

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee Meeting

Friday, April 19th 2019 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Strafford Regional Planning Commission
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Conference Room 1A
Rochester, NH

AGENDA

1. **Introductions**
2. **Staff Communications**
3. **Action Item(s)**
 - 3.1 Minutes from March 15th 2019
 - 3.2 Ten Year Plan Candidate Project list – for submission to NHDOT
 - 3.3 2020-2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
4. **Discussion Items**
 - 4.1 Letter to Sen. Maggie Hassan
5. **Project Updates**
 - 5.1 COAST strategic planning process
 - 5.2 FTA 5305(e) grant application
6. **Other Business**
7. **Citizen's Forum** – Citizens of the Strafford region are invited to speak on the subject matter of the meeting. Statements should be limited to three minutes.
8. **Adjournment**

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. Also include a way we can contact you if we need more information. Make your request as early as possible; please allow at least 5 days advance notice. Last minute requests will be accepted, but may be impossible to fill. Please call (603) 994-3500 or email srpc@strafford.org.

Rules of Procedure

*Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization, and
Strafford Economic Development District*

Meeting Etiquette

Be present at the scheduled start of the meeting.

Be respectful of the views of others.

Ensure that only one person talks at a time. Raising your hand to be recognized by the chair or facilitator is good practice.

Do not interrupt others, or start talking before someone finishes.

Do not engage in cross talk.

Avoid individual discussions in small groups during the meeting. When one person speaks, others should listen.

Active participation is encouraged from all members.

When speaking, participants should adhere to topics of discussion directly related to agenda items.

When speaking, individuals should be brief and concise.

The Strafford Regional Planning Commission & Metropolitan Planning Organization holds both public meetings and public hearings.

For public meetings, guests are welcome to observe, but should follow proper meeting etiquette allowing the meeting to proceed uninterrupted. Members of the public who wish to be involved and heard should use venues such as citizen forum, public hearings, public comment periods, outreach events, seminars, workshops, listening sessions, etc.

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee Meeting

Friday, March 15th 2019 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Strafford Regional Planning Commission
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Conference Room 1A
Rochester, NH

AGENDA

The meeting was called to order at 9:08am

1. **Attendance:**

Committee Members

John Huckins (Barrington), Tom Crosby (Madbury), Don Hamann (Rochester), Michael Williams (COAST), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Steve Diamond (Barrington), Peter Nelson (Newmarket), Steve Pesci (UNH), David Landry (Dover), Lucy St. John (NHDOT), Mark Avery (Madbury)

Guests

Steve Workman – TransportNH

Staff

Jennifer Czysz, Nancy O' Connor, Stefanie Casella, Colin Lentz

2. **Staff Communications**

No staff communications were brought to the committee

3. **Action Item(s)**

3.1 - **Minutes from February 15th 2019 [VOTE]**

M. Williams made a motion to accept the minutes with requested change

Seconded by D. Hamann

Vote: Unanimous in favor

4. **Discussion Items**

4.1 Legislation and State Budget

C. Lentz introduced Steve Workman who had offered to come to the Policy Committee to discuss transit funding in the state budget.

S. Workman explained that he had been the director of TransportNH (a transportation advocacy non-profit organization) for a little over a year. He provided handouts explaining a recent change to the Governor's draft capital budget that included an unexpected cut to state match for transit capital funding. He gave an update on two specific issues: inclusion of \$200,000 in the state budget for transit operating funds that was requested by NHDOT, and \$907,460 in state

match for transit capital. Neither of these was included in the Governor's draft budget that was presented to the legislature. S. Workman explained that the House Finance Division II would be reviewing the budget in the coming weeks. He recommended that Policy members reach out to the members of the finance committee by phone or with a letter rather than presenting formal testimony at a hearing.

C. Lentz asked the Policy members if they would be comfortable calling or writing representatives if they had a set of talking points. S. Workman said it would be great to get official input from the planning commission.

P. Nelson said the handouts looked like a good summary of points and he asked if the information could be provided in digital format so SRPC staff could distribute them to committee members.

