

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

Minutes

**Friday, October 21, 2018
9:00 AM-11:00 AM**

1. – Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:07

Members: Mark Avery (Madbury), Wayne Burton (Durham), Tom Crosby (Madbury), Steve Diamond (Barrington), Marcia Gasses (Dover), Don Hamann (Rochester), Don Hamman (Rochester), Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), Sandra Keans (Rochester), Scott Kinmond (New Durham), David Landry (Dover), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Peter Nelson (Newmarket), Victoria Parmele (Northwood), Stephen Pesci (UNH), Shanna Saunders (Somersworth), Lucy St. John (NHDOT), Dirk Timmons (UNH Wildcat), Michael Williams (COAST)

Guests: Victoria Sheehan (Commissioner, NHDOT), Christopher Waszczuk (Assistant Commissioner, NHDOT)

Staff: Jennifer Czysz (Executive Director), Colin Lentz (Sr. Transportation Planner), Rachel Dewey (Planner), Stefanie Casella

2. - Staff Communications

C. Lentz thanked commissioners Sheehan and Waszczuk for attending the meeting to discuss statewide budgeting and transportation priorities. He noted that the discussion was timely because SRPC staff had recently met with Chris Scott from Senator Shaheen's office to discuss ways to increase SRPC's ability to communicate regional issues and priorities to the senator and other decision-makers.

R. Dewey announced that the Partnering for Performance NH workgroup had received an award from the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) for their collaborative work in implementing performance-based planning.

3. - Action Item(s)

3.1 - Minutes from September 21st 2018 [VOTE]

D. Hamman made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Seconded by T. Crosby.

Vote: Unanimous in favor

3.2 - Transportation Alternatives Program – regional project scoring results [VOTE]

C. Lentz described the results of the process the TAC used to score the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) projects proposed by Rochester, Somersworth, and Farmington. He explained the

methodology and noted that while there had been several municipal representatives at the TAC meeting, a quorum was not achieved. In order to ensure the scoring results had a greater level of statistical strength, multiple municipal representatives were invited to score projects, in addition to SRPC staff present. This increased the number of objective individuals scoring each project.

Individual voters

Somersworth – 2

NHDES – 1

Rochester – 1

Farmington – 2

Dover – 1

New Durham – 1

SRPC staff – 3 (not including C. Lentz)

C. Lentz explained that the scoring results would be sent to NHDOT to be incorporated into their final statewide scoring process.

T. Crosby made a motion to approve the TAP scoring results to be sent to NHDOT. Seconded by M. Williams.

Vote: unanimous in favor (L. St. John abstaining)

3.3 - Performance Target Setting – Pavement and Bridge conditions; Travel Time Reliability [VOTE]

C. Lentz explained that the regional targets for performance measures related to pavement and bridge conditions, and travel time reliability needed to be submitted to FHWA on November 16th.

He noted that several targets are not required for various reasons (e.g. the region has no interstate highway miles so targets dealing with the interstate do not apply). Regional MPO targets are required only the **bold** measures below:

- **Percentage of the Non-interstate NHS in Good condition**
- **Percentage of the Non-interstate NHS in Poor condition**
- ~~Percentage of the Interstate in Good condition~~
- ~~Percentage of the Interstate in Poor condition~~
- **Percentage of NHS bridges in Good condition**
- **Percentage of NHS bridges in Poor condition**
- **Percent of person-miles traveled on the non-Interstate NHS that are reliable**
- ~~Percent of person-miles traveled on the Interstate that are reliable~~
- ~~Truck Travel Time Reliability (TTTR) Index (Interstate only)~~
- ~~Annual Hours of Peak Hour Excessive Delay (PHED) Per Capita~~
- ~~Percent of Non-Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) Travel~~

C. Lentz explained that because MPOs and the state are still integrating performance targets into existing programs, and because the Stafford region's performance in these areas is currently very good, Strafford MPO staff have recommended that the MPO support the targets set by NHDOT for this initial round. He added that another reason for supporting the state targets this round was because the methodologies used to set targets would be changing for subsequent rounds of target setting. The

methodologies would become more comprehensive, and significantly alter the apparent conditions of highway pavements throughout the state. C. Lentz noted that a quorum was not present at the October TAC meeting so they were unable to officially vote on performance targets. He suggested that barring any additional concerns from TAC member, he could submit targets to NHDOT and FHWA following the November TAC meeting.

M. Williams made a motion to approve the support of state performance targets on the condition that TAC members did not raise any concerns at their November meeting. Seconded by M. Gasses.

Vote: Unanimous in favor

4. Discussion Items

4.1 - Statewide Transportation Funding and the Ten Year Plan – Victoria Sheehan, NHDOT Commissioner

V. Sheehan and C. Waszczuk presented information about overall funding and planning challenges related to the state Ten Year Plan. They provided a handout with more details and engaged Policy members about how SRPC could play a larger role in promoting not just how much money should be part of the draft Ten Year Plan, but also how funding should be invested.

The commissioners' presentation focused on several topics and issues.

