

## Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee Meeting

**Friday, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2018      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 April 20<sup>th</sup> 2018 [VOTE]
  - 3.2. Comments and Approval of Letter to NHDOT: Regional Priorities for Urban and Rural Freight Corridor Designation [VOTE]
- 4. Discussion Items**
  - 4.1. Regional Transit Asset Management (TAM) Targets
- 5. Other Business**
- 6. 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
- 7. 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](mailto: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  
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Conference Rm. 1A  
Rochester, NH 03867**

**Draft Minutes**

**Friday, May 18, 2018  
9:00 AM-11:00 AM**

**1. Introductions**

*The meeting was called to order at 9:11am*

Members Present: Mark Avery (Madbury), Wayne Burton (Durham), Tom Crosby (Madbury), Glenn Davison (NHDOT), Steve Diamond (Barrington), Don Hamann (Rochester), Fred Kaen (Lee), Sandy Keans (Rochester), Martin Laferty (Farmington), David Landry (Dover), Judy Nelson (Rollinsford), Peter Nelson (Newmarket), Anthony McManus (Dover), Victoria Parmele (Northwood), Steve Pesci (UNH), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Michael Williams (COAST)

Staff Present: Rachel Dewey (Data Analyst), Stefanie Casella (Data Collection and Analysis Assistant), Kathy Foster (Financial Consultant), Colin Lentz (Regional Transportation Planner)

**2. Staff Communications**

C. Lentz announced that Rachel Mack (GIS Planner) had accepted a position at a consulting firm near Portland, Maine and today was her last day at SRPC. He said staff were excited for her and wished her well, and that the search to find a replacement had already begun. C. Lentz explained that SRPC was also in the process of hiring an intern for the data collection season. He said they were in the process of conducting interviews and current staff had already started setting traffic counts assigned by NHDOT.

V. Parmele said she understood that SRPC would have half the staff working on data collection this season compared to the previous season. C. Lentz explained that in the recent past, funding had usually supported hiring a larger team of 3-4 data collection interns in the first year of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), while usually one additional intern was hired in the second year to assist staff. He said the intern would be working with Stef Casella to conduct data collection.

V. Parmele asked if SRPC staff still had the same workload as the previous season [with more limited staff capacity]. C. Lentz responded that they had the same number of NHDOT-assigned traffic counts to set. He added that in years when a large data collection team is unavailable, staff must prioritize completing traffic counts over expanding other programs such as culverts, sidewalks, and local road assessments. He said staff would not be neglecting those other data collection programs and that they would be fulfilling existing obligations and agreements for those programs.

S. Pesci said it seemed like NHDOT was falling behind on publishing up-to-date traffic data and reports on their website.

G. Davison responded that he hadn't looked at the state of the online statewide dataset, but that NHDOT staff were currently working on implementing new systems that would make data more available and useful, including online maps. He said that could be a reason for the delay compared to years past, and he would check on progress.

C. Lentz reminded the committee that Jennifer Czysz would be starting as SRPC's new Executive Director on May 29<sup>th</sup> (the day after Memorial Day).

### **3. Action Item(s)**

#### **3.1. Minutes from April 20<sup>th</sup> 2018 [VOTE]**

T. Crosby made a motion to accept the draft minutes from April as written

Seconded by J. Nelson

Vote: unanimous in favor

#### **3.2. Review and Recommendation of Eligible Routes for Urban and Rural Freight Corridor Designation [VOTE]**

C. Lentz reviewed the request for input from the Regional Planning Commissions regarding designation of new miles of "Critical Urban Freight Corridors" (CUFCs) and "Critical Rural Freight Corridors" (CRFCs). He noted that NHDOT was authorized by federal law to designate 150 new miles of federal aid eligible highways as CRFCs and 75 new miles as CUFCs as part of development of their required freight plan. C. Lentz presented a map of highways in the region that were eligible for designation and those that are already designated. He said designation of new freight corridor sections would make them eligible for federal funding under the National Highway Freight Program. G. Davison pointed out that New Hampshire's apportionment would be about five million additional freight dollars for the whole state, and that NHDOT needed to develop the statewide freight plan in order to receive the funding. C. Lentz said he had discussed freight issues with municipal planners who were concerned that corridor designation and freight funding would lead to more trucks traveling through communities. He said he had been thinking of the funding as supporting improve freight management – improving freight access and safety, and minimizing conflicts with local traffic and development – rather than strictly widening highways to accommodate more freight traffic.

