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Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization

Public Participation Plan



Strafford Regional Planning Commission

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Executive Summary

Federal regulations established in 2005 as part of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) require a public participation component for the metropolitan transportation planning process to ensure fair and equitable public input opportunities in transportation planning. SAFETEA-LU requires implementation of the public participation process throughout transportation plans and programs and requires consideration of all modes of transportation. SAFETEA-LU carries on the “continuing, cooperative and comprehensive” (3Cs) approach to transportation planning. In addition to the “3Cs” process, emphasis has been placed on broadening public participation to include stakeholders who had not been involved previously.

The requirement to establish a plan and strategy for engaging the public was carried on in the 2012 federal transportation authorization, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, (MAP-21) signed into law on July 6, 2012. Under MAP-21, public involvement remains a focus of the planning process. In compliance with federal transportation requirements, this document outlines Stafford Metropolitan Planning Organization’s strategy and goals for engaging the public and ensuring fair and equitable representation for the public within the Stafford Region.

This plan is reviewed as part of the four-year certification process conducted by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration to ensure the planning process provides full and open access to the public. Contained in this document are the Stafford Metropolitan Planning Organization’s current public involvement strategies and policies.

The primary goals of the Stafford Public Participation Plan are to:



Educate and inform the public about the metropolitan transportation planning process



Solicit public input to identify transportation related needs, desires, issues and concerns



Reach out to communities in the region to provide information about meeting and public hearings schedules to provide opportunities for the public to participate in the planning process



Improve the public involvement process to ensure concerns and issues of those directly impacted by the transportation planning process are addressed

Introduction

The Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the southeastern area of New Hampshire and includes eighteen communities (See Figure 1) .

The Strafford Public Participation Plan documents the actions to be carried out by the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization to ensure that opportunities exist for the public to be involved in transportation planning activities, pursuant to **Title 23 CFR 450.316** of Statewide Planning;



Metropolitan Planning and Criteria and Procedures for Determining Conformity to State or Federal Implementation Plans of Transportation Plans, Programs and Projects; and Statewide Transportation Planning Rules.

Public participation is essential for informing the transportation planning activities of the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization. This document will serve as the organizational public participation guide for implementing transportation policy and conducting project planning and development. The Strafford *Public Participation Plan* policies have been adopted by the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Policy Committee.

What is a Public Participation Plan?

A public participation plan is a document that:

“...defines the process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.” (CFR 450.316(a))

The Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee meets on the third Friday of every month at 9 a.m. in Conference Room 1A, located in the Rochester Community Center at 150 Wakefield Street, Rochester NH 03867

In addition the plan lays out the outreach techniques Strafford MPO uses to provide information and opportunities for feedback from the public.

Transportation projects can help determine the shape and character of a region. The transportation system and transportation policies play a major role in determining where people live, how they get to work, what modes of travel are chosen, and where businesses develop. Transportation also plays a significant role in the environmental quality and livability of an area. These are among the reasons it is important to have strong public participation in the planning and execution of transportation improvements. Public participation is vital for understanding and achieving the future vision of the region.

Public involvement creates opportunities for the public to become informed about transportation decisions being made in the region and across the state. This is particularly true in situations where certain populations will be directly impacted by a transportation decision. Public involvement allows the Metropolitan Planning Organization to identify issues, priorities, needs, and other factors that may impact the final outcome of a transportation decision. Public involvement throughout the planning process ensures issues can be addressed and outcomes will address the needs of the public.



Not only is it important for an agency to understand a community's values, it is equally important for the community to understand the constraints associated with planning for transportation projects. When the public is involved in the planning process, they gain insight into the role of government including regulatory limitations of government due to lack of revenue.

It is the intent of the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization to actively solicit comments and engage the interests of the public through the processes outlined in this document, as well as pursue new strategies to maintain pace with rapidly changing technological innovations and trends.

Public Participation Policy

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)(P.L. 112-141), builds on the foundations of transportation planning provided in SAFETEA-LU and the older transportation authorizing statutes preceding it. Language from the statute requires a public participation component for the metropolitan transportation planning process.

"The metropolitan planning process must "include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans." (Rule 23 CFR part 450, 49 CFR part 613)

Additionally Metropolitan Planning Organization public participation requirements and criteria are specified in this document within *Appendix A, Federal Regulation on MPO Public Participation Process.*

Requirements Addressing Low-Income Communities and Minority Communities

“No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act [42 USC 2000d])

“Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations,” (Executive Order 12898), reinforced the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It was signed by President Clinton on Feb. 11, 1994 and published in the Feb. 16, 1994 in the Federal Register, Vol. 59, No. 32. Executive Order 12898 and the accompanying memorandum focus federal attention on the environmental and human health condition in minority and low-income communities

Requirements Addressing Populations with Disabilities

The *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* includes requirements regarding the involvement of persons with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation services. The Act includes provisions that ensure those with disabilities have accommodations included in transportation facility development, are able to access the sites where public participation activities occur, and are guaranteed access to information available at those forums.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization’s public participation methods to address the *Americans with Disabilities Act* are described in *Opportunities for Public Participation*.

