

## Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee

### Meeting Minutes

**Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 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 9:05am

#### 1. **Attendance:**

##### Committee Members

Barbara Holstein (Rochester), Michael Bobinsky (Somersworth), Richard Michaud (Somersworth), David Landry (Dover), Tim White (NHDES), David Landry (Dover), Steve Pesci (UNH), Michael Williams (COAST), Don Hamann (Rochester) Mark Avery (Madbury), Tom Crosby (Madbury), Glenn Davison (NHDOT), Jon Hotchkiss (Middletton), Joe Boudreau (Rochester), Mark Richardson (Somersworth).

##### Staff

Jennifer Czysz, Colin Lentz, Rachel Dewey

#### 2. **Staff Communications**

J. Czysz said the quarterly Commissioner meeting will be at the SRPC office and focusing on solid waste disposal issues. Monday March 9<sup>th</sup> there is a visioning session being held by the Regional Economic Development Corporation to update their regional economic development strategy which covers multiple towns in the SRPC region.

R. Dewey noted that staff are working on an update of the SRPC website.

#### 3. **Public Hearing – Amendment #3 to the 2019-2022 TIP**

M. Williams made a motion to open the public hearing  
Seconded by D. Landry  
Vote: Unanimous in favor

C. Lentz presented information about the draft amendment which included several local projects and statewide programs:

- Commuter/Intercity Bus Replacement (40284)
- Durham (42873)
- Lee (42876)
- Milton, NH – Lebabnon, ME (40658)
- Program: Rehabilitation of Tier 2 highways
- Program: Maintenance of high-investment bridges

- Program: Maintenance & Preservation of Tier 1 & 2 Bridges
- Program: CMAQ to FTA
- Program: CRDR
- Program: FTA 5310
- Program: FTA 5339
- Program: GRR
- Program: Resurfacing of Tier 1 highways
- Program: Pavement markings
- Program: TSMO
- Rochester (42880)
- Statewide (42878)

He explained proposed changes to projects and funding. The amendment included several new projects in the region that had been funded through the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement program (CMAQ): a Park and Ride in Lee, an intersection improvement in Rochester, and new Buses for UNH Wildcat.

M. Williams made a motion to close the public hearing  
 Seconded by D. Landry  
 Vote: unanimous in favor

#### 4. Action Item(s)

##### 4.1 Minutes from December 20<sup>th</sup> 2019

D. Landry made a motion to approve the minutes as written.

Seconded by M. Williams

D. Landry noted that he was listed twice in the participants list

Vote: unanimous in favor (UNH abstaining)

##### 4.2 Amendment #3 to the 2019-2022 TIP

S. Pesci made a motion to approve Amendment #3

Seconded by D. Landry

S. Pesci thanked NHDOT for including the CMAQ projects in the amendment so they could begin them quickly.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

##### 4.3 Regional Safety Performance Targets

C. Lentz explained that SRPC needs to set performance targets for highway safety annually under the performance-based planning requirements in federal regulations. DOTs and MPOs set targets for five performance areas: the number of fatalities; the rate of fatalities; the number of serious injuries; the rate of serious injuries; and the number of fatalities and serious injuries involving non-motorized users. C. Lentz handed a memo to the committee and thanked R. Dewey for updating it with more detail on trends and issues in the data. The targets cover all public roads in the region with the goal of identifying locations where major crashes are happening to address them. C. Lentz

added that SRPC tracks motorcycle crashes due to their prevalence in NH. He noted that fatalities are reported directly to a federal database. But the data on serious injuries are inconsistent due to differences in technology and process between local police departments, and the process of getting crash reports from municipalities to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

C. Lentz explained that SRPC staff were recommending that the MPO support the targets set by NHDOT and to work to keep fatalities and severe injuries in the region below 11% of the statewide total. C. Lentz said unfortunately 90% of the problem in traffic safety was that humans were behind the wheel, but SRPC can use data to identify locations where infrastructure is leading to crashes. J. Boudreau said the data from the past five years made it look like there was no net improvement; some years had fewer crashes but others had more, so it balanced out. C. Lentz said that the downward trend isn't apparent over the short term, but fatalities and injuries are decreasing over the long term. Countermeasures by law enforcement (e.g. hands-free laws) and vehicle technology (e.g. automatic braking) have a large impact. However, he noted other negative trends described in the memo that have led to a rise in crashes (such as the opioid crisis). R. Dewey said SRPC can improve infrastructure but not change human behavior.