S. Pesci noted that Representative Pitre on the House Div. II finance committee was from Farmington and asked what Farmington's relationship with COAST was like. M. Williams said among several recent public workshops throughout the COAST service area, Farmington had the greatest number of participants, and that there was good local support for COAST. S. Pesci emphasized the need to highlight that New Hampshire and Mississippi were the only states that didn't provide state match for transit operating funds. S. Workman agreed and noted that transit capital fleets throughout the state were rapidly aging. S. Pesci noted that the University of New Hampshire was not even part of the budget request for capital since the UNH Wildcat fleet has relied on grant opportunities (such as CMAQ) and student fees to operate service and purchase new fleet vehicles.

C. Lentz asked S. Workman what the way forward was for advocating for transit in the state budgets. S. Workman said there was a structure in place that agencies and advocates could use to reach out to legislators, and there needed to be a consistent set of talking points. He said he was in favor of some of the priorities in the Governor's proposed budget but wasn't sure about the logic behind the overall framework. For instance, funding was prioritized for address the opioid crisis (which is a good thing) but transportation would likely be a limiting factor for anyone seeking treatment and rehabilitation because they may have lost their driver's license or even the ability to afford a personal vehicle. Therefore, it was counterproductive to limit public transit when the goal was to reduce the opioid crisis.

P. Nelson that transit related communications need to come from the people who ride the buses, those who are widely underrepresented.

E. Strachan added that it was also important to get support from people who don't ride the bus. She said it was important to support members of the community who need transportation assistance. The equivalent situation is when people pay for local schools through taxes even if they don't have children in the school.

M. Williams added that the seacoast had a very successful program that supported alternative modes of transportation such as walking, cycling, carpooling, public transit. He said the program and some of COAST's peak-hour bus service would lose its funding once the little bay bridge project was completed.

S. Pesci emphasized that cuts to transit funding didn't mean the need for service goes away. The needs are still there, and the cost burden will fall to social service agencies, municipalities, and ultimately individuals. M. Williams agreed, providing an example of one of COAST's regular ADA riders who lived in Dover and worked a night shift in Portsmouth had to wait two hours

after his shift till the buses started running. He expressed regret that COAST was unable to be more responsive to the needs of this individual.

E. Strachan said it would be important to create a graphic comparing NH to other New England states in terms of their investment in public transit. C. Lentz said he was jumping ahead on the agenda slightly, but wanted to note coordinated grant applications that SRPC and Rockingham Planning Commission had each submitted to study the economic impact of public transit in the Strafford and Rockingham regions. The proposed project would include transit-specific case studies such as the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, the Pease Tradeport, and others.

M. Williams emphasized that over the past ten years, demand for COAST's ADA service has grown 881%, but the federal transit funding they rely on has only grown by 15%. Ten years ago their ADA program cost \$180,000 per year; now it is up to 1.4 million per year. Because of New Hampshire's aging population, this demand will only keep growing.

E. Strachan noted that young people are wanting to drive less or even live places where they don't need to own a car. M. Williams said public transit isn't just a social services issue, it is also an economic development issue. He said that city staff from Dover, Rochester, and Somersworth are hearing from developers that they are reluctant to invest in new commercial and residential development projects if sites don't have good access to public transit service. The cost of supporting public transit is too much for municipalities to bear alone, but they are missing local economic development opportunities because of the lack of transit service.

D. Landry asked if developers see themselves as having a role in supporting and growing transit service, rather than just saying they would develop more sites if municipalities would only build more bus stops. M. Williams said he usually didn't hear from developers until they were fairly far along in site planning and wanted to coordinate on where to build a bus shelter. He said in his experience developers were unlikely to pay for anything additional unless a town makes them as part of their planning approval process.

C. Lentz asked if there was ideal timing for contacting legislators about this issue. S. Workman said the committee process would take about three weeks, so contacting them as soon as possible would be best. C. Lentz said he would send a summary of information to Policy members following the meeting.

J. Czynski asked the committee if they were comfortable with staff sending a letter to legislators in support of transit funding and the issues that had been discussed.

S. Pesci asked that staff personally reach out to the House Finance Division II Committee member from Farmington [Joseph Pitre] to discuss his support for transit funding.

D. Hamann made a motion to approve staff to send a letter and reach out to Rep. Pitre

Seconded by T. Crosby

Vote: unanimous in favor

C. Lentz gave a brief summary of bills that were being debated and developed in various legislative committees. He noted some that had been "retained in committee" [won't be formally voted on this cycle]. He noted that NHDOT had just received funding to study alternatives to the gas tax model for funding highways and bridges.

