Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization
Policy Committee Meeting
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Conference Rm. 1A
Rochester, NH 03867

Minutes

Friday, August 18 2017
9:00 AM-11:00 AM

1. Introductions

Members Present: Mark Avery (Madbury), Tom Crosby (Madbury), Steve Diamond (Barrington), Martin Laferte (Farmington), Don Hamann (Rochester), Sandra Keans (Rochester), Peter Nelson (Newmarket), Tony McManus (Dover) Scott Orzechowski (Somersworth), Victoria Parmele (Northwood), Brian Tapscott (Somersworth), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES) , Michael Williams (COAST)

Staff Present: Cynthia Copeland (Executive Director), Colin Lentz (Regional Transportation Planner), Rachel Dewey (Data Analyst), Rachael Mack (GIS Planner), James Burdin (Regional Economic Development Planner), Stef Castella, Derrick Bartlett, Mason Twombly, Molly Belanger (Data Collection and Analysis Assistants), Cynthia Plascencia (Transportation Writer)

The meeting was called to order with a quorum at 9:06 am.

2. Staff Communications

3. Action Items

3.1. Minutes from July 21 2017

M. Williams made a motion to approve the July 21, 2017 Meeting Minutes
Seconded by B. Tapscott
Vote: Unanimous in favor

4. Discussion Items

4.1. Project Development Support - Data Collection and Visualization

4.1.a. Presentations from the 2017 data collection team

The SRPC Data Collection team (S. Casella, M. Twombly, M. Belanger, and D. Bartlett) gave a presentation on current data collection activities: SADES Road Surface Management Systems (RSMS), SADES Sidewalk Assessments, Traffic Counts, SADES Culvert Assessments, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Counts. They provided an overview of the equipment and process for each data collection effort, including recent additions and improvements to SRPC's data collection

equipment. D. Bartlett discussed how collecting RSMS data allows municipal officials to develop a detailed long-term work plan and budget for maintaining local roads. These data also allow users to develop a comprehensive review of their road network with an overall goal of improving the pavement condition index (PCI) over time. D. Bartlett reviewed some of the information collected during assessments:

- General road information (road name, surface type, shoulder type, road width, number of lanes, etc.)
- Various types of cracking (alligator cracking, edge cracking, longitudinal/transverse cracking)
- Overall Roughness
- Pot holes/patching
- Frost heaves
- Rutting
- Drainage conditions

D. Bartlett explained the forecasting aspect of collecting RSMS, which calculates the Pavement Condition Index (PCI). Municipalities can use this to calculate estimated repair costs, prioritize maintenance and repairs for individual road segments, and develop progress reports. He added that the data collection team would be attending forecasting training soon.

C. Copeland commented that the forecasting training is on hold as staff from the UNH Technology Transfer Center revise and upgrade the system. C. Lentz added that RSMS data helps municipalities put together a specific road maintenance plan that covers ten years with detailed budgeting for individual road segments in each year. He said SRPC can work with municipalities to update the plan each year once the initial assessment has been completed.

D. Bartlett also discussed the SADES sidewalk assessments, which provides municipalities with current and accurate data regarding the condition of local pedestrian infrastructure. It identifies areas sidewalks that are disconnected or areas where existing sidewalks need repair or maintenance. It also helps identify areas where sidewalks are not ADA compliant.

M. Twombly discussed traffic counts and the data it provides to support land use and transportation projects. He explained that counts can be customized to collect various types of data such as overall volume, individual vehicle classification (size), and speed. NHDOT assigns count locations to each RPC yearly, and municipalities can request supplemental count locations. M. Belanger demonstrated the various devises used to track data, such as turning movement counters, tube counters, and radar counters. Data from NHDOT-assigned counts is sent to NHDOT where it is incorporated into the state traffic database, which is available on their website. M. Belanger added that if data for a local road is not available, municipalities could contact SRPC to collect the data. She noted that radar counters can be placed on one-lane roads and they can count on paved or unpaved roads.

S. Castella overviewed the culvert assessment protocol. There are about 100 attributes collected to assess the condition of each culvert including: the condition of built infrastructure; the shape and depth of the stream; types of plants and soils in the stream; and any historic artifacts (such as old stone masonry). She explained that the level of detail informs municipalities and multiple agencies on the condition of the infrastructure around the culvert

and road, the health of the stream system [e.g. can it support a healthy ecosystem], and potential historic value. S. Castella explained that they primarily collect data from streams, wetlands, and ponds, but upon request, can also collect data from drainage structures and culvert drainage. S. Castella stated that there are certain culverts that they do not assess, such as private drives, class VI roads, or potentially hazardous areas. S. Castella said that the culvert data are sent to NHDES for review prior to publication on a statewide database that includes publicly available digital maps.

She noted that culvert information is available on the New Hampshire Coastal Viewer website. S. Diamond asked what types of problems the data collection team is looking for during culvert assessments. S. Castella explained that the assessment is not meant to perform specific analysis, but the team identifies obvious problems such as erosion and scouring around the culvert that could impact the road over the culvert.

C. Lentz added that the culvert program is interesting because of the number of agencies that are involved. DOT is interested in the road/transportation infrastructure; NHDES is interested in the health of the stream system and aquatic organisms that live in it; Department of Historic Resources is interested in historic architecture (such as rock walls or stone culverts); and US Geologic Survey is interested in fluvial geomorphology. C. Lentz emphasized the importance of these studies and the holistic picture they provide.

M. Belanger shared a new bicycle and pedestrian counter, explaining that it can collect data for both bicyclists and pedestrians, or each individually. V. Parmele asked where the counter is placed to collect data. M. Belanger explained that the counter can be placed on a utility pole or a tree near a trail or other bike/ped route.

P. Nelson asked where all the information from data collection efforts would be available for public access. M. Belanger explained that traffic volume data is found on the NHDOT website. She added that any specific data not immediately accessible on the SRPC website can be provided on request. She stated that culvert data are found on the SADES website. C. Lentz added that SRPC is working on a way to migrate all of the data into one location, and that R. Mack would be presenting about those efforts later in the meeting agenda.

S. Diamond asked how traffic data are presented to show change over time. M. Twombly presented a report that contained data tables detailing traffic counts and the timing of the counts. S. Castella added that DOT's website does not show a detailed breakdown of the timing of the counts, but it does Adjusted Annual Daily Traffic, with traffic numbers by the day/by the season. C. Lentz explained that SRPC can provide analysis of individual traffic counts (e.g. when peak traffic occurred, and how volumes changed daily) and how overall traffic volumes have changed along specific highways over multiple years.

5. Project Update(s)

5.1. CMAQ

C. Lentz gave an update on the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program, which is a federal funding program managed by NHDOT through a competitive grant process. He noted that Dover and Somersworth, and the two public transportation providers (COAST and UNH Wildcat) had submitted letters of interest for the program. C. Lentz explained that DOT is still working out the details with the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) as far as how the scoring will go and what criteria will be used. C. Lentz explained that RPCs will be assisting with scoring by using the same criteria that DOT will use. He added that Cynthia Copeland would be available to review applications from the region to ensure applicants get every possible point.

C. Lentz shared information from a recent GACIT meeting about the number of letters of interest across the state and proposed scoring criteria. V. Parmele asked when the last CMAQ round occurred. C. Copeland replied that it was in 2009.

S. Diamond asked what are some of the types of projects that are generally proposed for the CMAQ program. C. Lentz explained that the program focuses on projects that reduce congestion on highways and reduce car idling, thereby reducing transportation sources of emissions. He noted that the majority of projects proposed for the current CMAQ round are for infrastructure projects to improve traffic flow, transit provider requests funds for new transit vehicles, and one transit provider has proposed a new transit route.

M. Williams commented that COAST submitted proposals for traffic signal transit prioritization, bus replacement, and a new bus storage facility. M. Williams explained that new (more efficient) vehicles are needed to replace older ones that emit higher emissions, and new facilities to house buses would help decrease idle time for buses, reducing emissions.

E. Strachan asked if there were any bicycle and pedestrian letters of interest, and C. Lentz replied that none have been submitted from the Strafford region, but there were others around the state. C. Lentz also stated that the CMAQ round is organized so that projects of different scales were not competing against each other. For example, transit projects result in a much higher emission reduction than a bicycle project. So transit projects would only compete against transit projects, infrastructure improvement projects would compete with other infrastructure projects, and bicycle/pedestrian projects with other bicycle/pedestrian projects.

GACIT

C. Lentz stated that the next GACIT meeting will be held on August 23, in Keene. He said GACIT will be releasing the first draft of the Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan and Strafford MPO will be able to see what projects had been selected from the region. He added that the CMAQ funding round will be discussed as well.

C. Lentz discussed a list of regional GACIT meetings. He explained that four out of five councilors represent municipalities in the Strafford region, and the councilors would be holding public hearings throughout September and October. C. Copeland noted that the upcoming

meetings in Dover and Rochester were both on Thursday, September 28th, which was the same day as SRPC's commission meeting. She explained that staff were working on possibly moving the SRPC meeting and encouraged members to attend GACIT meeting in their districts to promote local and regional transportation needs.

C. Lentz stated that at a recent meeting of the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) he discussed NHDOT's Road Safety Audit Program, which is an annual program for safety improvement project. He explained that the Road Safety Audit Program has two baseline criteria for applicants: the intersection or road segment must have at least one fatal crash within the past 10 years, and have had no safety-related improvements completed within the past five years. He noted that local police records may have a fatal crash that has not been reported in a statewide database, and that local records can be used for applying the program. C. Lentz added that the Road Safety Audit Program is part of the overall HSIP program; projects are programmed in HSIP more regularly than in the Ten Year Plan. He said HSIP program managers are looking to program projects and funds for 2018-2020, so he will be reaching out to municipalities who have intersections or highway segments where safety issues can be demonstrated via fatal and serious crashes to help them put together applications.

S. Diamond asked how the fatalities are reported and added to the database. C. Lentz explained that after crashes are reported at the local level, data from the police report are sent to the Dept. of Motor Vehicles, and from there they get distributed to the Department of Safety and NHDOT. C. Lentz added that it is a long and convoluted process to get the data to those databases, but SRPC can bypass this process and look at various data sources directly. He reiterated that the Road Safety Audit Program is an annual program and municipalities can apply as often as they want.

E. Strachan asked what the program paid for, and C. Lentz replied that it paid for a detailed audit of the infrastructure in question with NHDOT and local staff participation, professional engineering work, and the reconstruction based on audit and engineering results. C. Lentz added that in January SRPC will have access to a software program called Safety Analyst, which will allow staff to complete detailed safety analysis for municipalities, and make the process of putting together an application much easier.

6. Other Business

R. Mack gave a brief presentation on her progress with putting detailed maps and information on ArcGIS online page of SRPC's website. She displayed a map of the updated Ten Year Project portfolio, which details all projects from the recent project solicitation effort. She reviewed some of the categories, such as bridges, road segments, corridor studies, etc. and demonstrated how to navigate the map. R. Mack added that municipalities can access the data for project applications, such as crash data, and she will continue to publish similar maps with additional data from DOT. She added that municipalities can access the map gallery via the Strafford.org website.

R. Mack also announced that she had been working with MapGeo to build a web-based GIS viewer for the SRPC website. MapGeo is an interactive online map program where viewers can look at maps with access to multiple different data sets (such as transportation, zoning,

demographic and economic data, housing, etc.). R. Mack provided an example of MapGeo by reviewing Nashua RPC's MapGeo site (https://nrpcnh.mapgeo.io/). She explained that municipalities could use MapGeo to access data and maps for project development.

C. Lentz stated that he had written a letter of support on behalf of the Policy Committee for the reorganization of the Rail Transit Authority. He explained that at the previous Policy Committee meeting, Robert Jaffin had notified members about a house bill that proposed disbanding the Rail Transit Authority. C. Lentz said the letter had supported reestablishing the Rail Transit Authority to focus on multi-modal and intermodal planning throughout New Hampshire, rather than focusing on one mode in specific regions of the state. C. Copeland added that she wanted to recognize Robert Jaffin for his work for SRPC, SMPO, and the CEDS. She stated that he has moved to Maine, but thanked him for his work and dedication to the Strafford region.

7. Citizen's Forum –

Citizens of the Strafford region are invited to speak on the subject matter of the meeting. Statements shall be limited to three minutes

No citizens brought comments forward.

8. Adjournment

M. Laferte moved to adjourn
Seconded by B. Tapscott
Vote: All in favor
The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Colin Lentz & Cynthia Plascencia

Approved by:

Name Printed Victoria Parmele

Signed Victoria Parmele

Date: 9/15/17