THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

CHRISTOPHER D. CLEMENT, SR.
COMMISSIONER

JEFF BRILLHART, P.E.
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

MINUTES OF THE
STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM
May 21, 2014; 1:00 PM
NHDOT Planning and Community Assistance Conference Room, Room G02

ATTENDANCE: Christopher Gamache, NH Dept. of Resource and Economic Development; Felice Janelle, Dept. of Environmental Services (representing Air Resource Division); Erik Paddleford, Bureau of Rail & Transit; Ruairi O'Mahony, Central NH Regional Planning Commission (representing Rural Planning Commission); Mary Ann Cooney, Dept. of Health and Human Services (representing the Commissioner of DHHS); Kerrie Diers, Nashua Regional Planning Commission (representing Urban Planning Commission for Metropolitan Planning Organizations in the State); Tim Blagden, Bike Walk Alliance of NH; Jim Esdon, DHMC Injury Prevention Center (representing Debra Samaha); Terry Johnson, Foundation for Healthy Communities

NHDOT STAFF: Thomas Jameson, Program Manager, Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance; William Watson, Administrator, Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance; John Corrigan, Safe Routes to School Coordinator, Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance; Dawn Pulica, Scribe, Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance.

GUESTS: David Preece, Southern NH Planning Commission

Tom Jameson called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

Each member was asked to introduce themselves and say what organization they represent. Areas of expertise represented by this committee are health, environment, regional planning, metropolitan planning, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, injury prevention, and recreation.

After introductions were made Tom gave a PowerPoint presentation of the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and the TAPAC's role.

During the presentation the following comments and questions were made:

- One of the main goals of the TAP selection round is to get the best projects funded with very limited TAP funds. Approximately $5 million available for the round.

- Tom commented on the funding distribution and how TAP funds require 50% of the funds to be distributed by population.

- The TAP Program will be programmatic in the STIP/TIP, which means that the entire program is in the STIP, the whole dollar amount versus each individual project.

- Bill commented that if we go forward with this proposal with the programmatic setup in the STIP/TIP that the projects need to have information clearly identified such as a list of those specific projects to back up the amount of funds.

- Min and Max thresholds will be established for projects applying for TAP funds. $200,000 will be the minimum and $800,000 will be the maximum. The average TE project is around $400,000.

- Eligible TAP activities have been focused around non-motorized transportation infrastructure. This was done because of the limited amount of TAP funds available. A list of eligible TAP activities that will not be allowed by the Department were shown.

- David Preece asked about the Safe Route to School program's travel plans which were a requirement to do infrastructure projects. Bill Watson answered that travel plans are not required under TAP. Travel plans are encouraged and can be funded by the Planning Commissions or local communities.

- Bill stated that these max and min thresholds as well as allowed eligibility activities are the Department's guidelines and may not be the same as other states TAP programs, such as Vermont or Maine. Our main goal is to focus on infrastructure for non-motorized transportation.

- The Department is setting a goal of three (3) years as the appropriate time from start to completion for a project. Milestones will be used to ensure projects comply with this timeframe. If an LPA misses a milestone projects will be evaluated and possible closed.

- For the TAP application round the following will be required:

    - All potential TAP applicants will be required to submit a letter of interest. Basic project information and a rough estimate will be required.
    - Everyone that submitted a letter of interest will be required to attend a two hour informational session. This will be mandatory.
    - All TAP applicants that have fulfilled the above requirements will be allowed to submit an application for funding.
    - TAP applications will be submitted to both NHDOT and their regional Planning Commission.
    - Regional Planning Commissions will score and rank their projects and submit rankings to NHDOT.
    - NHDOT will use Decision Lens software to score and rank projects.

- Ruairi O'Mahony questioned if DOT or DOT Districts can apply for TAP funds. Tom replied "no" TAP does not allow any State Agencies to apply. Bill Watson added non-profits cannot apply unless they partner with a municipality.

- After projects have been scored and ranked available funding will be assigned to projects until funds run out. The Department will allow 5 additional projects below the funding line to be approved but unfunded. The reason is if additional TAP funds become available before a new TAP round those projects could be considered for funding.

- The list of projects will then be presented to the Commissioner of NHDOT for his approval.

- The goal for the TAP funding round is to have projects selected by November of 2014 and have them included in the first STIP amendment in January of 2015. This will allow TAP projects to begin in the spring of 2015.

Tom Jameson turned the meeting over to Bill Watson who gave a presentation on the Decision Lens software. Bill discussed the old process used to select Transportation Enhancement projects and how Decision Lens software will be used for the new TAP selection. He demonstrated how effective the software can be in decision-making and evaluating project applications.

Tom logged into Decision Lens and opened up the criteria brainstorming section and asked the committee to suggest some criteria that would be best used for evaluating and measuring the needs for each project. The goal for this committee is to develop the criteria and compare which criterion is more important and then evaluate possible weightings for each criterion.

Some criteria that were briefly discussed were as follows:

- What type of project? (rail trail, bike path, sidewalk, bike shoulder)
- Does the project have support, financial commitment
- Purpose and Need for the project
- Safety
- Population

Tom indicated the next meeting will be used to define the criteria and to refine them. As a starting point Tom asked the committee members to email him criteria ideas. These will be compiled and entered into decision lens as a starting point for the next meeting.

Tom thanked everyone for being here and having a perfect attendance. The next two meetings will be scheduled using Doodle Poll. Tom will send out the meeting invitations the week of May 26th.

The committee adjourned at 2:45 PM.