W. Burton asked what C. Lentz meant by freight "management", saying that people might equate that to "regulation" by the government that would affect private freight companies. C. Lentz responded that he had been using the word management for his own purposes to describe a more holistic approach to freight planning that included consideration for the need to ensure efficient freight movement and the potential impacts from increased freight traffic. G. Davison added that the state's goal was not to manage freight traffic in the sense of regulating companies' access to freight routes, but to work with freight stakeholders, planning commissions, and municipalities to improve a fragmented freight network. G. Davison explained that several stakeholders from freight

sectors (including trucking, rail, and air freight) were part of the Statewide Freight Advisory Committee that was being facilitated by NHDOT for development of the State Freight Plan. He said the freight plan development process included several planned public freight summits across the state. The first had been in Claremont and Concord and another was scheduled for Portsmouth, with others in the near future.

C. Lentz asked about Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) such as open-road tolling and all-electronic tolling. G. Davison said ITS was an important component of the freight plan and improvements, but pointed out that the turnpike system was not being considered for freight corridor designation as the turnpike system is self-sufficient through toll revenue and freight funding should be invested elsewhere.

S. Diamond asked about NH202 being identified on the map C. Lentz had provided.

C. Lentz explained that the map simply identified routes that were eligible under the designation rules; it didn't constitute a recommendation for designation of NH202.

G. Davison added that NH202 was unlikely to be designated because it is a smaller highway that has many twists, turns, and hills.

S. Pesci asked what the small crosses on the map represented.

C. Lentz responded that they were locations he had identified as potential areas of freight concentration (such as the Ossipee Aggregates rail facility in Rochester used by New Hampshire North Coast rail, and the UPS distribution hub in Dover).

S. Pesci asked for clarification on the role of the Regional Planning Commissions in the urban and rural freight corridor designation process. G. Davison responded that NHDOT was looking for input on the priority candidates for designation of new routes under the state freight plan development process.

C. Lentz explained that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members had identified NH16 (the Spaulding Turnpike) and US4 as priority routes in the region for consideration. He said he was looking for similar input from Policy members on priority routes and additional technical analysis.

V. Parmele asked about the TAC's process in discussing priority corridors in the region. C. Lentz responded that the TAC had a general discussion about the corridors that were already important routes for freight, and where communities had concerns about conflicts with local traffic patterns and development.

P. Nelson asked how the priorities and input of freight providers and users was being incorporated into the corridor designation processes. G. Davison reiterated that the state freight advisory committee included a diverse range of freight providers who were providing direct input to the plan development.

S. Pesci pointed out that Strafford MPO had already made recommendations to NHDOT regarding freight through its Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the list of projects it had submitted for consideration during the Ten Year Plan development process. He asked how additional technical

input was really useful at this point. S. Pesci suggested that the Policy committee direct SRPC staff to write a letter to NHDOT summarizing discussion points and identifying priority corridors: NH16; US4; NH125; the Boston to Maine Rail Corridor; and all the crossings and connections associated with those routes. He asked if there was consensus among the Policy members on those routes.

Policy members discussed the priority routes. S. Diamond suggested that an underlying assumption [of communications to NHDOT about TAC and Policy discussion] should be that rail is the safest, most efficient freight mode.

C. Lentz asked for confirmation of consensus on the priorities proposed by S. Pesci. He said he would draft a letter compiling TAC and Policy discussion points and concerns. He reiterated that RPC comments were due to NHDOT by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Policy members concurred with the proposal.

P. Nelson emphasized the need to identify prospective projects that are eligible for funding under the National Highway Freight Program in the short term. G. Davison said the freight planning process was designed to identify those projects but also to ensure funding would be invested where needs were greatest – as identified by the RPCs and their communities.