State Mandates

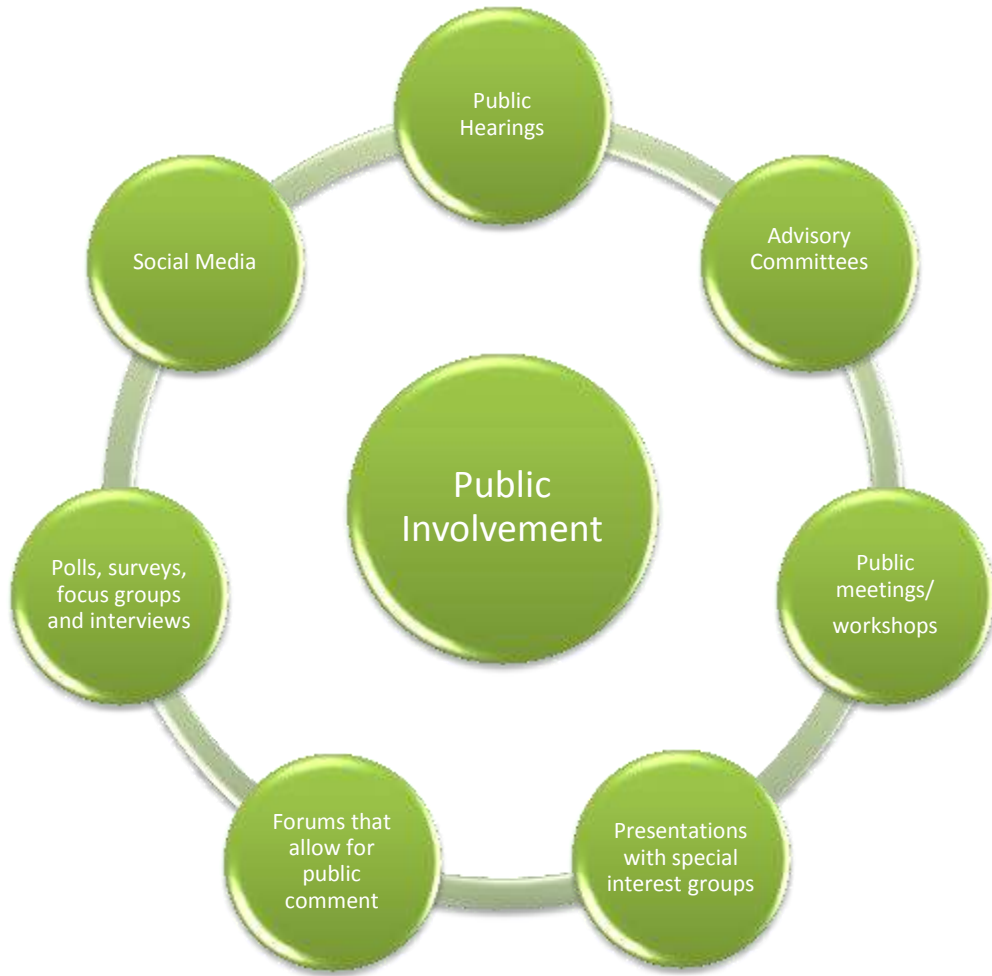
“Every citizen during the regular or business hours of all public bodies or agencies... and on the regular business premises of such public bodies or agencies, has the right to inspect all governmental records.”(New Hampshire Revised Statutes RSA 91-A)

Governmental records include all writings made, maintained or kept by the State or any agency, institution or political subdivision for use in the exercise of functions required or authorized by law or administrative rule or involving the receipt or expenditure of public funds.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization procedures for distributing information in accordance with the public records law of New Hampshire are discussed in *Chapter 4: Documentation, Distribution and Notification*.

Strafford MPO

Strafford MPO’s practice is to adopt strategies that allow the organization to meet state and federal policies that guide out public participation procedures. The contents of this plan provide the framework in which Strafford MPO will meet the state and federal requirements for public participation and outreach.



Strafford MPO Public Participation Goals

The fundamental goal of the public participation plan is to assure that the decisions regarding a proposed plan or project are made only after the public is aware of and has had the opportunity to comment on the proposal. Transportation decision-makers must consider concerns of the public and users who may be affected by a proposed project. Strafford’s specific goals in the public participation process are:

GOAL	RESPONSIBILITIES
Educate and Present Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide timely and adequate information to the public • Educate public with information and presentations on the regional planning process • Explain the committee structure & tasks of the planning organization • Present information in a manner that is easily understood by the public
Solicit Public Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit input from the public for concerning regional transportation options • Emphasize public participation prior to planning efforts, key decision points, & when final draft products are released • Available to citizens to make public comments and express concerns at any time
Facilitate Information Flow Between the Public and Decision Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule and organize meetings for public comment opportunities and information sharing • Create informational materials for events, projects, programs, and other transportation planning related topics • Communicate best practices for transportation planning to the public and decision makers
Consider Public Concerns in Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments to be considered and documented • Devise transportation plans, programs and projects, that reflect local, regional and state priorities and needs.

Opportunities for Public Participation

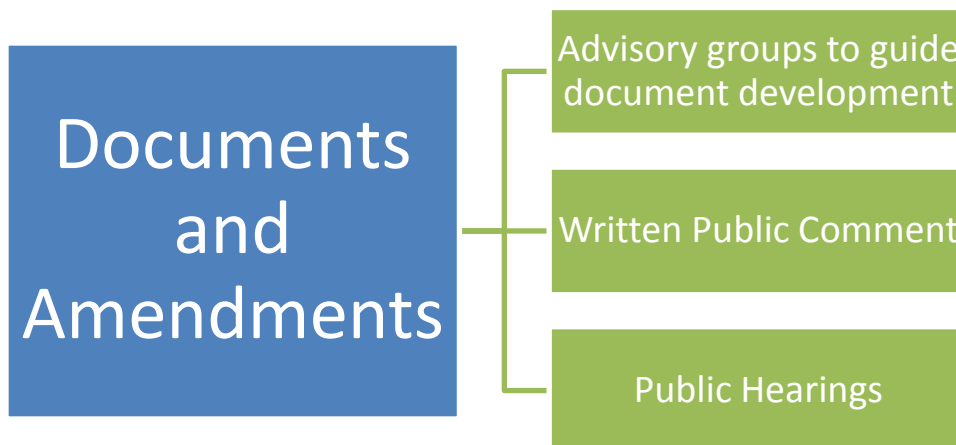
Throughout transportation planning process there are numerous opportunities for the public to contribute, offer feedback, and inform decision making in order to learn about and shape transportation planning outcomes. Since the last *Public Participation Plan* update, the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization has sought out and embraced new technologies that expand the ease and opportunities for public participation.

For all relevant events, meetings, forums, etc. Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization follows requirements from the *Americans with Disabilities Act* to ensure reasonable accommodation are made for those with disabilities. Included on notices and meeting agendas is the following statement:

“Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. Include a description of the accommodation you will need including as much detail as you can provide. Also include a way we can contact you if we need more information. Last minute requests will be accepted, but may be impossible to fill. Send an email to srpc@strafford.org or call 603-994-3500” (Strafford MPO ADA Statement on Agendas)

Documents and Amendments-

The Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administrations require metropolitan planning organizations to maintain various planning documents. These documents are subject to public comment periods and public hearings to allow the public opportunities to play a meaningful role in the planning process. In addition to federally required documents, Strafford MPO assists with the development of New Hampshire’s *Ten Year Transportation Plan*, studies, and grants. Throughout all of these processes there are opportunities for public participation and input.



Advisory committees, comprised of stakeholders and interested members of the public, are utilized in the creation of documents like the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan* and *NH Ten Year Transportation Plan*. Input from these committees influence the content and focus of documents.

The public is strongly encouraged to comment on documents during official public comment periods. Notices of public comment periods and public hearings are published in the newspaper covering the Strafford region, *Fosters Daily Democrat*. Notice of public comment periods and public hearings are also available at the Rochester and Dover public libraries, and on the Strafford MPO website (www.strafford.org). Public comment periods range in duration from 30-45 days, and comments are accepted in written form, fax, email, and at public hearings. Public hearings are held in conjunction with regular monthly Policy Committee meetings at the Strafford MPO offices. A summary of public comments and Strafford MPO responses is included in the final published document.

