

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUREAU OF RAIL AND TRANSIT**

MEETING REPORT

DATE OF MEETING: January 27, 2016

LOCATION OF MEETING: NHDOT, 5 Hazen Drive, Concord NH - Room 205

SUBJECT: Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (BPTAC)

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Felice Janelle, NHDES (Chair)
Gretchen Gandini, WOW Trail (Vice Chair) (by phone)
Terry Johnson, HEAL (by phone)
Jeff Latimer, Gus' Bike Shop
Tim Blagden, BWA-NH
Dave Topham, Granite State Wheelmen
Will Schoefmann, City of Keene
Erik Paddleford, NHDOT – Rail and Transit
Mary Poesse, North Country Council
Craig Tufts, CNHRPC
Scott Bogle, RPC

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS/ OTHERS PRESENT:

Larry Keniston, NHDOT – Rail and Transit
Jim Kirouac, NHDOT – Highway Design
Matt Waitkins, NRPC (by phone)

NOTES ON MEETING:

The regular meeting of the BPTAC was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by the Chair.

Approve December Minutes

The minutes of the December 16, 2015 meeting were approved.

Research Proposal Ideas

Felice gave some background on the research proposal solicitation from the Materials and Research Bureau. There are two current proposal ideas. One being developed by Plymouth State University (PSU) would essentially be a continuation of the current work they are doing with the Strava bicycle data. The project entails conducting an analysis of the Strava data and coming up with ways RPCs and DOT could use the data for planning. The research project would study bicycle usage and traffic volume estimates and tie in some of the LTS work with the potential to develop bicycle related performance measures. There is already a relationship with PSU and the thought is that the project will be competitive. The other project being proposed is one that would research the best bicycling and walking performance measures to use in NH. There was discussion that the projects may overlap in some ways. Tim Blagden thought the projects were different enough to warrant both being submitted as separate projects.

Scott Bogle informed the committee a multi-MPO DOT initiative to determine evaluation criteria and determine a set of performance metrics that would be used by the Department and all the RPCs is in the works. Strafford RPC took the lead conducting the series of interviews with community members to try to come up with a consistent set of performance metrics to respond to federal requirements. Performance metrics would link to project selection criteria in the 10 year plan process. The initiative to determine evaluation criteria will extend out to the summer of 2017. The performance measure research proposal mentioned above may recommend metrics that are different from what the MPOs come up with, so there may be some coordination that would need to take place.

Scott will send around the draft list of measure that Strafford RPC has come up with thus far. The committee can compare that list with what BPTAC has discussed in the past.

Craig suggested the research proposal may overlap with the RPC effort and may not lend itself to being selected for funding.

Felice suggested having the proposal from Plymouth by the next meeting and something from Strafford RPC then we can compare the possible projects and discuss.

Erik mentioned that all ideas/ proposals would need to go through the Rail and Transit Bureau to determine what may be suitable to put forward as a research proposal. BPTAC can recommend project proposals but cannot submit proposals directly to the research group.

Jeff Latimer suggested an economic impact study would be a good potential research project as well. Erik mentioned part of the bicycle pedestrian plan request for qualifications included conducting an economic impact study as part of the bike/ pedestrian plan. Larry offered to help Jeff with the proposal Jeff writes up by passing it through the research section for review and suggestions. Larry suggested developing research ideas on an ongoing basis to be ready when funding opportunities come along; having projects ready to go should be something the group is continuously working on.

Support Letter for the Statewide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan funding

BPTAC has developed a support letter to request funding an update to the statewide bicycle and pedestrian plan. Jeff suggested adding something about the cost savings related to roadway maintenance that come from reducing vehicle usage while increasing bicycle use. Jeff will work on this and submit the letter to Felice when completed. Erik will submit the letter once the edits are made.

Tim asked about tying the bicycle/ pedestrian plan to the revision of the highway design manual. This will likely be included in the project planning process when the plan is updated.

