

## Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee

### Meeting Minutes

Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup> 2019 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Strafford Regional Planning Commission  
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Conference Room 1A  
Rochester, NH

The meeting was called to order at 9:04am

#### 1. Attendance:

##### Committee Members

Barbara Holstein (Rochester), Richard Michaud (Somersworth), Michael Bobinsky (Somersworth), Steve Diamond (Barrington), Victoria Parmele (Northwood), Joe Boudreau (Rochester), Don Hamann (Rochester), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), David Landry (Dover), Tom Crosby (Madbury), Glenn Davison (NHDOI), Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), Michael Williams (COAST),

##### Staff

Jennifer Czysz, Colin Lentz, Jackson Rand, Nancy O' Connor

#### 2. Staff Communications

C. Lentz announced that Jackson Rand had started that week as the new GIS planner. Jackson introduced himself.

#### 3. Action Item(s)

##### 3.1 - Minutes from July 19<sup>th</sup> 2019 [VOTE]

M. Williams. made a motion to accept the minutes as written

Seconded by D. Hamann

Vote: Unanimous in favor

##### Metropolitan Transportation Plan Development - Focus Groups

C. Lentz explained that the Metro Plan regional survey had received a total of 321 responses and the next step was to hold a series of focus group meetings with specific stakeholders to discuss regional planning and transportation challenges. One primary outcome from such meetings would be a preliminary set of goals and objectives that the Policy Committee would review and finalize for the Metro Plan. C. Lentz said he and N. O'Connor had discussed four possible stakeholder groups thus far: municipal staff; economic development and housing; infrastructure resilience and emergency preparedness; and environmental. A draft list of topics and potential invitees was provided. He said they would likely reach out to freight stakeholders individually due to the difficulty of getting

multiple entities in one place. C. Lentz said they thought the municipal staff focus groups presented the best opportunity for a first meeting.

N. O'Connor described their initial plans for the scope of the municipal staff focus group. Each stakeholder focus group meeting would be a facilitated workshop to establish consensus around common regional planning challenges. For instance, each participant in municipal staff group could submit a list of top ten local challenges that would be compiled and ordered so the entire group could discuss the top three from that common list. The group would develop specific action points that would help SRPC staff and the Policy committee develop goals and objectives. C. Lentz noted that the goals and objectives would be paired with data analysis (e.g. traffic volumes, safety data, demographics, etc.) to help develop and prioritize projects to improve the transportation network.

J. Czys noted that the stakeholder workshops would essentially act as a regional needs assessment to inform the goal-setting process.

V. Parmele asked for more specifics about who would be invited to the municipal staff group. C. Lentz noted that the list provided was very preliminary but could include public works and planning staff. He suggested that the municipal staff discussion should be broad, which could identify specific topics to be discussed at the other focus area workshops.

B. Holstein described the collaborative effort to address homelessness between Rochester, Dover, and Somersworth. Jen asked committee members who is missing from the list of possible invitees. B. Holstein said someone from Strafford County should be included. E. Strachan said Sherry Godlewski should be included in discussion about infrastructure resilience and Jessica Wilcox from NHDES could be a good source for contacts in the freight industry. She added that S&J Transportation has been very open to conversations as well.

S. Diamond noted that because local governments are reliant on local property taxes, have limited budgets, and limited resources, planning and budgeting is only focused on near-term costs. There needs to be a more regional approach. C. Lentz said this will be a challenge to frame the conversation with this factor in mind.

Jo Boudreau asked why infrastructure needs (e.g. housing developments need water, sewer, etc.) were not more explicit in the proposed approach. C. Lentz said he had expected that infrastructure would be inherently part of the focus group conversations.

G. Davison said the NHDOT bureau of environment and NHDES should be included in various conversations. C. Lentz said they definitely would.

M. Bobinsky suggested that local fire chiefs should be included in the emergency management group. Jo Boudreau suggested that representatives from industry should be included. This could include utilities like Eversource and small and large businesses in the region.

D. Landry asked if there were equivalents for chamber of commerce staff in small rural towns. He wondered how this process could engage smaller communities equally on issues where large cities have paid staff. J. Boudreau said efforts should be made to find rural business representatives, suggested that business owners and similar stakeholders in larger cities would also be able to represent rural issues because their business interests would go beyond the city borders.

C. Lentz summarized, saying they would take the committee's input in mind as they continued to develop the focus groups.

#### 4. Project Updates

##### Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) meetings for the draft Ten Year Plan

C. Lentz said he had developed a short presentation for the GACIT hearings based on the policy and planning priorities the Policy Committee had outlined. He gave the presentation at a GACIT hearing in Dover (October 10<sup>th</sup>) and would be giving it again at a GACIT hearing in Rochester on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. The presentation includes specific support and requests regarding projects and planning priorities. J. Czysz encouraged committee members to attend the hearing and emphasize issues that are important to them. She added that C. Lentz could provide general speaking notes to anyone based on the planning priorities the committee had discussed.