In addition to going through this process to update documents on a regular update cycle, it is also used for, periodic changes known as amendments. Amendments play an important role in the maintenance of transportation planning documents. Amendments make changes to existing documents and are critical to ensuring documents are kept up to date with the latest regulatory information. They are essential for accounting for real world changes that impact documents, like a delay in a project schedule. Amendments ensure the implementation of transportation planning activities through an open and accountable process. Amendments follow the same public participation procedures as documents.

Amendments are particularly important for the Strafford Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP lays out the region transportation projects, programs, funding levels, and sources expected to be carried out over a four year period. Regional projects must be listed in this document in order for projects to receive federal funding.

Comments and other written feedback regarding projects and documents are valuable in shaping Strafford MPO planning activities and work products. Comments and written feedback are reviewed by staff at Strafford MPO, and each comment is addressed either individually or grouped with similar comments. Comments can be found in the appendices of documents or by request from the Strafford MPO office.

Meetings-

Meetings are one of the primary tools Strafford MPO uses for face-to-face interaction with the public. Strafford MPO holds monthly Transportation Advisory Committee (every first Friday at 9am) and Policy Committee meetings (every third Friday at 9am) at the SRPC offices at 150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Rochester, NH 03867. The public is encouraged to attend committee meetings and/or contact their representatives with their comments and concerns. A public comment section is included on the agenda for all meetings of Strafford MPO's Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee, as well as Strafford Regional Planning commission meetings. The Strafford MPO website (www.strafford.org) contains a calendar of meeting dates and associated agendas and minutes.

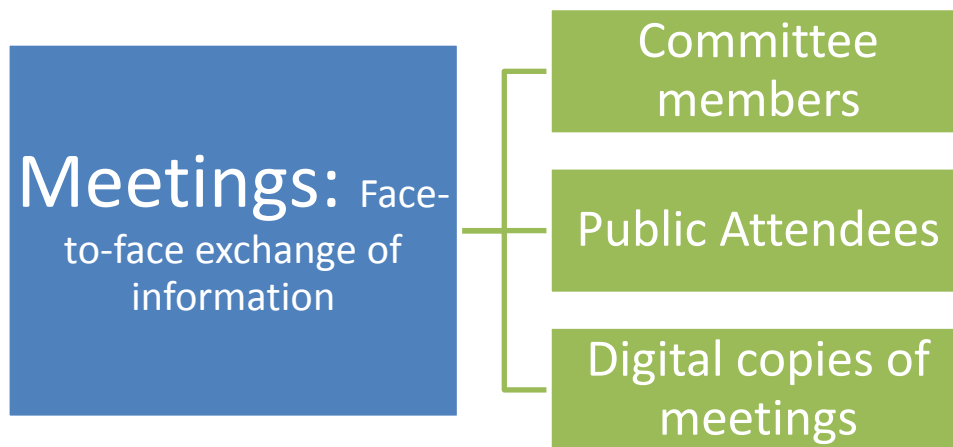
The Strafford MPO Policy Committee and Transportation Advisory Committee are comprised of representatives appointed by local communities and agencies. The committees assist Strafford MPO by providing organizational direction and feedback about planning activities. Committee members also act

as representatives for Strafford MPO by communicating important planning activities back to their communities and agencies. Public notice and the agenda of Policy Committee and Transportation Advisory Committee meetings are published in the newspaper covering the Strafford region, *Fosters Daily Democrat* at least ten days prior to the meeting date. The public notice and agenda are also available on the Strafford MPO website (www.strafford.org) and at the Strafford MPO offices in Rochester, NH.

Meetings are one of the ways Strafford MPO informs committee members and the public about transportation projects, practices, and general information about transportation. Information about state and federal rules and programs, grant opportunities, best transportation practices, and transportation resources are also shared at meetings.

Video and audio of all of the monthly transportation meetings are recorded and archived digitally. These files are available to anyone upon request. In the future it is Strafford MPO’s intention to make these videos available on the internet on YouTube or similar service. Meeting packets and minutes are also available to the public at the meetings and upon request.

Ad hoc committees and work groups are occasionally established for short durations to assist on specific planning tasks and functions. The meeting schedules of these groups are variable and on an as-needed basis. Ad hoc committee and work group meetings are public meetings by New Hampshire law and membership on these short-term committees typically includes representatives of affected municipalities, community groups, and experts on the relevant committee topic. Members of the public are often experts on local issues and play an important role on these small groups.



Public Forums, Workshops, & Focus Groups-

Public forums, workshops, and focus groups provide a setting for public discussion. These events are intermittently held by Strafford MPO to gather public feedback about a specific topic and will often include multiple sessions to cover different content or capture an evolving view of a topic.

Such forums may include: poster sessions, open houses/interactions periods, activities to engage public input, formal presentations, question and answer formats, brainstorming sessions, small break-out groups, focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and charrettes.

Public Outreach-

<p>“Public participation or public involvement is an integral part of the transportation process which helps to ensure that decisions are made in consideration of and to benefit public needs and preferences.¹”</p>		<p>SRPC Planner Matt Sullivan does regional outreach at the Newmarket Heritage Festival (2012)</p>
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Soliciting information from the public, specifically from underrepresented populations, can be challenging. A strategy Strafford MPO has adopted to address this challenge is periodically attending public events taking place throughout the region. Local farmer’s markets, fairs, senior centers, veterans events, local festivals, and job fairs are events that Strafford MPO has participated in to provide additional opportunities for input from members of the public who may not be able to easily attend meetings or are unaware of the planning activities in the region. SRPC also utilizes the Equity and Engagement checklists (See Appendix F)

These events provide the opening for Strafford MPO to actively engage the public face-to-face in a non-formal setting. Seeking out events and locations that are in close proximity or are likely to attract underrepresented populations are an effective methods for engaging hard-to-reach populations and help Strafford MPO address Title VI and Environmental Justice requirements.

Surveys and dialogue are often used at these events to gather information to inform the planning process. Attending public events also provides the organization with an opportunity to introduce our planning activities and educate people on where they can find out more information about Strafford MPO’s work.

Strafford MPO will often piggyback these events with Strafford Regional Planning Commission to educate and solicit information about a wide array of planning topics including transportation, land use, economic development, energy, and the environment. This can be valuable for understanding planning impacts from a holistic perspective.

Surveys and Questionnaires-

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization uses surveys as a primary tool to gather information for major document updates and to help guide general transportation planning. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan, transportation project lists, studies, and understanding regional transportation priorities all depend on the use of surveys and questionnaires to some extent. Electronic surveys and Strafford MPO's ability to incorporate more information and visualizations through digital medium are making it more efficient to collect information in this way. However, digital medium are limited in who they reach; one pitfall of using electronic versions of surveys and information sharing is that some segments of the population can be entirely missed. So while more costly and time consuming, Strafford MPO maintains a balance between soliciting information electronically and old fashioned face-to-face surveys.

