**Southwest Region Planning Commission**

**Transportation Advisory Committee**

**Minutes**

**October 3, 2022**

**Present:** Kendall Lane, Chairman, *City of Keene;* Frank Sterling, Vice Chairman, *Town of Jaffrey;* Susan Ashworth, *Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services;* Brian Barden, *Town of Dublin;* Leslie Casey, *Town of Sullivan;* Leandra MacDonald, *Town of Peterborough;* Cheryl Mayberry, *Town of Walpole;* Ed Smith, *Town of Hinsdale;* Ruth Ward, *Town of Stoddard;* Bruce Tatro, *Town of Swanzey;* Lucy St. John and John Kallfelz (ex officios) *NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT).*

**Staff members present:**  Tim Murphy, *Executive Director*; J. B. Mack, *Principal Planner*; Rebecca Baldwin, *Office Manager*; Henry Underwood, *GIS Specialist/Planner.*

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Lane called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance.

**II. Minutes of September 12, 2022**

**Motion: To approve the minutes of September 12, 2022 as presented.**

Motion by Frank Sterling, seconded by Cheryl Mayberry. Minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

**III. 2025-2034 Ten Year Plan Project Review Process**

J. B. Mack announced that today’s meeting would focus on scoring criteria that will be used to score and rank projects that have been nominated for the 2025-2034 Ten Year Plan (TYP). It will serve as a refresher for TAC members that participated in the 2023-2032 TYP cycle and as training for new TAC members. He referred to the *NH Ten Year Plan: Regional Project Review* document that was included in the agenda packet noting that the same criteria will be used by all of the RPCs for their individual scoring of projects. Review criterion consists of eight categories including Economic Development, Equity, Environmental Justice and Accessibility, Mobility, Natural Hazard Resiliency, Network Significance, Safety, State of Repair, and Support. The TAC previously agreed to use the weighting system for all criteria and subcriteria that was used for the 2023-2032 TYP cycle, with had Safety as the criterion most heavily weighted.

J. B. Mack reviewed the procedure used for scoring projects noting that scorers should be consistent and use their best judgement. He noted that there are two types of criteria that are part of the scoring rubric. One type of criteria looks at “project need” and the other looks at “project impact”. The “project need” scale runs from 1 to 10 with 10 indicating a very high need and 1 indicating no need. The “project impact” scale uses a similar aproach, however, projects can also be scored a “0” which means that the project will have a negative impact. TAC members should not assign negative numbers to scores if they believe the project will create a negative impact. Lucy St. John noted that each of the RPCs assisted in developing the scoring criteria and assign weights according to the one that is of most importance to them. J. B. Mack continued explaining that the *NH Ten Year Plan: Regional Project Review* document is structured with two columns for each criterion. On the left hand side of the page, there are prompting questions that TAC members should ask themselves about the project to determine a particular score for that project based on the information that they are provided about the project. On the right hand side of the page, there are examples of sources of information that should be considered as background information or evidence addressing each prompting question. To assist in helping TAC understand the scoring process, J. B. Mack used the NH 101 Corridor Improvements project that was scored in the last TYP cycle to demonstrate how the scoring and ranking process works, covering each set of criteria.

J. B. Mack explained that staff will put together a “project profile” for each project. The project profiles mirror the structure of the scoring guidance in the *NH Ten Year Plan: Regional Project Review* document with prompting questions on the left hand side and relevant, available background information or evidence on the right hand side of the page pertaining to the project in question. He encouraged TAC members to share any other supporting documentation that they might be aware of on a particular project. Chairman Lane noted that TAC is not locked-in to any opinions that staff might share and should independently score each project. Lucy St. John noted the importance of looking at the impact each project has on the overall transportation system. Bruce Tatro asked how much consideration should be given to opinions from surrounding communities during the scoring process. J. B. Mack replied this should be taken into consideration under the Support criterion, if there is evidence available showing a community’s level of support or lack of support.

J. B. Mack noted that the projects for the Westmoreland River Road Bridge Replacement, Swanzey NH 10 West Swanzey Improvements and Hinsdale Fort Hill Branch Rail Trail Bridge Improvements have already been reviewed by the engineering consultants. Staff will wrap-up completing profiles on each of the nominated projects by mid-October and provide them to TAC members to allow as much time as possible for their review and scoring. Chairman Lane reminded members that they should refrain from scoring any projects in their respective communities to eliminate any perceived conflict of interest. J. B. Mack asked if TAC members wanted to receive the profiles electronically or printed-out. Chairman Lane suggested that for scoring purposes it is easier to work with printed copies. Frank Sterling noted that the use of Google Earth is helpful when viewing individual projects and the surrounding landscape. J. B. Mack asked that project scoring sheets be returned to him by the end of the day on October 27th so they can be tabulated and presented at the October 31st TAC meeting for further discussion.

**Transportation Program Updates**

Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program (CMAQ)

Henry Underwood announced that applications for the CMAQ program will be released during October. It is anticipated that $30 million will be available for projects that improve air quality. A 20% cash match is required and a mandatory letter of interest must be submitted to NHDOT by November 4, 2022. There will also be a mandatory training scheduled for November 15-16, 2022 and a workshop during December. Applications are due by January 6, 2023. J. B. Mack asked if TAC will be asked to assist in the scoring process and Lucy St. John explained that details on that have not been released as yet.

Highway Safety Improvement Program Road Safety Audit

Henry Underwood noted that applications for an upcoming round of Road Safety Audits is anticipated to become available in the near future. In order to qualify for the 100% federally funded program your community must have had either a fatal or serious injury crash during the last ten years. Recent Road Safety Audits have been conducted in Jaffrey, Keene, Fitzwilliam, and Swanzey.

**V. Next Meeting**

Chairman Lane announced that the next meeting of TAC is scheduled to take place on October 31, 2022.

**VI. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin

Office Manager