C. Lentz said since staff had only just started in-depth legislation tracking and bills were being processed quickly, he suggested that staff would follow up with the committee on various bills, but that the committee prioritize supporting or objecting to bills on which they had unanimous consensus. S. Pesci asked when crossover day was for the House and Senate. C. Lentz said the House crossover date for finance bills is April 11th and other legislation was April 4th; the Senate crossover date for all bills is March 28th.

4.2 Ten Year Plan Projects Update

C. Lentz explained that he and J. Czysz had met with NHDOT staff about regional candidate projects for the Ten Year Plan. NHDOT was able to provide more detailed cost estimates and additional guidance on project scopes. The TAC committee currently have a project scoring template and information about each potential project that will incorporate the new information from NHDOT so TAC (and ultimately Policy) can vote on a final list of projects to submit to NHDOT for the Ten Year Plan.

S. Pesci asked if there was any progress on getting a more accurate cost estimate for project at NH155 and Madbury Rd in Madbury. C. Lentz said that project did come up and NHDOT was interested in working with SRPC and the town to help accelerate that project contingent on fund availability.

5. Project Updates

5.1 DOV-SOM-ROC 108 Complete Streets

C. Lentz reminded the committee members that there would be a listening session for the 108 complete streets project at the Dover Middle School on Monday March 18th at 7:00. There will be an additional listening session on May 2nd at the Somersworth middle school at 7:00.

5.2 Kittery/Naval Shipyard Joint Land-use Study

C. Lentz said the land use study between Kittery and the Naval Shipyard was moving forward. There had been two meetings recently that included staff from SRPC, RPC, and COAST to scope the overall purpose and goals of the project. J. Czysz noted that the largest share of shipyard employees living in New Hampshire were commuting from Rochester and Farmington.

6. Other Business

J. Czysz reiterated that SRPC and RPC had submitted applications for FTA 5305e planning funds to study the regional connection between public transit and economic development. The grant would get rolled into the next UPWP for fiscal years 2020-2021.

S. Pesci made sure that the study would include the importance of Amtrak service to the region. He suggested that Amtrak had provided the largest contribution to regional economic development even though New Hampshire pays zero dollars to support the passenger rail service.

S. Pesci asked if there was any progress on addressing the possibility of a rescission at the end of the Fast Act in 2020. J. Czysz said it didn't come up during recent meetings with NHDOT. She

noted that NHDOT was unable to obligate funds during the government shutdown, which increased the risk that NHDOT would have unobligated federal funding by the end of the FAST Act. She asked L. St. John if she had any insight. L. St. John said she would follow up with an update.

Local Updates from Commissioners

S. Diamond said he had sponsored a local proposition in Barrington to provide more funding for bicycle infrastructure development. He said he had received good support from local constituents, but heavy opposition from local decision-makers.

C. Lentz added that the Governor's draft budget had included a specific set-aside for rail trails throughout the state.

E. Strachan reminded members that they could provide input on the statewide Bike/Ped plan on the project website (pedbike.com)

P. Nelson asked if SRPC was still using STRAVA data [a database of primarily recreational rider activity in the state]. C. Lentz said that NHDOT had recently purchased an additional three years of STRAVA data for RPCs to use in analyzing cycling activity. The data would be used as part of a multi-regional analysis of bicycle safety and accessibility.

7. **Citizen's Forum** – Citizens of the Strafford region are invited to speak on the subject matter of the meeting. Statements should be limited to three minutes.

8. **Adjournment**

M. Williams made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by S. Pesci

Vote: unanimous in favor

Meeting adjourned at 10:18am

MEMO

To: Strafford MPO Policy Committee
From: Colin Lentz
Re: Action Items for April 2019 Policy meeting
Date April 12, 2019

Unified Planning Work Program for fiscal years 2020-2021

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) guides the work that Strafford MPO undertakes over a two-year period. It translates established planning priorities, processes, and tasks into expected activities and work products, and provides general timeframes for task completion. The UPWP is supported by FHWA Urban Planning (PL) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Planning funds, which are combined under Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) jurisdiction in a unified contract. These funds are supplemented by Federal State Planning and Research (SPR) funds apportioned to NHDOT and are matched with a 20% local contribution. One half of that 20% match is provided via RPC community dues. The other half is provided by NHDOT via "Turnpike Toll Credits". The full draft UPWP is available on the Strafford MPO website: http://strafford.org/cmsAdmin/uploads/draftupwp_4-12-2019.pdf