An example of a survey Strafford MPO collects on a biannual basis is the *Biannual Rider Input Survey*. This survey is taken in coordination with the regional transit agency, the Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST) to assist with the collection of transit rider information. This survey provides valuable insights into regional transit user habits and needs relating to transportation and important information to help assess the success of transit in the region. Strafford MPO staff members ride the regional public transit routes and work with passengers to collect the data in person.

Informing the Public

Strengthening public awareness of the services provided by Strafford MPO and sharing information developed through our transportation planning activities are main points of emphasis for the organization. The development of required federal documents remains a major component of the Strafford MPO work program and one of the primary tools for informing the public about transportation planning in the region. However, data collection and distribution are taking on a larger role in the day to day office activities at Strafford MPO.

Strafford MPO creates numerous planning documents to track regional transportation activities. Most plans provide a framework for achieving planning goals outlined within the documents or by federal regulations. Topics can range from reporting four years of federally funded transportation projects to laying out a 25+ year vision for regional transportation development.

Along with creating and maintaining required planning documents, Strafford MPO is collecting, standardizing, and sharing a variety of transportation data. Finding ways to effectively make data more useful and accessible to communities, regional organizations, and the public is a primary focus of Strafford MPO.

Moving forward, data is playing a more significant role in everyday life. Where it once was collected and stored, often for limited purposes, today our technology makes it possible to widely distribute data. Finding ways to efficiently and effectively communicate and share data using online tools allows others to find meaningful uses for data that can go beyond the original purpose.

Documents-

Documents remain an important way Strafford MPO communicates with the public. Much of the work Strafford MPO does in the region can be understood by reading the transportation documents we create. All of our transportation documents are available on our website: www.strafford.org, or at the Strafford MPO offices in Rochester NH. Hardcopies and electronic versions are available by contacting Strafford MPO. The table below relates the document name and a brief description of its contents:

Document	Purpose	Timeframe/Update Cycle
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	The TIP is a multi-modal program of [transportation] projects covering at least four years that includes the list of priority projects to be carried out in each of the four years for which Federal approvals or funding are sought.	In the August-September timeframe of even numbered years (i.e. 2010, 2012, etc...)

<p>Air Quality Analysis and Conformity Determination</p>	<p>The air quality analysis document demonstrates that transportation projects planned for the region conform to all applicable federal air quality requirements.</p>	<p>Concurrently with Transportation Improvement Program</p>
<p>Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)</p>	<p>The MTP is a long range plan with a 20+ year horizon that encourages and promotes the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of surface transportation systems in the region.</p>	<p>Every four years. (Transportation project list and financial constraint chapters are updated concurrently with the Transportation Improvement Program)</p>
<p>Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan</p>	<p>The “Coordinated Plan” identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. It provides strategies for meeting their needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation</p>	<p>Every five years in attainment areas. (Strafford MPO is now “unclassified/attainment”)</p>
<p>Intelligent Transportation System Architecture and Strategic Plan (ITS)</p>	<p>ITS are interrelated systems that work together to deliver transportation services. Integration of these systems requires an architecture to illustrate and gain consensus on the approach to be taken by a group of stakeholders regarding their particular systems. An ITS Architecture defines the systems and the interconnections and information exchanges between these systems.</p>	<p>Every four years</p>
<p>Unified Planning Work Program</p>	<p>The UPWP identifies the specific planning priorities and work tasks that the MPO will address during a particular program period.</p>	<p>Every two years</p>
<p>Prospectus</p>	<p>The Prospectus define the roles of various federal, state, and local agencies and entities involved in the transportation planning process, and it documents the interagency agreements that have/will be entered into between Strafford MPO and other organizations (COAST, NHDOT, etc.).</p>	<p>As needed</p>

<p>Public Participation Plan</p>	<p>The Public Participation Plan documents the actions to be carried out to ensure opportunities exist for the public to be involved in transportation planning activities</p>	<p>As needed or once every four years.</p>
<p>Transportation Related Studies (Route 125 Corridor Study, Park and Ride Toolkit, etc...)</p>	<p>These studies provide information on potential projects that are to be encompassed in the planning documents SRPC creates.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>New Hampshire State Plans (Ten Year Plan, Rail Plan, etc...)</p>	<p>Statewide plans encompass planning processes and projects from each of the four MPOs and allowing for expansion of current and future transportation planning in the state.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Meetings-

Attending Strafford MPO meetings is one way the organization informs the public about the planning activities of the organization. Approving documents, making planning policy decisions, and receiving feedback are actions that take place at meetings, but they also allow the organization to educate and communicate about transportation trends, topics, projects, and regulations. Education and sharing information make meetings an important outreach tool.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Strafford MPO holds monthly Transportation Advisory Committee (every first Friday at 9am) and Policy Committee meetings (every third Friday at 9am) at the SRPC offices at 150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Rochester, NH 03867. In addition to Strafford MPO monthly meetings, staff attends other meetings outside the organization that provide opportunities to inform other segments of the public about Strafford MPO planning activities and transportation related topics.

Strafford MPO regularly attends and participates at a number of regional boards that provide the opportunity to reach out to members of the public including:

Group Name	Group Focus
<p>Seacoast Commuter Options</p>	<p>Regional/Interregional transportation management association, commute to work, guaranteed ride home, rideshare</p>
<p>Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT)</p>	<p>Coordinated human services transportation activities and implementation. Working to provide expanded</p>

	reliable transportation services to disadvantaged populations.
Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST)	Working with the primary regional transit provider.

Public notices & Public hearings-

As discussed in the previous chapter, public notices and public hearings are long standing ways Strafford MPO reaches out to the public. Public notices announce meetings and public hearings, while comment periods inform the public about times and locations of meetings. Notices are distributed widely to ensure the public is well informed about opportunities to participate. The Metropolitan Planning Organization maintains a comprehensive mailing list of elected officials, public officials, special interest groups and others to ensure the widest possible distribution of documents. A list of interested parties includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Boards of Selectmen and Town/City Councils from communities;
- Planning Boards, Traffic Safety Committees, Public Works Officials/Road Agents;
- Public and private transit and taxi operators, including demand responsive operators;
- Human Service agencies with low income, elderly and disabled clients;
- Representatives from adjoining MPOs;
- Traffic safety and enforcement agencies;
- Chambers of Commerce; economic development organizations;
- Members of the State legislature;
- Appropriate State and federal agencies, including the NHDOT, NHDES-Air Resources, DRED, Pease Development Authority, FHWA, FTA, FAA, EPA;
- Individuals and groups with a demonstrated interest in transportation issues;
- Major businesses and business and industry associations;
- Schools and colleges;
- Transportation and highway user groups;
- Neighborhood associations;
- Those traditionally underserved by the transportation system; and
- Members of the MPO TAC and Policy Committee not otherwise listed.