#### **4. Discussion Items**

##### **4.1. Air Quality Conformity and STIP approval**

C. Lentz provided an update on an ongoing court case in California that challenged federal air quality standards from 1997. He explained that depending on how the case is determined in the appeals process, MPOs across the country could be required to show that they are “in attainment” of the 1997 federal air quality standards. C. Lentz said the court case impacted the current amendment to the STIP (Amendment #4) – although the RPCs had approved the amendment, it had not been approved by FHWA before the original court case was ruled. Therefore, the RPCs, NHDOT, NHDES, and federal agencies had reviewed projects that would require detailed air quality analysis to ensure that they wouldn’t increase vehicle emissions. He said none of the projects in the Strafford region required analysis, but three projects in other regions would need to revert to their funding levels prior to the amendment in order to get it approved. This was critical because the recently approved CMAQ projects were part of Amendment 4. C. Lentz said Amendment 4 would be delayed but approved in the near future. He explained that the real impact of the court case could be on the update to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). This would usually happen in the fall [of an even-numbered year] following the approval of the Ten Year Plan. C. Lentz said that any future amendments to the current STIP or updates would potentially require air quality analyses to be completed by the RPCs. He clarified that any future amendment to the current STIP could be approved as long as it only contains projects that are exempt from air quality analyses (such as transit, bike/ped, traffic signal, and other congestion reduction or safety projects). C. Lentz explained that because the state had been in attainment of air quality standards for several years, the computer models used by Rockingham and Strafford MPOs to conduct air quality analyses had not been maintained, were out of date, and would require time to refurbish.

S. Pesci expressed dismay that it was unfortunate that the models had fallen into disuse and disrepair. He said it was going to be much more expensive to rebuild the models than it would have been to maintain them.

C. Lentz said he would keep the committees updated with any new information.

**5. Other Business**

**5.1. Approach to Regional Project Development and Ranking**

C. Lentz reminded the committee members that he was organizing a sub-committee of TAC and Policy members to discuss regional planning and develop projects to be submitted for the next Ten Year Plan.

V. Parmele informed the committee that it was the last meeting for Judy Nelson and Anthony McManus. She thanked them for their years on the Policy and Executive Committees in service to the MPO and the region.

**6. Citizen's Forum**

No citizens brought forward any issues or topics of discussion.

**7. Adjournment**

S. Keans made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by W. Burton

Vote: Unanimous in favor

*Meeting adjourned at 10:19 am*

Minutes prepared by Colin Lentz

Approved by

Name Printed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization 2019 Transit Asset Management Performance Targets

**June 15, 2018**

### Background

On July 26<sup>th</sup> 2016 the Federal Transit Administration published the [final rule](#) on Transit Asset Management (49 CFR Part 625). The rule requires providers of public transportation to set targets for their transit assets by January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 for the following fiscal year. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are required to set regional targets 180 days after transit providers. The targets comprise four asset categories: equipment, rolling stock, infrastructure, and facilities. The Strafford region contains no relevant “Infrastructure” as defined under 49 CFR part 625 (e.g. fixed guideway for light rail mass transit), therefore Strafford MPO is only required to set targets for equipment, rolling stock, and facilities.

### Rolling Stock and Equipment Methodology

Rolling Stock refers to “revenue vehicles” that transport users of public transportation services. Equipment refers to non-revenue vehicles that are used for administration, maintenance, and operations of facilities. The National Transit Database (NTD) stores information about public transportation vehicle fleets. It compares the anticipated service lives of individual vehicles to their Useful Life Benchmarks (ULB). Anticipated service lives of assets are primarily determined from the minimums set forth in FTA Circular [5010.1D](#). The performance measure is the percentage of vehicles that meet or exceed their ULB.

