- A. Air Quality Update – Determination of Non-Attainment Area Boundaries

Brockett stated with the lousy weather this summer there has been low ozone levels. EPA has published that areas previously designated under the one-hour standard are going to be re-instated and re-designated under the same status. The effective date is January 16, 2001, which means the current TIP will need to meet air quality conformity by January 16, 2001.

Walker stated the RPC will start working on air quality conformity in the fall. **Brockett** stated the 8-hour non-attainment boundaries for this region should remain as previously discussed. **Turse** stated he had a phone call from a member a Merrimack Valley Environmental Group concerned with regional issues.

Maddali introduced Tom Jameson, the new NHDOT bike/ped coordinator. **Jameson** stated the signs and cones located in crosswalks can be purchased through the Bureau of Traffic (Walter Keunehoff is the point of contact). Any town can request a crosswalk to be installed through the Bureau of Traffic; however, there are a lot of issues to be considered. The next bike/ped conference will be held on May 24, 2001, location to be announced.

Walker stated the Seacoast MPO is concerned with transportation planning rules and regulations. The FHA is working on developing and updating current new transportation rules to reflect TEA-21 and how that changed ISTEA. He has copies at the meeting for members.

Walker continued the AMPO has put together a four page document on their proposed position on the proposed rules, that is included and easier to read.

Lemieux stated the above rules are what guides everything that is done within the transportation planning process, they are being updated. Comments should be sent to Dave Walker at RPC. The comments will mean more in Washington if they are sent by the MPO. The deadline for comments has been extended until September 23, 2000.

Senter asked Pat Monfet to give an overview. **Monfet** explained that the Council is working with Holy Family Hospital in Massachusetts to provide service to participants who use their facility.

Brockett stated she has the new Honda compressed natural gas vehicle, and offered to show the vehicle to anyone who was interested.

8. Adjourn

Motion: **Senter** made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1130 a.m. **Brockett** seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Roxanne M. Rines
Recording Secretary