Public hearings provide the opportunity for the metropolitan planning organization to present information to the public regarding the projects or programs being discussed at the hearing. Often
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times public hearings involve the use of PowerPoint presentations, live GIS mapping, and other visualizations to aid in the communication of information.

Public outreach -

It is frequently the case that Strafford MPO participation at community events around the region provide the best means for communicating information to the public about the activities the organization pursues. Local farmer’s markets, fairs, senior centers, veterans events, local festivals, and job fairs are events that Strafford MPO has participated in to provide additional opportunities to share information with members of the public that may not be able to easily attend meetings or are unaware of the planning activities in the region.

In addition to piggybacking on events, Strafford MPO staff routinely accept invitations from local organizations and municipal boards to speak on regional planning issues or specific planning projects. We find that sharing information at local meetings is an excellent way to build partnerships with communities and inform communities about the planning activities taking place in the region.

The Strafford MPO Website, and Other Internet Tools –



The internet is one of the most popular and powerful ways of communicating information existing today. The internet has many advantages over face-to-face communication because it can transfer complex ideas and information nearly instantaneously over long distances and on the user’s schedule. The internet also allows more members of the public to participate from home, the office, and just about anywhere in between. This is one of the ways Strafford MPO addresses the challenge of communicating with disadvantaged populations and mobility challenged individuals.

Strafford MPO is a component of and shares a website with the Strafford Regional Planning Commission. Content pertinent to Strafford MPO is under the “transportation” tab on the website www.Strafford.org. The Strafford MPO area of the website contains links to plans, studies, and documents. In 2011 the website was updated to make it more accessible to those with vision impairment and limited English proficiency (LEP). The site can now be translated into a wide variety of languages and website font sizes can be adjusted to meet the viewer’s needs.

Updates to the website are ongoing to keep the public informed about planning activities and to offer way to provide comments. The transportation content on the website includes:

- A calendar of meetings, notices, and events
- Agendas and meeting minutes
- Links to a range of regional demographic, economic, and traffic data
- Downloadable versions of planning documents
- GIS content

Strafford MPO has put forth significant effort in the collection and digitization of transportation data from across the region with the intent to make it available for public use. Included in these datasets are regional sidewalk information, regional culvert information, regional road information, and regional traffic count information, regional crash data, and transportation project information. To make this information available to the public, Strafford MPO acquired WebGIS, a mapping tool that will allow the MPO to widely share the data layers. Currently (fall of 2013) staff are working to make this tool available for public use on our website.

Other website features that are being explored include the use of “dashboard” software which can provide real time data visualizations to the public covering variety of topics from timelines for projects, to live transportation statistics like travel delay.

Blogs & Newsletters –



As with the website, Strafford MPO shares a newsletter and blog site with Strafford Regional Planning Commission. Blogs and newsletters are a part of Strafford MPO’s public outreach strategy as they offer an effective way to distribute regional planning information with the public.

Both the blog and newsletter are produced on a regular basis and are distributed widely. The organization produces about 20 newsletters and over 30 blog entries annually to ensure we are communicating about regionally relevant planning topics on an ongoing basis. The topics of blogs and newsletters will often include information about meetings and conferences in the region, planning activities being approached by agencies in

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the region, and information about Strafford MPO’s own planning activities.

Twitter, Facebook and Other Electronic Media Strategies-



Strafford MPO is adopting new media sources that are popularly used by wide cross-sections of the public. Again partnering with Strafford Regional Planning Commission, the MPO use Twitter and Facebook to stay up to speed on trending planning topics, and is able to quickly respond to provide our followers with updated planning information.

Facebook is another tool popular tool for keeping in touch with the public. The Facebook page is updated frequently and is synchronized with the twitter and blog pages. Facebook allows Strafford MPO to share photos, information, publications, meeting dates; information from the blog and twitter are automatically noted on the Facebook page.

Strafford MPO has also started to investigate using YouTube for hosting videos of Transportation Advisory Committee and Policy Committee meetings. Posting meetings on a YouTube Channel would make the meetings and public hearings available to anyone with an internet connection.

Media Strategies-

Visualization Techniques

The use of visualization techniques are a requirement that dates back to the transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU. Visualizations use images, maps, graphs, and other visual techniques to help convey information and data to the public in ways that are easier to grasp. Visualizations are a tool to help communicate information about projects and programs in a way that will lead to better decision making outcomes for all.

Some examples of visualization techniques used in the Strafford region include:

- The use of Google Earth to better communicate transportation project locations and information to communities in the region.
- Showing aerial projections of how alternative land use policies scenarios could impact development and the transportation system in twenty years.
- Using renderings or photo simulations to show a how a widened roadway or streetscaping could change the character of a community.
- The use of flow charts to clearly depict the transportation planning process
- Using graphs to depict transportation project-funding distributions

Mailing Lists

Mailing list databases help Strafford MPO organize and update its public communications. Lists may include telephone numbers, fax numbers and/or email addresses to help contact the public. Using mailing lists, the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization reaches target audiences with announcements of upcoming events, meeting invitations, newsletters, summary reports and email blasts and other information about its activities. Strafford MPO updates its mailing list at the start of a major planning process. Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization may also create a targeted mailing list for surveys. The master mailing list includes approximately 850 members of the public and organizations.

Documentation

All documentation pertaining to transportation plans and programs is available for public review and comment. Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization produces policy documents, such as adopted resolutions, technical reports, white papers, consultant reports and memorandums. These provide written documentation of the policies, plans, programs and planning activities of the transportation planning process.

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization may publish technical and other reports after acceptance by the Technical Advisory Committee or other committees, as appropriate. These reports will be available upon their completion. In addition to published reports, Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization maintains unpublished technical information in support of its planning efforts.

Minutes are prepared for all meetings of the Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee. These are available on the Strafford MPO website and upon request from the planning commissions. Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization will also provide documentation of key decision points in a planning process through the public outreach of that process.

For major updates to the Metropolitan Transportation



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Plan, a separate summary document of public participation activities and input received is produced. It is available to decision-makers and the general public through the planning commission offices.

Distribution and Notification

The public may request to view or receive all reports developed and compiled by Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization. Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization publications may be free of charge or are available for a nominal fee. Most publications can be downloaded and printed from the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization website. The public may also view unpublished technical information at the Strafford Regional Planning Commission office.

Draft policy documents are available at the Strafford Regional Planning Commission office and on the Metropolitan Planning Organization website. Draft documents are also available for review at the public libraries in Dover and Rochester.