There is no UPWP funding increase for FY 2020 and 2021 and the total available is the same as for the current UPWP (FY2018-2019); funding has remained essentially flat since 2012. Scope and budgeting details are being finalized with NHDOT. Financial and budget details will be available at the Policy meeting

The UPWP is nominally segmented into five categories: administration; planning; public outreach; data and analytical support; and technical assistance. Strafford MPO applied for and will be receiving additional FTA grant funds through the 5305e (planning) program to study linkages between public transit and economic development. An additional \$50,000 for that grant will be incorporated into the 2020-2021 UPWP and the scope of work tasks for the project will be included as an additional sixth work category.

This iteration of the UPWP includes updated references to federal regulations, updated Planning Emphasis Areas provided by FHWA and FTA, as well as MPO Planning Priorities. In addition, the Category and Task descriptions have been reformatted, reorganized, and updated to reflect current tasks and activities. For the most part, the draft 2020-2021 UPWP is consistent with the work included in the 2018-2019 work program. There are some areas that the MPO will be prioritizing efforts over the next two years:

- Planning & Environmental Linkages, Climate Change adaptation, and Resiliency
- Updating the MPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Updates to the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs)
- Maintaining and enhancing the travel demand model

Recommended Action: Approve the 2020-2021 Unified Planning Work Program

Ten Year Plan Project Scoring and Ranking Results

SRPC staff worked with a subcommittee of TAC and Policy committee members to develop a set of projects that would be eligible for the Statewide Ten Year Plan. NHDOT was able to complete an engineering review for 5 out of the 7 projects that were submitted. That review included project cost estimates based on proposed scopes. The TAC used a set of weighted criteria to rank the projects (All RPCs used the same set of criteria, but each RPC weighted them according to regional priorities). At the April TAC meeting, the committee reviewed the ranking results and voted to approve a set of ranked list of projects in the table below.

This decision incorporated cost estimate information provided by NHDOT. For instance, the top-ranked project was a project in Dover (roundabout project on the NH108 bridge over the Bellamy), but the NHDOT cost estimate for the project was above the theoretical allocation of federal highway funds to the region. The TAC voted to proceed with the four projects above (plus the soundwall project) and refine the Dover roundabout project at the 108 bridge over the Bellamy river for future funding opportunities. Given time and resource constraints, NHDOT was only able to review the top five projects submitted in Strafford MPO's preliminary list in December; the Rochester bridge over the Cocheco project in the table below was not one of the top five. The scope of that project focuses on bridge widening and would likely have resulted in a cost estimate beyond the regional allocation. The Dover soundwalls project does not use funds in the regional allocation; it was included so it could be eligible for the Type II soundwalls program.

The projects highlighted in the table below are the projects that were approved by the TAC to be recommended to the Policy Committee. NHDOT has indicated that MPO project submissions will be incorporated into the Ten Year Plan as presented *provided that the regional funding allocation is not exceeded*. The next step is for the MPO Policy Committee to make this final recommendation based on the NHDOT cost estimates.

Priority Number	Municipality	Scope and Location Summary	Project Cost Estimate	Regional Allocation
1	Dover	Safety and Congestion improvements at NH Route 108 over the Bellamy River	\$6,896,505	\$4,901,449
2	Rochester	Intersection improvements at the sequence of Charles St/NH 125 (Columbus Ave) and Old Dover Rd	\$2,361,753.60	\$4,901,449
3	Dover	Pedestrian and accessibility improvements along Chestnut St	\$204,551.20	\$4,901,449
4	Somersworth	Pedestrian improvements along W. High Street and High Street to connect schools to the downtown	\$1,157,142.40	\$4,901,449
5	Northwood	Intersection improvements at School St (107) & US 4/US 202 Intersection	\$1,002,694	\$4,901,449
6	Rochester	NH125/Columbus Ave bridge over Cocheco	no cost estimate	NA
7	Dover	Soundwalls at Exit 7 on Route 16 - Spaulding Tnpk	Not part of allocation	NA
8		Total of Estimates (only highlighted projects)	\$4,726,141	\$4,901,449

Recommended Action: TAC and staff recommend that Policy approve projects 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 to be submitted to the NHDOT for the draft Ten Year Plan (see table below).

