

2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Draft Plan Development Record of Public Comments Received Updated as of 6/16/2016

Comment:

A couple of quick thoughts on reading through this. One would be to have the maps linked to a full resolution PDF copy of the map that readers can open and look at independently at higher resolution. Better yet would be a link to an interactive GIS map that allows one to zoom and pan at their own discretion at any level. I'd also like to have the ability to show/hide town boundaries for the benefit of Commissioners who attend these meetings and want to quickly and easily zone in on their own community and where their representation overlaps with this plan.

Within the plan itself, it would be advantageous to know more on a town by town basis too, what each community's financial contributions are and to break down projects within the 10 year plan by city/town so that commissioner level representatives have a focus back to their specific constituency. For example, I'm still learning about what projects impact Newmarket and any frame of reference that helps educate me on what projects will directly affect Newmarket financially and otherwise will be very useful. In addition, I'm looking for some sort of historical context too, to know what Newmarket has benefitted from in the past, what they have contributed financially, especially when matching funds are required, and what the future looks like moving forward. It will be beneficial to all to make sure that local priorities are matching up with regional and state plans, and that the critical aspect of how much things are expected to cost are factored into the equation.

Thanks for all the effort on a good summary of the financial plan so far.

I'm starting to work my way through the Metro Plan and will hopefully be able to consolidate most of my forthcoming comments in a single document, however, after a quick scan through I did make note of what I would consider a gap in the Air Resources sections. While Pease and Skyhaven may be the two regional airports of significance inside the regional boundaries of SRPC, it seems the broader plan continues to ignore the importance of Logan, Manchester and Portland airports. These are critical transportation hubs to business and economic vitality to the region and need to be incorporated in a more significant fashion IMHO.

Consider that you look at pipeline transport outside the region (as far as Canada), and rail freight (which pretty much can be summarized as NHNC's gravel operations), I think *airport transportation connectivity* is grossly underplayed in this plan. Car and bus traffic to and from these airports (Logan/Manchester/Portland) is a more critical future planning concern than some of the other items that get more write-up at present. I hope to see this addressed in a future draft. Anything less than a solid understanding of the importance of air travel to businesses and consumers in the region will be a missed opportunity and just because those airports are outside our immediate "planning area", does not make them any less significant to the overall transportation puzzle.

Response:

I agree with your concerns and we'll review the related content in the plan. I'll be working with the Metro Plan team in the coming weeks to improve content related to airport transportation. Thank you for your comments.

Comment:

It is time to investigate an online, cloud-based workgroup solution for commission members so that we can all have online access to a shared "groupware" set of documents. This could include online editing and threaded conversations about each type of posting like this too. It seems crazy to me in this day and age to be cycling these kind of docs through email. I'm happy to make some recommendations on platforms and solutions if that helps...

But I think it's time to find a more productive way to engage SRPC commissioners. I would imagine most would find browser level access to a central shared file repository and mark-up system far more convenient than sending docs via email and essentially forcing committee members to manage these files and workflow each in the own independent ways.

Response:

Those are excellent suggestions. I'd love your recommendations for group document/information sharing solutions or platforms. I will talk with staff about the feasibility of implementing something on this scale. Thank you for your comments

Comments:

Chapter One was not identified as such in the Master Outline (How the Strafford Region is Evolving) and had a different title in the footer (Regional Conditions Affecting Transportation Planning). I found this entire chapter's content, including the Introduction's, organization and editing process very perplexing from a reader's point of view.

Chapter two was the only chapter that correctly identified its title on the bottom of its pages (How We Move), however for only a few pages. None of the other three chapters had provided chapter titles on the bottom of the documents pages.

Response:

Thank you for your comments. We will make changes in the format according to your suggestions.

Comments:

An explanation about the differences between a Regional Transportation Plan and a Metropolitan Transportation Plan might be educational.

Page No.17's text should be placed on Page No.16, so all page numbers might require a change. Top of Page No.17's description of the location of Table No.1 is uncertain.

Bridges are critical infrastructure for all users of the transportation network. If they are not maintained in stable condition, they can be weak link in the transportation link in the transportation network during emergencies. The Strafford region has 21 bridges currently on the Statewide Red List. But if you go to the MPO Plan, Chapter No.2, Page No.4, Table No.1., ("2015 State and Municipal Red List Bridges in Strafford region. Source NHDOT, 2015") You will observe that the table does not reflect this.

Response:

Thank you for your comments. We will make changes on pages 16 and 17. We will immediately correct the error on red list bridges information.

Comments:

The length and size of the paragraphs would be minimized to ease the flow of the messages, as large paragraphs can mislay an avenue of thought and be difficult for less perfect eyesight.

The background color of charts and diagrams do not hide the text and make it difficult to read.

Thru out all chapters, any appropriate mention of the titles of the, "Uniform Guidelines for all who receive Federal funds", contract guidelines, policy statements, requirements, administration of federal funds , i.e. 23 CFR 450.322, 23 CFR.206, 23 CFR 324(h). You did site 23CFRs but with no title, which might be a polite educational enlightenment for the non-planners.

Introduction - Page No.2, Para No.6

Be careful of repetitive use of the word "it"

3rd sentence spelling of it is missing a t.

Maybe the "its (goals) could be numbered or given a, b, c, d, the way the paragraph is written now made it challenging to follow the goals as written.

Revenue For Transportation Funding - Page No.3, Para No.1

Are all required "data sources, mentioned in the APPENDIX: A reference table or otherwise?

Figure No.9 and Figure No.1 are they the same figures?

Response:

Thank you for your comments. We will work to improve document flow and the readability of diagrams. We will ensure federal guidelines and legislation are appropriately cited. We will reduce word repetition and resolve the confusion with figure 1 and 9.