Strafford MPO prepares lists of public meetings scheduled with participating organizations. This listing is posted at the Strafford Regional Planning Commission office and on the website. These meetings are all open to the public. Public comment periods and a Citizens Forum are provided for during meetings of Metropolitan Planning Organization committees. The Citizen's Forum is included on every agenda and allows those members of the public to discuss and ask questions regarding the items on the agenda.

Review of Public Participation Process

MPOs serving Census-defined Urbanized Areas with populations over 200,000 are required to undergo review and certification every four years by FHWA/FTA to ensure compliance with Federal requirements. The Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization had a review in 2010 and another one will be taking place in 2014. The Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization does undertake a biennial self-certification review. The public participation processes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization are an important part of this review. As part of the self-certification, the MPO will biennially review the public participation process, considering the following items:

- What was the success of specific strategies in attracting the public and associated comments?
- What level of public input was received for various planning products?
- Was public input considered by decision-makers?
- Should any new strategies or adjustments be considered in the following year?
- Are any changes or amendments necessary to the Public Participation in Regional Transportation Planning document?

APPENDIX A – TITLE 23 PART 450.316 Interested Parties, Participation, Participation, and Consultation

(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

(1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

(i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;

(iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;

(iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;

(v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

(vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;

(viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public participation efforts;

(ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public participation and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and

(x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

(3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.

(b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

(1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;

(2) Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and

(3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204.

(c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under §450.314.

TITLE 49 PART 613 Planning Assistance and Standards

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Subpart A—Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming

613.100 Metropolitan transportation planning and programming.

The regulations in 23 CFR 450, subpart C, shall be followed in complying with the requirements of this subpart. The definitions in 23 CFR 450, subpart A, shall apply. [72 FR 7285, Feb. 14, 2007]

Subpart B—Statewide Transportation Planning and Programming

613.200 Statewide transportation planning and programming.

The regulations in 23 CFR 450, subpart B, shall be followed in complying with the requirements of this subpart. The definitions in 23 CFR 450, subpart A, shall apply. [72 FR 7285, Feb. 14, 2007]

Subpart C—Coordination of Federal and Federally Assisted Programs and Projects

613.300 Coordination of Federal and federally assisted programs and projects.

The coordination of Federal and federally assisted programs and projects implementing OMB revised Circular No. A-95, which is set forth in 23 CFR Part 420, subpart C, is incorporated into this subpart. [41 FR 33443, Aug. 9, 1976]

42 USC 2000d -Prohibition against exclusion from participation in, denial of benefits of, and discrimination under federally assisted programs on ground of race, color, or national origin. No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

APPENDIX B – Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), Defined "Interested Parties" By Plan Type

This table shows that the *Long Range Statewide Transportation Plan*, the *STIP*, and the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan* each list the same interested parties. The *Metropolitan TIP* does not list the interested parties, but refers back to the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan* in 23 U.S.C. 134(g).

23 U.S.C. 135 Statewide Transportation Planning		23 U.S.C. 134 Metropolitan Transportation Planning	
(e) LONG-RANGE STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN	(f) STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM	(g) DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PLAN	(h) METROPOLITAN TIP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens • Affected public agencies • Representatives of public transportation employees • Freight shippers • Private providers of transportation • Representatives of users of public transportation. • Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways & bicycle transportation. • Representatives of the disabled • Providers of freight transportation services • Other interested parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens • Affected public agencies • Representatives of public transportation employees • Freight shippers • Private providers of transportation • Providers of freight transportation services • Representatives of users of public transportation. • Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways & bicycle transportation. • Representatives of the disabled • Other interested parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens • Affected public agencies • Representatives of public transportation employees • Freight shippers • Providers of freight transportation services • Private providers of transportation • Representatives of users of public transportation. • Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways & bicycle transportation. • Representatives of the disabled • Other interested parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested parties... in accordance with subsection (g)(4)

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APPENDIX C - TIP/STIP Amendment Categories from Strafford MPO Prospectus

Certain amendments under the following general categories may, upon written request and at the discretion of the MPO, be made to the TIP without requiring a public participation process. Such projects shall include only ones which are exempt from air quality conformity determination under provisions of the Clean Air Act Amendment of 1990 and 40 CFR 93.134 and which are otherwise minor in nature, both in terms of scope and potential negative impact.

Safety

- *Railroad/highway crossing.*
- *Hazard elimination project.*
- *Shoulder improvements.*
- *Increasing sight distance.*
- *Traffic control devices and operating assistance other than signalization projects.*
- *Railroad/highway crossing warning devices.*
- *Guardrails, median barriers on divided highways, crash cushions.*
- *Pavement resurfacing and/or rehabilitation.*
- *Pavement marking.*
- *Emergency relief.*
- *Fencing.*
- *Skid treatments.*
- *Truck climbing lanes outside the urbanized area.*
- *Lighting improvements.*
- *Widening narrow pavements or reconstructing bridges (no additional travel lanes).*
- *Emergency truck pullovers.*

Other

- *Specific activities which do not involve or lead directly to construction, such as: 1) planning and technical activities; 2) grants for training and research programs; and 3) federal-aid systems revisions.*
- *Engineering to assess social, economic and environmental effects of the proposed action or alternatives to that action.*

APPENDIX D – Adopting Resolution for the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization

WHEREAS, the urban transportation planning process is required to have a PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN which delineates currently valid organizational responsibilities, operating procedures, and a summary of the planning program; and

WHEREAS, the PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN establishes the multi-year framework within which the Unified Planning Work Program for transportation planning in the Strafford MPO Study Area is accomplished; and

WHEREAS, the responsibilities for cooperatively carrying out the urban transportation planning process are clearly defined in the PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN and via executed agreements or memorandum of understanding attached to the PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization adopts the PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN dated_____.

The undersigned duly qualified Chairpersons of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution, adopted at legally convened meeting of the Strafford MPO Policy Committee held on the following date:

For Strafford Regional Planning Commission

Chairman

Date

Appendix E- Performance Based Planning

The federal transportation authorization, *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)* was signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012. With this authorization came new requirements for metropolitan planning organizations to conduct “performance-based planning,” a practice that included the creation of state and metropolitan area performance measures and performance targets for¹:

- Pavement condition on the Interstate System and on the remainder of the National Highway System (NHS)
- Performance of the Interstate System and the remainder of the NHS
- Bridge condition on the NHS
- Fatalities and serious injuries—both number and rate per vehicle mile traveled—on all public roads
- Traffic congestion
- On-road mobile source emissions
- Freight movement on the Interstate System

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization strongly supports the implementation of a performance-based planning approach. It is the organization’s view a performance-based planning approach will lead to better outcomes over the long term for the region. With this approach, over time the practices that work best to achieve performance targets will be affirmed and practices that don’t support goals will be reassessed.