- Draft Ten Year Plan priorities
- Overall state and national funding challenges
 - A funding rescission is scheduled for the end of the FAST act in 2020 which could potentially cut New Hampshire's available federal transportation funds approximately in half.
 - Gas taxes are not a sustainable model for maintaining the national highway trust fund because cars are becoming more fuel efficient. A new approach to sustainable transportation funding is needed.
- The turnpike system,
 - Federal transportation funds provided to states require 20% matching funds. New Hampshire currently uses turnpike toll credits as match. This means the state doesn't directly provide matching funds, but federal funds are buying less in the state overall.
 - NHDOT expecting to proposed a toll increase similar to the previous proposal (including a turnpike expansion)
- The need for communities to do everything possible to ensure federally-funded, municipally managed projects are executed efficiently.
 - FHWA will be assessing how much funding has not been "obligated" to specific projects in September 2019
 - Federal funds that have not been obligated by the time the FAST Act rescission is activated (July 1st 2020) could become unavailable – jeopardizing incomplete projects
- The condition of New Hampshire's roads and bridges and the significant cost of regular and long-term maintenance and operations

- The need for real funding support for public transit (especially urban transit that serves New Hampshire's cities and urbanized areas)

V. Sheehan said a primary goal of their presentation was to start a conversation with RPCs earlier in the Ten Year Plan process and emphasize the need for formal input from RPC member communities to decision-makers. This will require direct communication to decision-makers at the local, state, and federal level about the goals, priorities, and challenges of the Strafford region.

S. Keans asked for clarification about the process involved in expanding the I93 section of turnpike to exit 15 in Concord. C. Waszczuk confirmed that the Executive Council sets the turnpike toll rates, but that the legislature decides the physical dimensions of the turnpike. This makes the process more complicated.

M. Williams noted that tolls are a user-fee system that doesn't impact people who don't use the turnpike.

S. Pesci noted several important shortfalls in the overall transportation picture that had not been included in the commissioners' presentation: public transit, NH's aging population, and younger generations desiring alternatives to driving alone. He suggested that the commissioners' presentation include a comparison to what federal funds other states receive and how they manage those funds.

W. Burton noted that electric vehicle users do pay for the energy they use. It just doesn't go into transportation infrastructure, but to electrical infrastructure and public utilities. He said he had discussed the challenge of incorporating electric vehicle users into the transportation system.

S. Pesci brought up the possibility of adopting a user fee system based on distance-traveled (rather than fuel used).

P. Nelson asked what else NHDOT is doing to develop and advocate alternative funding approaches. V. Sheehan said NHDOT staff had been focusing on conversations with federal legislators and peer DOTs about new approaches and how the country overall will be addressing these national-level issues.

M. Williams referenced a proposal to re-introduce \$200,000 for rural public transit on the commissioners' presentation. He asked if \$200,000 was an assessment of the level of need for rural public transit or simply a politically viable proposal. V. Sheehan responded that past Ten Year Plans had included a small amount of funding for rural transit but that it had been removed from several recent plan updates. She said they were fully aware that \$200,000 was inadequate to fulfill rural transit needs but it was meant to be a politically viable attempt to get rural transit funding back into the plan.

P. Nelson suggested that NHDOT find ways to translate the overall budgeting and funding challenges into easily relatable numbers for the wider public.

V. Parmele asked what additional opportunities there would be to make their voices heard on the issues being discussed. V. Sheehan said this was just a first conversation and that NHDOT would be reaching out for direct input on decision points and specific issues during the development of the Ten Year Plan.

J. Czysz said SRPC would follow up with NHDOT after discussions with TAC and Policy members.

S. Pesci requested that NHDOT be bold in its presentation of these issues and advocacy to the state legislature. He asked specifically for real state funding support for urban transit, noting that \$200,000 was half the cost of a single heavy duty urban bus. C. Waszczuk agreed but noted that the \$200,000 was for operating support, and that capital funding is already available. S. Pesci acknowledged this and suggested that NHDOT would generate more stakeholder support statewide if they promoted better funding for transit services.

4.2 - Strafford MPO review in November – Leigh Levine (FHWA)

L. Levine explained that staff from NHDOT, FHWA, and FTA would be meeting with SRPC staff on Monday, November 5th to conduct a certification review of the MPO's work over the past 3-4 years. He invited policy members to the brownbag lunch portion of the review to have a general discussion about their thoughts and experience being MPO Policy members and Commissioners of SRPC.

5. Project Updates

5.1 - Ten Year Plan project development process

C. Lentz gave a brief update on the Ten Year Plan process, noting that TAC and Policy would be reviewing candidate projects at their November meetings to be submitted to NHDOT by December 3rd.

5.2 - Dover-Somersworth-Rochester NH108 Complete Streets

C. Lentz said the Dover-Somersworth-Rochester project contract had recently received approval from Governor and Council and would be starting the planning process very soon.

6. Other Business

M. Williams informed members that COAST would be holding the first of seven public meetings for their Comprehensive Operations Analysis project at the Farmington town hall that evening. He encouraged members to participate and said other meetings were scheduled for Rochester, Dover, Portsmouth, and Somersworth.

7. Citizen's Forum

No citizens brought forward comments.

8. Adjournment

M. Williams made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by D. Hamann

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 am

Minutes prepared by Colin Lentz

Approved by

Name Printed: Victoria Pamela

Signed: Victoria Pamela

Date: _____