M. Bobinsky said he had attended the Dover hearing and noted several people (including Rad Nichols from COAST and Jim Jalbert from C&J buslines) made valuable public comments. He complimented C. Lentz on the presentation, saying it reflected the needs of the region.

G. Davison reminded committee members that NHDOT had new opportunities for virtual public involvement in the Ten Year Plan process. This includes an introductory video from Commissioner Sheehan and an online survey. He said this is the first time NHDOT has developed a virtual component for the Ten Year Plan and is hoping for input on how it can be improved. G. Davison said NHDOT will be closing its phase of the Ten Year Plan public comment process on November 12<sup>th</sup> but it would like to have comments in by the end of October since they will present the final draft to GACIT in early November. GACIT may make changes to the draft plan prior to it being submitted to the Governor's office.

V. Parmele said she heard Commissioner Sheehan speak about the draft Ten Year Plan on NHPR and thought it was very forward-thinking.

B. Holstein asked if there is a way for folks to provide input and written comments if they were unable to do so online (she mentioned seniors she worked with who were unlikely to go online). G. Davison said NHDOT is happy to receive written comments through the mail. J. Czysz suggested that NHDOT could bring paper versions of the survey to the GACIT hearings.

J. Boudreau suggested that NHDOT have paper Ten Year Plan survey materials for people to fill out while they were waiting at the DMV and NH EZ-Pass center. G. Davison thought that was a great idea.

##### CMAQ updates

C. Lentz reviewed the projects proposed in the region: UNH Wildcat hopes to replace old diesel buses; Rochester has proposed downtown intersection improvements; the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) has proposed track improvements in Dover that would increase train speed and efficiency; and NHDOT has a proposed park and ride in Lee and traffic signal improvements throughout the state. He said he and the other RPCs were working on air quality analyses for their regional projects. J. Czysz explained that NHDOT had received \$13.5 million in CMAQ applications and had \$14.5 million available for funding. They were in the process of ensuring all projects were eligible and if they could make those numbers match, NHDOT would recommend that all projects be funded in the Ten Year Plan. Each project would only have to be eligible and show a positive air quality benefit.

C. Lentz reminded committee members about NHDOT's road safety audit program. Any municipality is eligible to apply for funding to address road segments or intersections on any public road that has experienced a fatal or severe crash within the past ten years. C. Lentz said the

application is simple but local crash records are required to put together a detailed diagram of crashes at the proposed site. He noted that most accepted applications are 100% federally funded and the projects are usually completed in under five years.

## 5. **Other Business**

J. Czysz noted that Marcia Gasses (town planner and TAC representative for Barrington, and Dover City Councilor and SRPC Commissioner) had resigned her position on the SRPC Executive Committee but will be continuing as an SRPC Commissioner.

E. Strachan handed out information about the upcoming round of funding through the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA). NHDES and OSI have matched DERA funds with funds from the Volkswagen settlement, substantially increasing available funds \$700,000 for projects. E. Strachan explained that DERA focuses on removing older diesel engines and vehicles and replacing them with newer, cleaner, diesel engines or alternative fuels (such as natural gas or electric). This can include non-road equipment and stationary engines (e.g. generators are eligible but only if they are operated at least 500hrs per year), marine and locomotive engines. E. Strachan noted that the amount of match required for each project will depend vehicle or engine. She provided several examples of types of projects in the region.

E. Strachan provided an update on the Volkswagen settlement. She noted that NHDOT was using VW funds to replaced several state plow trucks. She said there were two recent solicitations for the replacement of diesel school buses; one for natural gas or propane replacements, and one for all-electric. NHDES didn't get any responses for electric school bus due in-part to concern from potential applicants about adapting to the new technology within the specified timeline. She said NHDES will likely hold another EV bus solicitation in the future.

E. Strachan reminded the committee that the state was allocated \$31 million through the VW settlement and can use up 15% of that (\$4.6 million) specifically for new electric vehicle charging infrastructure. She said there is a state commission discussing electric vehicle charging issues that recently recommended that OSI focus on new DC fast charging stations (that can fully charge an average electric vehicle in around 20 minutes) on major corridors like I93. E. Strachan said NHDES and OSI applied for CMAQ funds to install level-2 chargers (that can fully charge an average electric vehicle in around 8-12 hours) at two state-owned properties in Concord at either the Flume or Cannon Mountain. This will be a pilot project for level-2 chargers and will use VW funds as match.

6. **Citizen's Forum** – Citizens of the Strafford region are invited to speak on the subject matter of the meeting. Statements should be limited to three minutes.

No members of the public brought comments forward

7. **Adjournment**

M. Bobinsky made a motion to adjourn  
Seconded by Michael W.  
Vote: unanimous in favor

Meeting adjourned at 10:13am

Minutes Approved by [Print Name] Victoria Pamele

Signed Victoria M. Pamele Date 10/18/19