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization also sees value in using a performance-based approach to help assess how well the organization is accomplishing the planning goals within the organization. This includes finding ways to evaluate the level of success the organization is achieving in engaging the public. Understanding the level of success for public outreach will allow the organization to better direct and adapt outreach efforts to achieve the best results possible for educating the public and soliciting public input.

The organizational goals for public participation are:

- Effectively soliciting input about transportation from a diverse cross-section of the public living in the region including: elderly, disabled, low-income, minority, and other traditionally underserved segments of the population.
- Gather an adequate quantity of high quality public input to allow the organization to understand the needs of the region and apply this understanding to the planning process.

¹ <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/factsheets/pm.cfm>
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- Effectively informing the public by providing relevant and timely regional resources, data, news, and public meeting information in popular and free formats, through outreach events, other social media formats, and at meetings.

Outlining goals for organizational performance is less challenging than establishing meaningful measures that provide information about how successful the organization is at achieving these goals. In addition, the process of measuring and analyzing the indicators of success should be inexpensive and should not interfere with primary work efforts by being overly time consuming.

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization has been using performance measures for public participation since the last update of the Public Participation Plan in 2007. These measures did an excellent job holding the organization accountable for the number of meetings held annually, the ability to have quorums at meetings, and the level of effort staff has put into creating continuous outreach materials including the newsletter, Twitter, blog, Facebook, and information packets. The use of performance measures was a step in a positive direction and the organization has benefitted operationally. Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization still received thoughtful comments from the public regarding the inability of the performance measures being used to effectively assess some of the key issues this document highlights, including *Title VI* and *Environmental Justice* requirements for engaging underrepresented segments of the population and how well the organization engages the community.

To ensure the organization is meeting the goal of engaging a diverse and representative cross-section of the region a number of new performance measures have been established:

Public Participation Measure	Purpose	Examples	What it accomplishes
Hold/attend at least one public event annually that focuses on connecting with Title VI and Environmental Justice populations.	Share information with the public about regional transportation topics. Solicit input about regional transportation from event participants.	-Strafford County Committee on Aging -COAST Bus Survey -Turkey Donation Day -Armed Forces Day	Ensures that SMPO is interfacing with segments of the population defined by Title VI and Environmental Justice for the purpose of informing the regional planning process.
Hold/attend at least one public event annually.	Share information with the public about regional transportation topics. Solicit input about regional transportation from	-Apple Harvest Fest -UNH Job Fairs -Farmers market	Ensures that SMPO is interfacing with segments of the population for the purpose of informing the regional planning

Public Participation Measure	Purpose	Examples	What it accomplishes
Solicit at least 50 public comments about transportation annually	Ensures public feedback is documented	event participants. -Transportation Surveys -COAST Survey -Comments about transportation plans and projects	process. Documented comments provide support for the SMPO planning process and planning decisions.
Attend at least 75% of the ACT meetings	Share information with people that represent Title VI and Environmental Justice populations about regional transportation topics. Solicit input about regional transportation issues from people representing Title VI and Environmental Justice populations.	-ACT Executive Committee Meetings -ACT member meetings -Act strategic planning sessions.	These meeting focus on community transportation for Title VI and Environmental Justice Populations. Representatives for these groups attend the ACT meetings and provide insightful information about challenges, what is working well and improvements that are needed.

The following tables highlight the ways Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization is tracking and assessing the organizational success in public participation. The practices shown in the tables are numerous and are utilized on an “as-needed” basis. Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization periodically monitors many of the techniques and indicators of success, to ensure the organization is moving towards organizational goals.

Assessment of the Effectiveness of MPO Public Participation Techniques

Objective 1: Informing the Public

Public Participation Techniques	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance Objective
Public meeting announcements, flyers, marketing materials, etc.	Number of places documents distributed	Increase number of exposures to announcements	Determine recipients. Discuss posting location and visibility to public. Consider redesign of the announcement and determine if materials are posted in a timely manner.
Press releases	Number of press releases posted	Increase number of press releases	Post a greater number of press releases via Constant Contact and on the SRPC/ MPO website. Broaden scope and subject of releases.
Posts via social media concerning meetings/events	Number of people who attended a meeting or event because they saw an announcement on the internet	Increase the number of people who have attended a meeting or event because they saw an announcement on the internet.	Look for community calendar of events on other websites to post meeting/event announcements.

Objective 2: Educating the Public

Public Participation Techniques	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance
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Public Participation Techniques	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance
Agenda packages	Comments received regarding agenda packages and meeting minutes	Post agendas and meeting minutes on website	Annually, survey MPO members and committee members regarding agenda packages and meeting minutes. As a result of comments, take action as needed.
Citizen Advisors Orientation Workshop	Comments received regarding orientation	Interest and number of attendees at each meeting	After each orientation, survey attendees. Revise orientation accordingly.
Distribution of plans and summaries	Comments received regarding the plans or summaries	Increase in number of comments received regarding plans or summaries.	Try to get “early and often” public review of draft plans and provide comment form for responses. When final plans or summaries are distributed, include comment form. Consider comments for development of future plans.
Web page	Number of visitors and feedback on “user friendliness”	Increase the number of visitors	Keep information on web page current. If visits are decreasing, consider redesign of web page.
Social Media	Number of “likes” (Facebook), followers (Twitter), and hits (Word press)	Increase number of social media followers	Regular updates of all social media outlets in an attempt to engage with the public

Objective 3: Involving the Public

Public Participation Techniques	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance Objective
Responding to office visits, phone calls, email and U.S. mail	Respond to all visits, phone calls, and inquiries within 72 hours.	Decrease in response time from MPO staff to inquiries from public	MPO staff document all incoming inquiries and direct to appropriate respondent in a timely manner
Public hearings/forums	Public attendance at MPO public hearings/forums	Increase in public attendance at public hearing /forums	Consider time, location, and accessibility of meeting room. Review announcements of meetings for timeliness, clarity, and distribution.
Surveys or comments forms	Number of comments / surveys	Increase in the number of comments / surveys received	Make sure a survey or comment form is available at every event and planned for in the agenda. Keep survey forms simple and quick to
Appreciation, acknowledgment responses	Number of responses	Increase number of responses	Use pre-printed thank-you notes. Make notes available to consultants and/or staff responsible for mailings.

Public Participation Techniques	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance
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Public Participation Techniques	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance Objective
Outreach events	Number of people interacting with MPO staff and volunteers at outreach events.	Increase in the number of responses/comments received from people attending outreach events.	MPO staff develops a network of contacts for outreach events, and schedules and organizes outreach events in region.

Objective 4: Reaching Out to the Public

			Objective
Developing community knowledge	Number of community events attended	Increase number of community events attended	Attend festivals, special events, lectures. Add contact names to mailing list.
Involvement from diverse community groups	Attendees to MPO meetings or events who were invited from community groups	Increase in representation from diverse community groups to reflect composition of the planning area	Attend meetings of community groups and solicit involvement in the transportation planning process. Build a network of contacts in different communities. Utilize the Equity and Engagement checklist to ensure you are aiming to reach the statewide population at large.

APPENDIX F EQUITY AND ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST

Equity and Engagement Checklist

Developed by Engagement and Equity TASC, December, 2012

In order to assure maximum and equitable participation by all residents of a community or region, the Equity and Engagement Technical Assistance Subcommittee of the Granite State Future project has developed the following suggestions for conducting planning initiatives.

1. Strive for **demographically representative engagement** that reflects the community or region where planning is occurring. This may entail special efforts to reach out and engage groups that traditionally have not participated in such work, for reasons of place, economic status, age, education levels, mobility limitations or other disabilities, or cultural and ethnic differences.
2. To the extent that is legally permissible, create opportunities for **participatory decision making** as the first principle in planning activities. Planners have special expertise and knowledge. That expertise and knowledge should be shared with community partners as much as possible, in order to increase informed participation, a shared sense of investment in decisions and implementation, and equitable relationships. The goal of **mutual empowerment of planners and community members** is crucial
3. As planning goals are set and decisions are made, **consider the impact of those decisions (before they are finalized) on all constituent groups and sectors** in a community or region.
4. In public conversations, media releases, and reports published for public consumption, **use plain, everyday language accessible to anyone** (including considerations of reading level and translation from English to other languages as appropriate).
5. As plans and goals are developed, **take into account their impact on diverse groups**, including best judgments about what groups could be advantaged and what groups could be disadvantaged by those decisions, and taking steps to mitigate any anticipated losses of resources, status, or power by those who might be disadvantaged.
6. Design **effective feedback loops** to inform participants about the ways their input was considered and acted upon.
7. Respect the **core value of local control** that characterizes New Hampshire's political and community culture. Plans and goals that require regional collaboration (for example in areas such as transportation, natural resource management, public school governance, economic development) should strive to maintain community identity and integrity as much as possible.
8. Planning processes must **attend to the "soft infrastructure" of communities**—the people who live, work, and interact with each other, not just the built environment that serves those people.

9. Specific planning decisions concerned with principles of equity will take into account such matters as where stores and businesses are located with respect to walking and transportation routes used by less affluent or minority populations or those with special mobility needs; access to fresh, affordable foods; personal safety; and other criteria that reflect the goal of **maximum access and participation in community life**.
10. Practices of equitable engagement in local and regional planning efforts should be **sufficiently consistent across sites** so that residents moving from one community to another will have similar access to and be able to understand planning and decision-making processes.

Abbreviation	Organizations
COAST	Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
UNH	University of New Hampshire
NHDOT	New Hampshire department of transportation
NHDES	New Hampshire department of environmental services
FHWA	Federal highway administration
FTA	Federal transit administration
NHDOT-AD	New Hampshire department of transportation-aeronautics division
NHDOT-BRT	New Hampshire department of transportation-bureau of rail and transit
SMRPC	Southern Maine regional planning commission
NHTA	New Hampshire Transit Association
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
NHOEP	New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning
MDOT	Maine department of transportation
NNEPRA	Northern New England passenger rail authority
ACT	Alliance for community transportation
SABR	Seacoast area bicycle routes
SCO	Seacoast commuter options
NHMTA	New Hampshire motor transport association
NHDES-ARD	New Hampshire department of environmental services-air resources division
BWA-NH	New Hampshire bike walk alliance

APPENDIX H Comments:

Comments received during the comment period beginning January 6, 2014 and continuing through February 20, 2014:

1. Where are the public comments forms located and are they ever sent randomly to the public via the USPS?
Directions for submitting comments can be found on the last page of this document. All comments can be submitted electronically or by mail. Email and physical addresses can be found on the SRPC website.

There are no standardized forms for submitting comments and forms are not sent out via the USPS to random members of the public.
2. Does the SRPC staff have a questionnaire form available for commissioners use, to gather information? Other than the NADO assessments?
No. Commissioners are encouraged to submit questions or other information directly to the SRPC Executive Director or other appropriate staff.
3. In “public conversation, media release, reports, for public conversation; Use plain everyday language assessable to everyone.” Keeping in mind that the general public are others are topic stunted and uninformed about most of the RPC programs. Try a less technical approach if you’re trying to reach the nonprofessional arena.
This comment is noted.
4. “Appendix F Equity and Engagement checklist + ACS Dec 2012, Technical Assistance and sub-committee” who is on this subcommittee and explain their function?
The Granite State Futures Equity Engagement Technical Subcommittee is a group of planners that was charged to develop best planning practices for engaging the public in an equitable way. The list in Appendix F are the work products from the group.
5. Explain “Chapter 3 Requirements addressing populations with disabilities,” elderly living in their own homes.
Requirements are that Strafford Regional Planning Commission make reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities and provide multiple venues for the public to participate. This is being accomplished through the efforts outlined in this document.
6. How could the commissioners bring back to their communities advantageous programs for their citizens.

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I would recommend holding a Commissioner meeting or a meeting with your own community to share ideas as a group about how to best disseminate information back to your community. It is not the role of the planning commission to direct what Commissioners do with the information they are provided. We strongly support sharing it with your community. Communities appoint Commissioners to represent their interest and bring information back.

7. Are veterans under the umbrella of any RPC programs consideration and if not why not explore the possibilities?

Yes. They are included.

8. Can we review the current methods of solicitation for public input, with input and comments from the commissioners and other RPC's?

Yes. Strafford Regional Planning Commission has provided numerous opportunities for input from Commissioners and review of strategies including public comment periods, public hearings, and frequent discussion about this public participation at Policy Committee and TAC meetings. Strafford RPC has taken this information into consideration and it has incorporated into the development of this Public Participation Plan.

9. What methods of public solicitation are successful, why are they considered as such?

What methods have proven unfruitful?

It would help staff if Commissioners defined success.

10. Outline what could be done by the commissioners in aiding the SRPC staff in promoting the Public Participation program. Make the tasks simple and achievable.



Public Participation is not a program in and of itself. It is an organizational policy for ongoing public participation efforts for all transportation planning related activities requiring public input. Commissioners can help the organization by sharing information you hear at meetings with appropriate local officials and members of the public who may be interested. Commissioners can also help by directing local officials to contact Strafford Regional Planning Commission if they require planning services.

Share Your Comments

Via Mail :
Strafford regional planning commission
150 Wakefield street, Suite 12
Rochester, nh 03867

VIA SRPC WEBSITE:
www.strafford.org

VIA EMAIL:
SRPC@strafford.org

VIA SOCIAL MEDIA:
 @StraffordRPC
 Strafford Regional Planning
Commission