Project Ranking Discussion

BPTAC developed a project ranking list when the BPTAC was first re-established in 2013. The committee reviewed the project list to look at what has been done, what projects should still be considered or removed, and rank projects based on priority. Felice reviewed the project ranking list with the committee. The resulting discussion produced some changes to the project list. A number of items were considered related to complete streets, so they were consolidated. A few other projects will be discussed further at subsequent meetings. The update to the Statewide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan is still considered the highest priority project (the most recent version of the plan dates back to 2000). Other projects that are currently ongoing include monitoring and interpreting current statutes of pending legislation and provided information to DOT, continuing with the

statewide bicycle and pedestrian traffic counting system and plan, providing input as needed on a complete street policy, updating the state bicycle maps to be online and interactive, developing recommendations related to striping/ rumble strips and signing, planning a conference (every 2 years), and discussing chip sealing treatments.

Project related discussions took place by committee members on the topics below.

Complete Streets

Tim indicated a meeting with Commissioner Sheehan took place with members of BWA-NH, Transport NH, and other DOT personnel. The commissioner seemed to be receptive to the complete street ideas discussed at the meeting. BWA-NH has been working with members of the state legislature to work toward a statewide complete street policy and discussed ways the DOT could be involved in the process should the legislature adopt a policy in the future.

DOT Bike/ Ped Website

Felice commented that the DOT bike/ped page was difficult to navigate and locating specific documents was a challenge and wondered if there was a way to make the website more user friendly and provide better information on bike/ ped safety. Larry asked Felice to contact him about the website and discuss ways to make it better.

Outreach

Tim indicated that the Driving Towards Zero group has a little bit of funding and some text in for Radio PSA's and that may be a way to get information out the public.

Felice would like to discuss little or no cost ways to conduct public outreach during the next meeting. NHDOT does have Facebook and Twitter accounts and those have been used by the bike /ped section in the past to get information out about the 3 foot rule and bike to work day.

Bike to work day; the Seacoast area, Dartmouth/ Hanover area, DOT and DES have promoted it in the past, but no unified statewide effort since about 2008. Commute Green has trip logger; there was supposed to be new software for Commute Green NH but it not clear where that stands. The committee should discuss ways to promote bike to work day at next meeting. Dave mentioned that LAB has a free nationwide trip logger that could be used in lieu of the Commute Green trip logger.

Felice will reach out to DMV to see when the driver's manual will be updated in order to see if bicycle and pedestrian related information could be added or updated whenever the manual gets updated.

Counting

Mary Poesse mentioned NCC could not get approval to conduct bicycle and pedestrian counting last fall. Wording in the UPWP has been changed so counting should be an eligible expense during the next counting season. The statewide counting plan developed by the counting subcommittee has been adopted by the Department and should make it easier for those RPCs who conduct bicycle and pedestrian counting to have the work eligible for funding through their UPWP.

Data Collection

The committee discussed ways for cyclists to log the locations of problem areas on state roadways. There may be a way to use ArcGIS online to develop an app for this. It could be a way to gather information and relay that information to the DOT design engineers when planning a project. Local bicycle organizations could help gather information as well. Scott mentioned RPC had a UNH intern used the “seeclckfix” application to have people report problem areas on a map. This application was also used by Portsmouth for their bike/ ped plan. Concord ended up using paper maps and surveys due to cost of setting up a specific app. Will Schoefmann has done something like this in Keene. There is an ArcGIS free app called collector used to collect field data that may be useful for something like this.

City of Manchester has used an online app to crowdsource the locations of potholes, which were then fixed in about 2 weeks. This topic should be discussed at the next meeting.

Subcommittee Charters

Erik indicated the charters have been reviewed internally with some minor changes being made. The charters have been reviewed by Felice and Erik will send the final versions out to the subcommittee chairs.

Strava Purchase Update

Erik indicated he recently submitted a proposal to purchase the next 2 years of Strava bicycle and pedestrian data to the Planning Bureau for consideration. To accompany this request, a letter was sent to all the RPC directors asking for support for the purchase by explaining what types of regional planning activities each RPC would conduct with the updated Strava data. RPC responses were received and submitted to the Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance for review and final approval of funding. Funding has been approved and the purchase request has been submitted.

Advocacy Update

Tim indicated that SENATE BILL 364 – 2016 AN ACT establishing a committee to study the feasibility of incorporating complete streets into the 10-year transportation improvement plan has been introduced. Tim indicated 2016 is a year of educating the legislature and 2017 would be first chance at getting a bill to change policy. However, NHDOT could always develop its own complete street policy.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm

Next Meeting: February 24, 2016 11:00-1:00pm, NHDOT: 5 Hazen Drive, Room 205 – Materials and Research Building.