S. Pesci noticed that SRPC's rate of fatalities and serious injuries was higher than the state, and that the gap had widened over the past five years. R. Dewey pointed to an explanation in the memo, noting that the SRPC has about 11% of the state's fatalities and serious injuries, but only 9% of the vehicle miles traveled, so the proportion is skewed. She noted that the serious injuries rate is rising. S. Pesci suggested that speed is the primary factor in these observed rates. He said the Spaulding turnpike is a major asset to the region, but while the posted speed limit is 55, most people drive 65 or even 70. Speed is the difference between vehicle damage, serious injury, or someone being killed. He added that the highway is designed in such a way that people feel safe going well above the posted speed limit, so it was time to consider the design of roads or enforcement of the posted speed limits. Members agreed that speed was a factor, but substance abuse was a major challenge – both alcohol and opioids. They discussed the challenge of getting accurate information from police crash reports. R. Dewey noted that many of the crash reports do not include accurate location information. C. Lentz said he had had the best luck contacting police departments directly to research local crashes and reminded members of the Road Safety Audit program that could rapidly respond to locations where fatalities and serious injuries had occurred.

S. Dimond said it was good to address individual locations where serious crashes were happening but addressing behavior issues could have a greater impact. C. Lentz agreed and said SRPC would continue to advocate to the legislature on new safety laws (such as a primary seatbelt law) and continue collaborating with the staff at the NHDOT safety section. S. Pesci reiterated that the design of roads has a strong influence on how fast people drive. C. Lentz said he had gotten a comment on the amendment from a TAC member in Milton wishing more could be done to proactively address traffic safety. Identifying locations with serious injuries and fatalities is ultimately a reactive approach. C. Lentz said the state crash data were getting more accurate and SRPC was working on various tools and techniques to identify traffic safety issues before they result in a serious injury or fatality.

As a piece of good news, S. Pesci noted that 2019 was the first year in recent modern history when neither the UNH or Durham police had recorded a single pedestrian-related crash. There was only 1 bicycle-related crash, but no injuries or fatalities.

S. Pesci made a motion to approve the SMPO targets in support of the NHDOT safety targets.  
Seconded by D. Hamann  
Vote: Unanimous in favor

## **5. Project Updates**

### **5.1 Legislative outreach**

C. Lentz said he and J. Czysz had recently attended public hearings for bills proposed by the NH House. The bills were proposing new alternative revenue generation for highway maintenance in NH. He presented testimony not directly in favor or in opposition to the bills, but broadly advocating for new revenues and supporting the House's efforts. C. Lentz said he and other MPO staff and directors had attended a meeting with Congressman Pappas to discuss policy priorities as he works with other members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on a new federal transportation authorization.

C. Lentz said he had attended a meeting of the Public Private Partnership commission (lead by NHDOT) and given testimony in support of the solicitation for enabling fee-based parking at the Dover and Portsmouth park and rides/bus stations. He explained that the lots are currently maintained by C&J Buslines which operates their service out of the lots. Demand for C&J service has been growing rapidly and they have been paying the significant cost of maintenance (including some abuse of the purpose of the lots). The solicitation is open to all proposals, but C&J would be a logical candidate for instituting the fee-based parking. C&J has said they would allocate a generous portion of the parking fee revenues to COAST to increase public transit to the two lots.

Lastly, C. Lentz was invited by Senator David Watters to a meeting of the Senate Commission on Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure to present on the RPC perspective on development of the level-2 charging network. C. Lentz explained that the state had issued an RFP for installation of fast charging stations (that could charge a vehicle in about 20 minutes) and the next phase was building out the level-2 network (that can charge vehicles in about 8 hours). He had said RPCs were in a great position to provide information at the regional level on ideal locations for level-2 chargers. This network would be geared for commuters who charge their vehicle at home but need a charger at work where the vehicle can charge for the work day to make the trip home. T. White said NHDES and NHOSI were partners in the RFP for fast-charging locations using funds from the Volkswagen settlement. He said none of the submissions to the RFP were eligible under the requirements. NHDES and NHOSI will be working to re-issue the RFP after getting more information about why there were no legitimate submissions. S. Pesci said the fast chargers were a great investment, but he would like to see more funding available to municipalities to install local level-2 chargers. This could be a grant program with local matching funds. C. Lentz said he had made similar comments at the Senate commission meeting, saying municipalities want to make investments in electric vehicle chargers and solar power generation.

## **6. Other Business**

C. Lentz presented a draft vision for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and asked for initial input from Policy members. He noted several comments and edits from NHDOT. He asked members to review the vision and send comments or bring them to the next meeting.

7. **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.

8. **Adjournment**

M. Williams made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by J. hotchkiss

Vote: unanimous in favor

Meeting adjourned at 10:30am

Minutes Approved by [Print Name] \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_