### Federal Transit Vehicle Classes

Asset Classification	Vehicle or Equipment Type	Useful Life (years)
<b>Class 1</b>	Minivan, van, sedan	4
<b>Class 2</b>	Light-duty small bus, minibus, small body-on-chassis	6
<b>Class 3</b>	Medium-duty transit bus < 30’, trolley, sprinter	7
<b>Class 4</b>	Heavy duty transit bus < 35’	10
<b>Class 5</b>	Heavy duty transit bus ≥ 35’	12
<b>Class 6</b>	Over-the-road-coach	12

### Facilities Methodology

Targets for facilities are developed by applying the Transit Economic Requirements Model ([TERM](#)) scale to facilities used in the provision of public transportation services. The TERM scale is a 5-point scale ranging from poor condition (1.0) to excellent condition (5.0). The performance measure is the number of facilities with a condition rating below 3.0 (adequate). The inventory includes four facility types that are owned by direct recipients and were purchased using federal funds:

- Passenger
- Administrative
- Maintenance
- Storage

The baseline for all classes is 0% because all transit facilities in the region are new or in good condition. The target for all facility classes is 0% because of their good condition and anticipated slow rate of change.

**Target Development**

Calculation of regional targets for rolling stock and equipment was based on comparing existing regional assets to anticipated additions and replacements. Strafford MPO developed targets by reviewing asset portfolios for the two regional transit providers: University of New Hampshire Wildcat Transit (UNH Wildcat) and the Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST). For each asset class, the total number of vehicles was compared to the number of vehicles at or beyond their ULB.

Assets lists provided by COAST and Wildcat are recorded in the National Transit Database (NTD) and follow the remaining Useful Life Benchmark methodology. Targets for transit facilities were determined by using the Transit Economic Resource Model (TERM) qualitative scale of condition. Per federal ruling, targets were based on realistic expectations and the best available data.

**Regional Target Setting**

Rolling Stock Existing Asset Conditions					
Vehicle Class	Wildcat: assets at-beyond ULB/total	COAST: assets at-beyond ULB/total	total regional assets	Total assets at/ beyond ULB	Regional Baseline
1	0 of 2	4 of 9	11	4 of 11	36%
2	2 of 5	3 of 9	14	5 of 14	36%
3	0 of 0	0 of 1	1	0 of 1	0%
4	0 of 0	0 of 2	2	0 of 2	0%
5	8 of 26	3 of 19	45	11 of 45	24%
6	0 of 0	4 of 4	4	4 of 4	100%

2019 Rolling Stock Regional ULB Assumptions & Targets				
Class	Wildcat: target assumption	COAST: target assumption	Assumed proportion of assets at/ beyond ULB by 2019	Regional Target
1	0 of 2	6 of 9	6 of 11	55%
2	2 of 5	3 of 9	5 of 14	36%
3	0 of 0	0 of 1	0 of 1	0%
4	0 of 0	0 of 2	0 of 2	0%
5	4 of 26	0 of 19	4 of 45	9%
6	0 of 0	4 of 4	4 of 4	100%

Equipment Existing Asset Conditions				
Wildcat: assets at- beyond ULB/total	COAST: assets at- beyond ULB/total	total regional assets	Total assets at/ beyond ULB	Regional Baseline
0 of 5	5 of 5	5	5 of 5	100%

2019 Equipment Regional ULB Assumptions & Targets			
Wildcat: target assumption	COAST: target assumption	Assumed proportion of assets at/ beyond ULB by 2019	Regional Target
0 of 5	5 of 5	5 of 5	100%

Facilities Existing Asset Conditions				
Wildcat: assets at/beyond ULB/total	COAST: assets below 3.0 condition	total regional assets	Total assets below 3.0 condition	Regional Baseline
0 of 2	0 of 5	7	0 of 7	0%

2019 Facilities Regional Assumptions & Targets			
Wildcat: target assumption	COAST: target assumption	Assumed proportion of assets below 3.0 condition by 2019	Regional Target
0 of 2	0 of 5	0 of 7	0%

**Final Regional Transit Asset Management Performance Targets for 2019**

Asset Category*	Performance Measure	Asset Class	Baseline	Target
<b>Rolling Stock</b>	Age - % of revenue vehicles within a particular asset class that have met or exceeded their Useful Life Benchmark (ULB)	<b>Class 1</b>	36%	55%
		Class 2	36%	36%
		Class 3	0%	0%
		Class 4	0%	0%
		Class 5	24%	9%
		Class 6	100%	100%
<b>Equipment</b>	Age - % of non-revenue vehicles that have met or exceeded their Useful Life Benchmark (ULB)	All vehicles	100%	100%
<b>Facilities</b>	Condition - % of facilities with a condition rating below 3.0 on the FTA <a href="#">TERM Scale</a>	Passenger	NA	NA
		Administrative	0%	0%
		Maintenance	0%	0%
		Storage	NA	NA

\* The category for Infrastructure deals solely with fixed guideway/rail systems, which are not owned by any 5310 or 5311 subrecipients in NH.