Priority Number	Municipality	Route/Road	Scope	Estimated Federal/State cost	Total Score
1	Dover	130/099 NH Route 108 over Bellamy	Change signal control at Mill St and Back River Rd intersections to roundabout control to improve traffic flow and safety. Maintain or improve safe bicycle and pedestrian access. Scope does not require bridge widening.	\$6,896,505	0.75
2	Rochester	Intersection sequence of Charles St/NH 125 (Columbus Ave)/Old Dover Rd	Reassessment of turning lane alignment and vehicle access. Existing sidewalks along the southbound side of should be upgraded and include industry standard ADA compliant components (e.g. dropdowns, warning treads, etc.). No pedestrian facilities exist for crossing NH125; one pedestrian crossing should be added to facilitate business access. An effective intersection improvement may require driveway access control/reductions to consolidate turning movements.	\$2,361,753.60	0.75
3	Dover	Chestnut St	Multimodal improvements along Chestnut between bridge over the Cocheco River and Third St Roundabout. Includes vehicles, bicycle and pedestrian, passenger rail, and fixed route bus (Wildcat and COAST). Improves multimodal linkage with Dover Transit Center and downtown. Project coordinated with RR crossing improvements at Central Ave and Third St roundabout.	\$204,551.20	0.74
4	Somersworth	W. High Street – south side: (Cemetery Road to High Street) High Street –west side: (High Street to Memorial Drive	Construct approximately 2900 linear feet of asphalt sidewalk with granite curbing and drainage improvements along West High Street from Cemetery Road to High Street and along High Street from West High Street to Memorial Drive. Both corridors experience steady pedestrian traffic even though the sidewalk network in the target corridor is either non-existent or in very poor condition. Sidewalks will have a direct access to downtown, local parks and public schools including the Somersworth Middle School and Somersworth High School. The West High Street corridor has no sidewalk and pedestrians rely on a painted area of the paved shoulder as a sidewalk. The High Street corridor sidewalk is in very poor condition and will compliment a 2017 TAP grant to fund sidewalk and bike lane improvements connecting the downtown area with the middle and high schools, one of two elementary schools, low income housing, and regional COAST bus stops.	\$1,157,142.40	0.64
5	Northwood	School St (107) & US 4/US 202 Intersection	Repaint eastbound US4 left turning lane onto NH107/School St, shifting it south to avoid westbound US4 through-traffic impinging on opposing left turning traffic. Add a right-turn lane on westbound US4 onto NH107 North. Pavement expansion, fill, & culvert work involved. Analyze driveways of retail establishment to reduce conflict points with intersection traffic. Northwood owns land along 107 near intersection with US4. Traffic turning from US4 (coming from both directions) onto school St and into parking lot for hardware & grocery store not do so safely. US4 Westbound traffic presents an especially dangerous situation where vehicles move to go around traffic turning right onto school street or the parking lot. Drivers use parking lot to avoid intersection.	\$1,002,694	0.63
6	Rochester	NH125/Columbus Ave bridge over Cocheco	Bridge widening for traffic congestion improvements. Pedestrian facilities comprise an adjacent but separate bridge that was recently updated.	no cost estimate	0.60
7	Dover	Exit 7 on Route 16 - Spaulding Tnpk	Approximately 350' feet of Type II soundwalls. \$400,000 programmed in year 6 of Dover CIP.	different funding source	0.48

April 3, 2019

Ms. Jennifer Kuzma
Deputy State Director
Office of U.S. Senator Maggie Hassan
1589 Elm Street, 3rd Floor
Manchester, NH 03101

Re: FAST Act Reauthorization Considerations

Dear Jennifer,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in advance of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) beginning its work on the reauthorization of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. As you know, reauthorizing the nation's surface transportation legislation is crucially important to provide long-term funding security for our transportation system and mitigate the threat of a damaging funding rescission.

On behalf of New Hampshire's nine Regional Planning Commissions, we offer the following suggestions about the reauthorization of the FAST Act for Senator Hassan's consideration.

Regarding the Sustainability of the National Highway Trust Fund

To ensure the sustainability of the Highway Trust Fund in the future, other revenue sources need to be considered beyond simply the gas tax. With hybrid and electric vehicles continuing to gain market share nationwide, gas tax revenues are likely to decrease significantly over time. The reauthorization of the FAST Act provides an opportunity for Congress to have a meaningful policy debate about other potential revenue mechanisms, including Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), that could serve as an eventual replacement for the gas tax.

Regarding New Hampshire's Apportionment of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Funding under the FAST Act

New Hampshire is 50th out of 50 states in total FAST Act allocations, and has struggled with an inequitable FHWA apportionment formula for nearly the past decade. As part of the FAST Act reauthorization, it is imperative to re-evaluate the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding formulas underlying the FAST Act to ensure that New Hampshire is receiving a fair and transparent allocation based on its population, number of urbanized areas, mileage of National Highway System roadways, mileage of Federal-aid eligible roadways, and other factors.

Some specific examples of how New Hampshire is receiving an inequitable apportionment include the following.

- The State of Vermont will receive nearly \$115 Million more than New Hampshire under the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) over the life of the FAST Act. However, Vermont has 559 fewer lane miles of National Highway System (NHS) roadway to maintain than New

Hampshire (NH has 2,749 lane miles and Vermont has 2,190 lane miles). As such, Vermont receives substantially more funding under the NHPP to maintain fewer roads.

- Again, using the State of Vermont as an example, Vermont will receive 32% more funding for Metropolitan Planning over the life of the FAST Act. Vermont has one urbanized area (Burlington) with a population of approx. 112,000 and one Metropolitan Planning Organization (which serves the Burlington urbanized area). New Hampshire has four Metropolitan Planning Organizations (SNHPC, NRPC, RPC, and SRPC) and five urbanized areas (Manchester, Nashua, Dover-Rochester, Portsmouth, and Boston) totaling a population of 661,000. Because of this dynamic, New Hampshire's four Metropolitan Planning Organizations are struggling to do more than keep up with the required tasks given budgetary limitations and have had to curtail studies and other technical assistance to their municipalities.

Regarding the Transportation Alternatives Program and Restoration of the Scenic Byways Program

Before the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), there were three federal programs very popular among municipalities in New Hampshire: 1) Transportation Enhancement (for general bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure development); 2) Safe Routes to School (for bicycle/pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods and schools); and Scenic Byways (to enhance awareness of and amenities for scenic roadways in the context of travel and tourism).

When MAP-21 was passed in 2012, these programs were consolidated into a single program called the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and overall funding was reduced substantially.

The development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure remains very popular and important in New Hampshire. In the New Hampshire Department of Transportation's most recent solicitation for TAP projects, 38 communities applied for \$22.6 Million in funding (versus \$5.7 Million in available funding). To ensure support for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure development, the funding supporting the TAP program should be restored to pre-MAP-21 levels (for the former TE and SRTS programs combined).

Additionally, the Scenic Byways program should be restored and funded at pre-MAP-21 levels. Every corner of New Hampshire has benefitted from travel and tourism related to Scenic Byways. However, without a dedicated funding source for Scenic Byways, this important regional resource is not being fully leveraged. Scenic overlook infrastructure is falling into disrepair, scenic vistas are being unmaintained and becoming overgrown, and local/regional agencies do not have resources to promote their Scenic Byways.

Regarding the Transportation Needs Reflecting New Hampshire's Changing Demographics

As part of the FAST Act reauthorization, it is essential to increase federal programmatic emphasis on age-friendly transportation considerations, including transit services to ensure that seniors transitioning out of driving have options to access medical appointments and other essential services.

New Hampshire largely relies on funding from the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5310 Program (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) to meet these needs. However, there are far more needs than funding and those needs continue to grow as our population ages. New Hampshire is not alone in trying to address the transportation needs of a rapidly aging population, and any additional federal emphasis on the Section 5310 program would be welcome nationwide.

Many New Hampshire public transportation providers, including COAST, the public transit agency serving the Seacoast area, has seen their Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit service costs increase significantly (in COAST's case, over 800%) in the past decade. While ADA complementary paratransit is a vital service, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) apportionments are not keeping up with growing need and demand for the service as our population ages. The travel needs for our population in the next 20 years will be different than those of the past 50 years, and this dynamic needs to be considered in the reauthorization of the FAST Act.

Transportation options are also in demand among the younger working-aged cohort. New Hampshire is challenged with declining enrollments in our schools and younger working-aged population resulting in workforce challenges. This cohort is more interested in transportation choices, which suggests the need for enhanced emphasis and funding in support of local transit, inter-city bus service, and intermodal connections including rail and air. These considerations are exacerbated in more rural areas of New Hampshire where development densities may not result in such services, yet the need currently exists and is continually growing.

Regarding the Highway Safety Improvement Program

The importance of the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) in New Hampshire cannot be understated. Not only is additional funding necessary, but the program should be adjusted to allow for the use of these funds to address a more broad set of safety issues. Currently the program is limited to funding improvements at locations where there have been fatal or serious injury crashes. However, many of these types of crashes are essentially random in that they are often due to behavioral decisions (not wearing a seatbelt, texting while driving) and demographics (older drivers), and less about a problem with the design of the specific location of the crash. We would suggest broadening the base of this program to allow for addressing locations with a history of multiple non-incapacitating injury crashes.

Additionally, the HSIP program should again allow the expenditure of funds on non-infrastructure safety initiatives such as education and public outreach. Prior to the FAST Act, New Hampshire had a robust program of HSIP-funded public service announcements and other outreach efforts to target the behavioral side of safety. However, many of those efforts no longer exist due to these restrictions.

Regarding the Project Development Procedures for Local Public Agencies

While everyone wants to ensure that there is no waste, fraud, or abuse in federally-funded projects administered by Local Public Agencies (LPA), the regulations have become so onerous that it is nearly impossible for a Local Public Agency to deliver federally-funded projects on time and on budget in New Hampshire.

The LPA guidance in other states often includes much more flexibility than New Hampshire, particularly for larger municipalities that have their own professional engineers on staff. New Hampshire's strict rules are the result of conservative regulatory interpretations by our FHWA division office and additional risk management provisions inserted into the LPA process by the NHDOT. In any case, different states are playing by different (often more flexible and streamlined) rules than New Hampshire. You would be hard pressed to find any municipality in New Hampshire that would speak positively about their experience bringing a federally-funded transportation project to fruition under New Hampshire's LPA rules. That dynamic will not change unless meaningful leadership is shown at the federal level to streamline the LPA

project development procedures and assuage State-level risk management concerns. Such streamlining should be considered as part of the reauthorization of the FAST Act.

Regarding Transportation Infrastructure Resilience

As part of the FAST Act reauthorization, additional programmatic emphasis on transportation infrastructure resilience is needed in the context of sea level rise and inland flood events. These issues are already frequently affecting New Hampshire communities. In Hampton, sea level rise is affecting NH Route 1A, which now floods routinely during king tide events.

Similarly, according to Dartmouth research, extreme precipitation events in the Northeast have increase in frequency by over 50% since the mid-1990s resulting in inland flood events. In northern New Hampshire, recent severe rain events have badly damaged road, bridge, and culvert infrastructure with significant impacts to regional mobility. For example, the Town of Shelburne was completely cut off after the October 2017 storm due to culvert failures on US Route 2 and North Road. We would support the establishment of a new programmatic funding source that could respond more nimbly and efficiently to emergent and time-sensitive resiliency issues that emerge from these types of events.

Regarding the Funding Ramifications of Urbanized Area Boundary Changes

There is potential that the 2020 U.S. Census will lead to the Manchester, Portsmouth and/or Dover/Rochester Urbanized Areas (UZA) crossing the 200,000 population threshold through absorption into the Nashua or Boston UZAs. When Nashua crossed the 200,000 population threshold following the 2010 U.S. Census, it resulted in a 34% decrease in FTA Section 5307 funding. Such a drop for Manchester, Portsmouth or Dover/Rochester would be devastating for those regions' transit providers. We ask that the Congressional delegation work to implement a *Hold Harmless* provision in the FTA funding formula so that when small UZAs are absorbed into larger metro areas their Federal Transit Administration (FTA) apportionments remain at least level.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on the reauthorization of the FAST Act. We thank you for your collaboration, and look forward to working with you and Senator Hassan in the future.

Sincerely,

Stephen Buckley
NHARPC Chairman