Comment:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Rochester's Community Development Divisions with comments on the draft 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan drafted by the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC). Thank you for providing the opportunity to offer feedback on the draft plan. As Community Development Coordinator for the City of Rochester, I have conducted extensive research into the transportation needs of Rochester as part of planning mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). I have consistently received input from relevant non-profit organizations, as well as from interested individual residents, that more and better transportation options are needed for low-income residents, elderly residents, and residents with disabilities. In particular, increased general public transportation and non-fixed-route shuttle services for elderly residents were identified as needs for the City of Rochester. I believe this closely matches the public opinion data mentioned in the "How We Move Better" section of the draft transportation plan on Strafford residents desiring improved public transportation options, such as additional bus routes and better bus service hours.

Also, the identification in the draft transportation plan of two food deserts within the City of Rochester matches data that I have obtained on the issue. Addressing these current food deserts will likely be a key component of the City of Rochester's in-progress Assessment of Fair Housing, scheduled to be completed in late 2019 and submitted to HUD in early 2020, and it is heartening to see this issue included in the draft transportation plan.

I urge SRPC, in the implementation phase of the finalized transportation plan, to prioritize increasing transportation options within the City of Rochester due to the extensive need of Rochester residents for

such. The City of Rochester is the second-largest city in Strafford County by population, only a few hundred people smaller than the neighboring City of Dover, and by far the largest city in Strafford County by land area, nearly twice as large as next-largest Dover. Further, according to the 2014 *Strafford County Community Assessment* published by the Community Action Partnership of Strafford County, half of the Strafford County families with annual incomes below \$25,000 are residents of Rochester or Somersworth.

I look forward to reading the finalized 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan for Strafford County and to working with SRPC in implementing transportation solutions for the City of Rochester and the entire Strafford region. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Response:

Thank you very much for your comments. I'm glad the plan touched on topics important to Rochester. You are welcome to come to the public hearing about the draft plan which will take place on Friday, June 17th at 9:00am in the SRPC conference room. Please be in touch if you have any other questions.

Comments received at the SMPO Technical Advisory Committee Meeting on Friday, June 3rd 2016

An overview of updates to the Metro Plan was presented to committee members at the meeting. It covered the plan outline and framework, the plan development and public engagement process, individual chapter content, specific appendices, and future goals for plan adaptation/evolution.

Question:

Are notices on highway advisory boards advisory-only, or are travelers required by law to change routes based on notices. If they are not legal requirements, are there future plans to make them that way?

Response:

Travel advisory notices are advisory only; I am unaware of lawmaking plans related to travel advisories.

Comment:

[Related to automated vehicle navigation technology, which tracks painted lane markings]
If automated vehicle technology relies on painted lane markings to navigate roads, NH would need greater consideration for lane marking conditions – especially due to winter maintenance work – in order to facilitate growth of automatic vehicles. Many rural roads have no lane markings at all. This has implications for seniors and residents with mobility challenges in rural areas who could benefit from automated vehicle technology.

Response:

Thank you for your comment.

Question:

Is the SRPC transportation project database available on the SRPC website?

Response:

The project database is not formatted for web-viewing, but recent STIP updates and the Metro Plan project listing are available on the website. The project database will also be used during project solicitation to update local projects.

Question:

Will ongoing and upcoming rulemakings from FHWA impact required content in the final Metro Plan after it gets approved?

Response: [from FHWA staff]

The implementation of FHWA rulemakings related to Metropolitan Planning will not affect the approval timeline or the content of the current draft of the Metro Plan.

Comments received during the Public Hearing at the SMPO Policy Committee Meeting on Friday, June 17th 2016

An overview of updates to the Metro Plan was presented to committee members at the meeting. It covered the plan outline and framework, the plan development and public engagement process, individual chapter content, specific appendices, and future goals for plan adaptation/evolution.

Comment:

We should add the word “affordable” to the transportation vision

Response:

Thank you for your comment. We will modify the vision.

Comment:

We should remove the word “choice” to the transportation vision

Response:

Thank you for your comment. We will modify the vision.

Comment:

[Regarding inter-regional commuting data from U.S. Census] How were the percentages for regional commuting calculated?

Response:

The percentages were derived from the *On the Map Tool* from the U.S. Census.

Comment:

[Related to slide about areas with low income, low access to a car, and low access to food in Rochester and Somersworth]: It seems there would be more rural areas in the region with low food access.

Response:

The U.S. Census uses a much larger buffer area when determining a location’s proximity to food sources in “rural” communities (as defined by the U.S. Census). Because of this, locations in more urbanized areas are identified as food deserts. SRPC will be looking to do their own detailed analysis of food access for future plan updates.

Comment:

[Regarding regional commuting data from U.S. Census] what is included in the “other means” category of transportation mode?

Response:

The category includes several alternative modes such as bicycling and telecommuting.

Question:

Do we know the location of hot-spots of congestion along regional routes?

Response:

SRPC doesn't have quantifiable data about regional congestion hot-spots, but he said SMPO staff are discussing maintenance and updates to the regional traffic model with staff from Rockingham Planning Commission. He said the model could be used to identify regional congestion and will be important in the near future as NHDOT and the MPOs develop a statewide performance-based planning framework.

Question:

Will climate change content in the Metro Plan discuss impacts to marine ports and make recommendations regarding adaptation?

Response:

The metro plan touches on ports and their importance to regional freight, but federal guidelines specify that MPOs can plan "up to ports and airports", but not within them.

Question:

When will the Intelligent Transportation Systems Architecture and Plan be updated?

Response:

The most recent ITS plan was written with Rockingham Planning Commission and is due for an update very soon.