

## Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee

### Meeting Minutes

**Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 9:00 – 11:00 AM**

Strafford Regional Planning Commission  
Virtual Meeting Via Zoom  
Rochester, NH

The meeting was called to order at 9:05am  
Prior to beginning the meeting, the Chair read the following statement:

As Chair of the Strafford MPO Policy Committee I have found that, due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-15, this Committee is authorized to meet electronically. Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to the meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, this is to confirm that we are:

*a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means;*

We are utilizing the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting. All members of the Committee have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through the Zoom platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # 1-646-558-8656 and meeting ID 852 4088 7267, or by clicking on the following website address:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85240887267>

*b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting;*

We previously gave notice to the public of how to access the meeting using Zoom, and instructions are provided on the SRPC website at [Strafford.org](http://Strafford.org), and clicking on the link for the May Policy Committee.

*c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access;*

If anybody has a problem, please call 603-559-3500 (ext. 102) or email Colin at:  
[clentz@strafford.org](mailto:clentz@strafford.org).

*d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting.*

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, we will adjourn the meeting and have it rescheduled at that time. Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their presence, also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

### **1. Attendance:**

#### Committee Members

Tim White (NHDES), Bill Fisher (Farmington), Mark Richardson (Somersworth), Don Hamann (Rochester), Victoria Parmele (Northwood), Michael Williams (COAST), Joe Boudreau (Rochester), Peter Nelson (Newmarket), Barbara Holstein (Rochester), Wayne Burton (Durham), Michael Bobinsky (Somersworth), David Landry (Dover), Steve Diamond (Barrington), Glenn Davison (NHDOT).

#### Staff

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

### **2. Staff Communications**

C. Lentz said Alaina Rogers had started with SRPC on the summer data collection team and been helping Kyle Pimental, and was recently hired as a full-time staff member. Alaina had successfully applied for a grant to study coastal resilience in Dover. The project will be focused on climate impacts to vulnerable populations in Dover.

J. Czysz added that SRPC is working on applying for CARES Act funds through the Economic Development Administration. Those funds would help SRPC hire a temporary dedicated position to organize economic recovery in the region. SRPC has received a preliminary approval and is working on finalizing the contract process.

### **3. Action Item(s)**

3.1 Minutes from June 19, 2020 [VOTE]

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

Seconded by M. Bobinsky

Vote: unanimous in favor (via roll call vote)

### **4. Project Updates**

4.1 Ten Year Plan progress and next steps

C. Lentz reviewed the draft weighting of project scoring criteria. He explained that TAC members had proposed weightings as individuals and he had compiled them into an average. He used the polling feature in zoom to present multiple choice questions related to the Ten Year Plan criteria.

1. Do you think these weights will help us accurately and objectively score projects?

Answer 1: Yes, they are representative of regional priorities

Answer 2: No, I think the weights could be adjusted

*The majority of members responded that the criteria were representative of regional priorities. A couple felt the weightings could be adjusted.*

2. Each of the sub-criteria is weighted approximately 50/50 (e.g. safety performance vs. safety measures). Do you agree with this?

Answer 1: Yes, each of the sub-criteria are equally valuable

Answer 2: I think we should discuss different weightings for the different sub-criteria

Answer 3: I'm not sure; need more information

*Most members felt the sub-criteria were equally valuable.*

3. What do you think about this approach in general? If we were going to develop our own criteria and scoring process, what would you change?

Answer 1: There are too many criteria

Answer 2: There are criteria I think should be added

Answer 3: This approach works well for this task

Answer 4: We need a completely different approach

*Most members felt this approach was appropriate for the task.*

Members discussed the applicability of the criteria, especially with the emergence of COVID-19. C. Lentz explained the rationale behind the criteria. Most members were comfortable with the proposed weighting on primary criteria. C. Lentz gave more detail on the individual sub-criteria and put them in context with the candidate projects. He noted that the average weight for sub-criteria was 50/50.

C. Lentz noted that SRPC staff are working on getting access to crash data and detailed demographic data. These are important for two criteria: Safety; and Environmental Justice, Equity, & Accessibility. He said state agencies are working to prepare crash data for sharing and RPC access with the passage of HB1182, and Rachel Dewey is working on a universal database that will help staff analyze detailed demographic data.

M. Bobinsky said he thought the “state of repair” criteria should be given more weight. He suggested that 3% be taken from the “mobility” criteria and added to “state of repair”. Several members concurred.

