

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee Meeting

Friday, October 18th 2019 9:00 – 10:00 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 September 20th 2019
 - 3.2 What topics to include in a letter to GACIT for the Ten Year Plan development
 - Regional planning priorities (previously established by Policy Committee)
 - Flexing of CMAQ funding
 - Statewide corridor studies
 - Electric vehicle charging infrastructure
4. **Project Updates**
 - 4.1 Metro Plan Development – focus groups update
5. **Other Business**
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.
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.

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 Minutes

Friday, September 20th 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 (NHDOT), 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 19th 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. Czysz 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 10th) and would be giving it again at a GACIT hearing in Rochester on October 2nd. The presentation includes specific support and requests regarding projects and planning priorities. J. Czysk 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 10th 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. Czysk 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. Czysk 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. Strachen 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. Strachen 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. Strachen 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. Strachen 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. Strachen 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. Strachen 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] _____

Signed _____ Date _____

DRAFT

MEMO

October 2019 Policy meeting

For discussion: submitting a letter to GACIT outlining regional planning priorities and potential policy and implementation proposals related to Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding, electric vehicle charging infrastructure implementation, and regional corridor studies.

Strafford MPO has the opportunity to submit a formal letter as part of the GACIT phase of the Ten Year Plan. The Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) will be submitting the draft Ten Year Plan to the Governor before the end of December so ideally Strafford MPO would submit specific comments before the end of the GACIT comment period on November 12th. This can include the regional planning priorities we have discussed recently.

During the GACIT phase of the Ten Year Plan process staff have been discussing CMAQ funding and electric vehicle charging (EV charging) implementation with Senator David Watters. He is on the Senate Transportation Committee which will take up the draft Ten Year Plan (TYP) after initial review by the Governor's office.

Senator Watters asked Strafford MPO staff if the Policy Committee would be willing to discuss several issues regarding CMAQ funds, electric vehicle charging, and regional corridor studies. The intention would be to submit a letter to the Governor with comments on the TYP so they are part of the record to facilitate initial dialog at the legislative level with members of the Senate Transportation Committee.

Scope of a potential letter to GACIT

The following bullets represent the range of possible points that could be addressed in a letter to GACIT. Each issue is described in more detail below.

- The list of regional planning priorities that were incorporated into the presentation given at the GACIT hearings in Dover and Rochester. This would reiterate the presentation to ensure all members of GACIT are aware of them.
- Flexing of CMAQ funds
- Expansion of the statewide corridor study program to specifically include consideration of EV charging infrastructure
- Detailed proposal for dedication of flexed CMAQ funds for additional EV charging infrastructure

Overarching current issues to frame discussion

- Current draft of the TYP proposes "flexing" 25% (2.2 million) of CMAQ funding to "other federal programs". [I need to clarify the specifics with NHDOT but I believe this refers to paving and bridge work; the funds may not have a specific destination yet]
 - Flexing CMAQ funds is allowed because NH is in compliance with federal air quality standards
- The state has dedicated \$4.6 million from the Volkswagen settlement (15% of total VW funds) specifically for the "acquisition, installation, operation and maintenance of electric vehicle supply equipment". Recent analysis has looked at potential EV charging installations on major corridors (e.g. I93). Utility companies like Util and Eversource in collaboration with state agencies have identified potential EV charging sites for public-private-partnership opportunities.
- The current TYP has \$700,000 per year starting in 2021 for corridor studies (through 2030). The current TYP pays for this with CMAQ funds and toll credits. NHDOT suggests that this could support two major corridor studies each year (~\$350,000 each). Though no specifics or

methodologies have been discussed, RPCs will likely have a regional process for prioritizing corridors in the region.

Major Points for Discussion

General policy request

Potential policy statement: “CMAQ funding should reserved for CMAQ-eligible activities”. Supporting this could mean altering the draft TYP to move the 2.2 million in CMAQ funding from paving and bridge programs back to the CMAQ program. Depending on how this is worded, I would recommend that we stress that Strafford MPO is not implying that paving and bridge work is less important or that NHDOT is using funds improperly. This could be contingent on finding funds to replace the CMAQ funds and ensure paving and bridge work would not be reduced as proposed in the TYP.

Corridor Studies

Strafford MPO could request that the statewide corridor study process have an increased and specific focus on identifying opportunities for new EV charging infrastructure. Current studies have focused on major corridors, but MPOs could request more comprehensive analysis for opportunities specifically for Level 2 charging stations. This could include a specific request for a dedicated RPC role in the prioritization and development of corridor studies.

- Level 1 = at-home charging from standard domestic outlet (average vehicle full charge 17-25 hours)
- Level 2 = dedicated equipment at public and private locations (average vehicle full charge 4-5 hours)
- DC Fast Charging = very powerful and expensive (average vehicle full charge ~20 minutes)

A proposal like this would require discussion and coordination between state agencies and the nine regional planning commissions.

Specific request for EV charging funding

With Senator Watters we discussed the possibility of requesting that the \$2.2 million of CMAQ funding be set aside in a separate program specifically for EV charging implementation. In one scenario RPCs could develop a process for regional analysis and solicitation of projects for expansion of EV charging infrastructure. Obviously this would involve discussion with state agencies about detailed logistics:

- How would the 2.2 million be allocated by region (an even 9-way split is \$244,444)?
- What specific parameters for potential projects?
- Who would be eligible and what project types?
 - Public, private, or both?
- Etc.

The above issues are listed in order of complexity. The policy statement could be incorporated into a letter to GACIT through the TYP process. The corridor studies are already funded in the TYP and MPO representatives could request the additional focus on EV charging. The CMAQ funding and EV charging will require far more discussion with state agencies and RPCs.