

APPROVED MINUTES OF 4/4/2017
Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

Held at the Comstock Community Center

180 School Road, Wilton, CT 06897

Representing Voting Members of the South

Western Region Metropolitan Planning Organization:

- Darien Planning and Zoning Director Jeremy Ginsberg
- Greenwich Senior Civil Engineer Frank Petise
- New Canaan Absent
- Norwalk Assistant Principal Engineer Michael Yeosock
- Norwalk TD Absent
- Stamford Signal Systems Engineer Veera Karukonda
- Weston Absent
- Westport Town Engineer Peter Ratkiewich
- Wilton Absent

Representing Voting Members of the Housatonic

Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization:

- Bethel Director of Public Works Douglas Arndt
- Bridgewater Absent
- Brookfield Director of Public Works Ralph Tedesco
- Danbury Public Services Superintendent Timothy Nolan
- HARTransit Planner Harrison Wenchell
- New Fairfield Public Works Superintendent Russell Loudon
- New Milford Public Works Director Michael Zarba
- Newtown Public Works Director Frederick Hurley
- Redding Public Works Director Jeffrey Hanson
- Ridgefield Absent
- Sherman Absent

Also in Attendance:

Greenwich Public Works Superintendent Joseph Roberto, New Fairfield Zoning Enforcement Officer Evan White, Bethel Assistant Director of Public Works Robert Dibble, from the CTDOT Bureau of Planning Roxane Fromson. Also, WestCOG staff members Robert Brinton, Michael Towle, Kristin Floberg, Robert Sachnin, Carl Zimmerman, Michael Sullivan, Jamie Bastian, Kristin Hadjstylianos and Jonathan Chew.

CALL TO ORDER / PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 am by Robert Sachnin. There was no public comment.

PRESENTATION

Ladders of Opportunity: GIS Analyst Michael Sullivan presented on this topic, noting that the FHWA requires each MPO to factor “Ladders of Opportunity” into its transportation planning. He distributed a handout summarizing WestCOG involvement with Ladders, defined as an effort to induce positive social and economic impacts from the use of federal transportation project funds.

A PowerPoint presentation by Mr. Sullivan displayed some of the demographic maps produced for Ladders analysis. He also demonstrated GIS tools that enable the mode of travel and travel time for any origin - destination pair to be quantified. This technology can be an effective bus route evaluation technology, part of the federal emphasis on “data driven” decision making, he said.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

FY2018-19 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP): Rob Sachnin addressed this topic, noting that the next WestCOG grant application for transportation planning funds, due every two years, was now in draft stage. A full copy of the draft UPWP will be forwarded to TAG members soon, he said.

MS4 Update and Next Steps: An update on this topic was made by Michael Towle. He distributed a handout entitled “MS4 Update 4/4/2017.” Outlined thereon were three next steps by WestCOG staff, two next steps by UConn Project CLEAR staff, and the three next steps suggested for each municipality. A discussion followed.

Snow Plow Routing Optimization: Carl Zimmerman reviewed a memo attached to the agenda entitled “3/28/2017 Regional Snow Plow Routing Study – Working Group.” He reviewed the contents and the request for volunteers to serve on a committee to review the study’s request for proposals to consultants, assist in selecting a consultant, and then guide development of work products. He noted that Kristen Floberg is to be the staff contact for this effort.

An extensive discussion followed, the bulk of the discussion then consisted of recommendations as to how TAG members would like to see this effort redirected. A summary of their views:

--- Public works directors in charge of plow operations expressed concerns regarding the benefits of the grant.

--- Every storm response is different, dependent upon the type of storm and emergency conditions that may be present. A GIS approach may not accommodate deviations in storm type, incorrect forecasts, day of storm decisions, appropriate assets to utilize, and which institutions, vulnerable populations and problematic landscapes be serviced first. The importance of leadership was also discussed.

--- While state roads are the most highly traveled and under CTDOT plowing jurisdiction, CTDOT may or not be present to service them, depending upon conditions elsewhere in the state. In these cases, municipal plow routes are quickly and substantially adjusted to include them. No advance information on this variable is available for a modeling analysis.

--- Overall there are many unpredictable routing variables that make GIS optimization routing plots more challenging. The group felt any analysis should be considered a living model, noting the variance in storm type, timing, and other logistical differences.

If the efficiency of the broader topic of snow plowing management can be emphasized in the upcoming work program, then study elements of most value are: 1) changes in salt and sand

specifications, application methods and storage technologies, 2) group purchasing of same 3) protocols and intermunicipal agreements for equipment sharing and regionalized storm response, 4) format for annualized communications, evaluation and exchange on best practices, 5) Storm related emergencies and regional response.

It was decided that interested TAG members could participate in project development and associated activities. Such a working group to help guide project direction within the grant constraints. Members would also be entitled to review and comment on draft project outputs prior to completion.

Regional Safety Analyses and Crash Rates: Kristin Floberg then made a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Measuring Safety on Local Roadways.” The technical challenge is to set priorities for the upgrade of safety features on local roadways, where relevant data sets such as car counts are limited and would be expensive to develop by field survey, she said.

While mapped concentrations of crash locations are available, interest in also utilizing crash rates was noted. The combination of total crashes and rates may help identify and insure that priority safety.

Ms. Floberg then reviewed a U Conn methodology designed to address this problem. It makes use of available data sets to estimate expected crash rates per traffic analysis zone, using land use density conditions and other modeling variables needed to estimate the relative severity of accident concentrations locally and regionally.

There was a discussion. It was agreed that the methodology displayed and endorsed by CTDOT, should be pursued by WestCOG staff and in addition to analyzing total crashes. The addition of supplementing efforts with local police department data was also discussed.

LOTICIP Update: Rob Sachnin distributed a summary of the South Western LOTCIP Program and provided comments.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of 3/7/2017 Minutes: On a motion made by Peter Ratkiewich and seconded by Mike Zarba the minutes of the TAG Meeting of 3/7/2017 were unanimously approved.

TIP Endorsement Request: A CT DOT request for a TIP amendment by HVMPO concerned Project #34-305 at the intersection of Route 37 in Danbury with Barnum Road. Rob Sachnin reviewed the proposed TIP change, for which additional federal funds are to be programmed.

Then on a motion made by Fred Hurley and seconded by Mike Zarba, it was voted unanimously to recommend that HVMPO approve the CT DOT request. A second TIP amendment recently received by the region and for Project #34-345, also in Danbury, was addressed for informational purposes.

OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion Items, Future Presentations and Upcoming Meetings: The list of upcoming WestCOG related meetings was reviewed, next TAG meeting scheduled for 5/2/2017 at which there will be a presentation on Americans with Disability Act considerations in transportation planning and design.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm.