

**Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Conference Room 1A
Rochester, NH 03867**

Meeting Minutes

**Friday, January 4, 2019
9 – 11 a.m.**

The meeting was called to order with a quorum at 9:08 a.m.

Introductions

Committee Members Present: Kelley Collins (Wakefield), Glenn Davison (NHDOT), Marcia Gasses (Barrington), Michael Hoffman (Newmarket), Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), Scott Kinmond (New Durham), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Chris Parker (Dover), Dianne Smith (Brookfield), Shanna Saunders (Somersworth), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Michael Williams (COAST), Gretchen Young (Dover)

Staff Members Present: Jennifer Czysz (Executive Director), Colin Lentz (Senior Transportation Planner), Rachel Dewey (Planner)

1. Staff Communications

C. Lentz announced that James Burdin and his wife had had their first baby – Miriam – who was officially named on January 1st.

2. Action Item(s)

2.1. Minutes from December 7th 2018 [VOTE]

C. Parker made a motion to accept the minutes as written
Seconded by M. Hoffman

3. Discussion Items

3.1. Safety Performance Targets for 2020

C. Lentz explained that the TAC and Policy committees would be voting at their February meetings to set new regional safety performance targets. He reminded committee members that targets had to be updated for several measures:

- The number fatal crashes
- The rate of fatal crashes (per 100 million Vehicle Miles traveled)
- The number of crashes resulting in severe injuries
- The rate of serious injury crashes (per 100 million Vehicle Miles traveled)
- The number and rate non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries

C. Lentz explained that he was anticipating a recommendation from staff to support the targets set BY NHDOT. He said he would provide extended data for February but noted that the NHDOT fatality target was 116 statewide. He clarified that supporting the state targets did not mean that Strafford MPO was saying that statewide fatal crash rates were acceptable for the region. It meant that Strafford MPO staff would work to identify crash hotspots around the region and help communities implement solutions to

highway safety challenges. C. Lentz provided several points to explain the reason for supporting the state safety targets:

- While there are identifiable highway locations that contribute to safety hazards, crashes essentially happen randomly across the state
- NHDOT set their targets in June of 2018 but a spike in crashes happened late in the year, meaning that 2018 crashes were ultimately 46% higher than 2017. If Strafford MPO were to set their targets based on updated data they would be drastically different than NHDOT. Strafford MPO would theoretically set a higher target than NHDOT, which would be a confusing and inappropriate message
- Performance targets are calculated averaging the past five years of crash data in each category (on a rolling basis). Crash rates respond to economic trends, and the end of the 2008 recession reduced the crash rate because fewer people were driving. The five-year rolling average for crash rates used to update the 2020 targets would now not include the end of the recession – therefore showing a significantly higher crash rate.
- It is difficult to “prove” that a certain highway project will reduce crashes by a specific number. Region-wide safety improvements will come from long-term planning and project development

M. Hoffman expressed concern about setting a target of 116 fatalities, implying that 116 lives lost was acceptable. C. Lentz emphasized that New Hampshire is a “vision zero” state where the underlying philosophy is that zero deaths is the only acceptable goal. While zero deaths is obviously the ultimate goal, it is unreasonable in an immediate timeframe, so the federal performance targets represent an incremental approach to tracking and reducing fatal and severe crashes.

M. Hoffman alerted everyone that a resident and long-time town councilor of Newfields had just been killed by an errant driver over the weekend on New Years’ eve. He noted several typical highway and infrastructure designs that are dangerous for non-motorized users.

M. Gasses noted that the benefit of the doubt and the law usually favor someone driving a car over a pedestrian or other vulnerable user – that penalties for drivers are not adequate to compel drivers to be more careful.

E Strachan noted that there was a Legislative Service Request focused on vulnerable users.

J. Cysz reminded members that the Metro Plan would need to be updated soon and that was a perfect opportunity to align regional priorities such as safety and go beyond the data and targets for pedestrian fatalities.

M. Williams said lack of safe pedestrian facilities was a regular challenge for COAST and their riders because they needed to access certain locations on the bus, but bus stops were in locations without sidewalks or other amenities.

C. Lentz noted that there were two projects in the works related to bicycle and pedestrian safety planning. The consultant firm Alta is currently working on a statewide bike\ped plan, and several RPCs including Strafford would soon be starting a project to assess connectivity and safety issues at the regional and statewide level. He noted that an Alta team member would be at the March TAC meeting to discuss the draft plan.

S. Saunders noted that NHDOT will build sidewalks and bike lanes, but then requires municipalities to maintain them. She expressed that this is a barrier to towns and cities and should be changed. C. Lentz

said that would be a good addition to the draft policy resolutions he was working on and had provided in a handout.

D. Smith asked for clarification about what the goal of performance target setting was. C. Lentz said he saw it as a method for showing a return on investment. Essentially the targets require states and MPOs to demonstrate that federal funds are being invested in the transportation system in such a way that they address the observed challenges and meet overarching goals from FHWA. D. Smith asked if there was a financial implication (penalty) for not achieving targets. C. Lentz said there were potential penalties for states but not for MPOs.

Members discussed issues related to traffic safety, the causes of crashes, and the difficulty with accurate crash reporting.

C. Lentz said he would provide more detailed information prior to the TAC meeting in February.

3.2. Ten Year Plan project scoring process

C. Lentz reminded members that the final Ten Year Plan project ranking process would be coming up soon. He explained he would be developing an excel sheet that would allow TAC members to rank potential projects at home prior to the meeting.

4. Project Updates

4.1. Travel Demand Model

C. Lentz explained that MPOs were officially not required to conduct a full air quality analysis related to the recent court case from California. He said staff were still updating the travel demand model so it would be a useful planning tool in the near future.

5. Decision-maker communications

C. Lentz reminded people of the draft set of priority planning issues that were worded as “resolutions” related to primary issues of concern and meant to be used to communicate those issues with decision-makers. He explained that the resolutions were designed to be adapted for future specific opportunities for communication and outreach (hearing testimony, infographics, letters, in-person meetings, etc.) on transportation and other MPO issues. C. Lentz said it would be most effective to have municipal representatives communicate with decision-makers on issues, rather than staff. He said several members of the Policy committee had volunteered to be on a sub-committee that would focus on decision-maker outreach opportunities. He added that staff had begun tracking proposed legislation and invited any SRPC committee member to work with staff to develop talking points and data related to an issue they were concerned about.

D. Smith asked if the resolutions were a final document. C. Lentz said it was not a final document and the goal was to have a set of resolutions that could be adapted in response to emerging issues and could form the foundation of documents like the Metro Plan. C. Lentz said the goal was advocacy for regional and statewide issues and challenges; the MPO and especially staff cannot lobby for specific issues. D. Smith said she would want to read the document in more detail and would contact C. Lentz with comments and additions.

5.1. TIP approval process

C. Lentz reminded TAC members that the draft TIP would be posted for public comments starting on January 14th.

6. Other Business

C. Parker notified members that there would be a public hearing hosted by the Public Private Partnership Oversight Committee (chaired by NHDOT) at the Dover City Hall on January 9th. The hearing would be focusing on two issues: a proposal by C&J buslines to privatize the Dover and Portsmouth Park & Rides and charge for parking in order to pay for maintenance and operations (among other reasons); and other proposed improvements along the Spaulding turnpike.

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 forward comments at the meeting

8. Adjournment

C. Parker moved to adjourn
Seconded by J. Hotchkiss
The meeting adjourned at 9:48 a.m.

Approved by
Name Printed: Michael Williams

Signed: 

Date: 2/1/19