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BARRINGTON  
BROOKFIELD  
DOVER  
DURHAM  
FARMINGTON  
LEE  
MADBURY  
MIDDLETON  
MILTON



NEW DURHAM  
NEWMARKET  
NORTHWOOD  
NOTTINGHAM  
ROCHESTER  
ROLLINSFORD  
SOMERSWORTH  
STRAFFORD  
WAKEFIELD

William Rose, Policy and Planning Manager  
Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance  
New Hampshire Department of Transportation  
James O. Morton Building  
PO Box 483 | 7 Hazen Drive  
Concord, NH 03302-0483

June 8, 2018

**RE: Priority routes in the Strafford MPO region for designation of critical urban and rural freight corridors**

Dear Mr. Rose:

This letter presents input from the member communities of the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization (Strafford MPO) regarding the designation of new Critical Urban Freight Corridors (CUFCs) and Critical Rural Freight Corridors (CRFCs) in the Strafford Region. It also considers overall regional freight planning and investment priorities as NHDOT develops the first New Hampshire Statewide Freight Plan. In addition to this letter Strafford MPO encourages NHDOT to refer to the Strafford Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the list of projects that was submitted to NHDOT during the most recent Statewide Ten Year Transportation Plan development process.

**Overall Regional Perspective**

Many of the regular freight corridors in the Strafford region travel through small municipalities, leading to conflicts between local traffic, commuters, and freight traffic. For instance, US Route 4 provides the only reasonable alternative to NH Route 101 for a direct east-west connection to the I93 corridor. However, the high speeds and large volumes of through traffic (including freight) are a challenge for small rural communities. Statewide freight planning should carefully balance efficient freight movement with potential impacts to local communities' ability to preserve and develop their local character. Safety is a primary concern in rural corridors where large freight vehicles share highways with a variety of motorized and non-motorized users.

Local and regional economic development depends on access to a safe and connected multimodal highway network. Freight planning efforts should be based on collaboration between municipalities, freight industry experts, Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), and state agencies to ensure that local freight connections are efficient and pose the fewest conflicts with other users and with community development.

The Strafford and Rockingham MPO regions comprise the richest mix of travel modes and the greatest potential for a multi-modal freight network with a direct connection to the I95 corridor. This includes road, rail, air, and maritime freight. Statewide freight planning and investment should consider the improvement of intermodal connections in addition to designation of new highway freight corridors.

## **Consideration of Critical Regional Freight Routes**

Strafford MPO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Policy Committee members request that NHDOT consider the following highway routes in the Strafford region when developing the Statewide Freight Plan and reviewing candidate routes for designation as new CUFCs and CRFCs:

- NH Route 16
- US Route 4
- NH Route 125
- NH Route 11

### NH16

We understand that the turnpike system (e.g., the Spaulding Turnpike section of NH16) is not being considered for designation because it is self-sufficient and freight funding will be better invested on non-turnpike highway miles. However, NH16 is the only major limited-access highway miles in the Strafford region, and it serves as the primary north-south freight route connecting municipalities and businesses in the eastern half of New Hampshire. Strafford MPO requests that NHDOT consider locations where regional highways intersect with the turnpike in metropolitan and urbanized areas of the Strafford region. Strafford MPO also requests that NHDOT consider the non-turnpike sections of NH16 because of the route's importance in connecting the Seacoast with the Lakes region and White Mountains. NH16 is critical for freight, local and regional commuters, and tourism travel. (Tourism is the state's second largest industry.)

### US4

US4 is the primary east-west corridor and the most direct route to Concord and the I93 corridor for communities in the Strafford region. US4 bisects the Town of Northwood, effectively separating it into northern and southern halves and creating a barrier to local travel. Northwood's local economy, safety, and overall quality of life are vulnerable to poor freight planning and management along US4. The need for safe, efficient freight movement while mitigating or reducing local transportation impacts for communities like Northwood is a challenge for highways like US4 across the state. Strafford MPO requests that NHDOT work with municipalities and RPCs to plan and develop projects that will balance freight movement with local safety and quality of life.

### NH125

NH125 poses challenges similar to US4. It is the only alternative to NH16 for direct north-south travel and it links the City of Rochester to NH101. NH125 carries high volumes of freight traffic and is an important link for several rural communities, including Barrington. However, high traffic volumes and speeds conflict with local development efforts. One critical bottleneck is at the intersection with NH9. The intersection is a local nexus point of commercial and residential development in Barrington. Similar to US4 and Northwood, freight investment should focus on mitigating conflicts between existing freight traffic, local traffic, and local planning and economic development.

### NH11

NH11 is an important regional route that links the City of Rochester through Farmington and New Durham to Alton. It is the primary northbound alternative to NH16 in the region and it carries large numbers of tourism traffic to the Lakes region. In recent years the corridor has experienced significant

commercial development, traffic volumes, and congestion. Comprehensive planning and collaboration with municipalities along NH11 are needed to ensure that economic development, local traffic, tourism access, and freight movement do not conflict as the corridor is developed.

### **Regional Rail Connections**

Rail is the safest and most efficient method for transporting large volumes of freight within and through New Hampshire. The Boston to Maine rail corridor is a vital economic connection between southeastern New Hampshire and the major metropolitan centers of Portland, Maine, and Boston, Massachusetts. Additionally, the New Hampshire Northcoast rail line from Ossipee to Rollinsford represents a strategic freight link from communities in the Lakes and Strafford regions to interstate economies via the Boston to Maine rail line. The New Hampshire Northcoast line has several at-grade crossings along Routes 16 and 125, including the town and city centers in Wakefield, Union, Milton, and Rochester. While the actual tracks of the rail network are not eligible for designation under the CUFC and CRFC process, it is important to consider the intermodal connections between highways and rail corridors in the region and in the state as a whole. Intermodal connectivity is essential for a diverse freight network that provides access to a wider range of markets for New Hampshire businesses.

Strafford MPO requests that NHDOT consider at-grade crossings when assessing overall freight safety and efficiency in New Hampshire. For instance, the Boston to Maine rail corridor line crosses Central Avenue and Chestnut Street in Dover. These are downtown main streets that carry a full range of users: cars and freight trucks, buses from COAST and Wildcat Transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. They are also adjacent to Dover's Amtrak Downeaster stop and multimodal transportation center. While these streets are not eligible based on the criteria in USDOT's National Highway Freight Program Implementation Guidance, at-grade rail crossings through dense urban centers should be carefully considered. Passenger and freight rail can provide economic development opportunities for small and large communities.

### **Conclusion**

New Hampshire's freight network needs investment to support the efficient movement of goods. Businesses of all sizes require safe and accessible routes to bring goods in and send products to markets within and without the state. However, the majority of highway miles in New Hampshire are in rural areas where traffic volumes and speeds can pose challenges for community planners and the engineers who build transportation infrastructure. Freight investments that prioritize truck volumes on rural highways could negatively impact communities. Strafford MPO requests that freight investment take an approach that balances improved freight access and efficiency with community development and quality of life.

New Hampshire needs more comprehensive data about the movement of freight within through the state. RPCs are an excellent resource for collection and analysis of regional freight data. However, traffic model development, data collection and analysis, and planning will require increased collaboration among state agencies, regional planning commissions, freight stakeholders, and federal partners. This collaboration will also aid in the development of the New Hampshire Statewide Freight Plan, the designation of new freight routes, and the development of freight improvement projects that will ultimately be included in the STIP and regional TIPs. RPCs have detailed knowledge about the local and regional context and are a venue for engaging municipalities to identify where freight investment will yield the greatest return, and where it could lead to unforeseen consequences.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Czysz, AICP  
Executive Director, Strafford MPO

CC:  
Strafford MPO Technical Advisory Committee  
Strafford MPO Policy Committee

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