V. Parmele asked how much the criteria weighting changed this round compared to last round. C. Lentz responded that they were very close compared to last round. He asked for follow-up about the suggested additional weight on “state of repair”, noting that the NHDOT maintenance districts and municipalities are bearing the cost of infrastructure maintenance separately from new project development. In addition, any project that involves a new configuration will likely improve the condition of the pavement or infrastructure by default. Members discussed the need to maintain existing infrastructure before building new infrastructure.

W. Burton asked for clarification on what “network significance” means. C. Lentz said it’s really getting at the number of people served; a route like NH125 will score higher because it is a regional route that handles more volume than a local road.

C. Lentz noted that discussion and questions from committee members were addressing the fact that the criteria were not mutually exclusive. Many of the criteria have an overlapping relationship (for instance the state of repair of a road will have an impact on the safety if that road is in very poor condition).

J. Czysz added that the criteria were developed in collaboration with NHDOT and the other 8 RPCs so that a consistent approach would be used across the state. RPCs are able to weight the criteria according to regional priorities. She reminded committee members that TAC members drafted the criteria weights and the Policy committee can request the TAC members take a second look at the weightings. J. Czysz suggested that Policy members could use the criteria weighting template that TAC used to generate alternative weightings.

W. Burton asked what the deadline was for this decision. C. Lentz said NHDOT needs a list of projects by November 6<sup>th</sup>, which means the Policy Committee needs to vote at their meeting on October 16<sup>th</sup>. The list needs to include ranked projects that fit within the regional allocation [\$4,901,449], plus one or two additional projects as a contingency.

C. Lentz asked what Policy members preferred to do in order to resolve criteria weighting considerations. He reiterated that the committee could request that TAC reconsider the weights with greater emphasis on “state of repair”, or he could send Policy members the weighting template for them to fill out, and he would incorporate the recommended changes. The recommended changes would be shared with TAC as well at their September meeting.

M. Bobinsky suggested that C. Lentz send Policy members the weighting template. He added that he was sensitive to the fact that the TAC already spent time to weight the criteria. He had some suggested tweaks but didn’t want to completely undo the TAC’s work. C. Lentz said he would send the weighting template to the Policy committee right after the meeting ended.

C. Lentz said he could send the weighting template to Policy and include the candidate projects so members would have some context for how criteria would be applied.

#### 4.2 Timing for updating the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

C. Lentz explained that following the approval and signing of the Ten Year Plan by the Governor on July 24<sup>th</sup>, NHDOT had begun developing a draft STIP. The STIP comprises the next four years of projects in that Ten Year Plan. NHDOT is planning on developing a draft STIP to review by MPOs around October/November, from there the MPOs develop regional TIPs (Transportation Improvement Program. The MPOs are planning on getting their TIPs approved near the end of March. C. Lentz said he would provide more detail in the future.

### 5. Discussion Items

#### 5.1 Metro Plan updates

C. Lentz reminded the committee that every MPO has a Metro Plan, which is a comprehensive regional plan for transportation needs that covers the next 20 years. It is based on federal requirements and programs specific transportation projects based on data and available funding.

C. Lentz said the updated Metro Plan would have far less text and include more focused data analysis. Staff are working on a database of metrics that apply to regional planning and many of them are transportation related. He said the Metro Plan will include those metrics as snapshots of important data trends. This includes demographics, traffic volumes, safety trends, etc. The metrics will help pair data trends and proposed projects. For instance, what kinds of projects should be prioritized in the future to support the rising senior population. C. Lentz added that staff are working on implementing several new analysis tools that will enable staff and committee members to develop and propose needed transportation projects.

C. Lentz said he wanted to focus on the draft written content at this meeting. The Metro Plan written content is focused around eight overarching themes and each theme is currently less than four pages long. This is intended to set the context of transportation challenges in the region and allow the reader to match those challenges to the data snapshots in the plan. He posted several poll questions for committee members using zoom:

1. Were these the right themes?

Answer 1: There are too few (doesn't cover range of topics)

Answer 2: There are too many (they could be condensed)

Answer 3: Just the right amount; covers relevant topics

The majority of members said they thought it was the right range of themes to cover issues relevant to the region.

2. What do you think about theme content?

Answer 1: Right amount of information

Answer 2: Trying to say too much in short space

Answer 3: Good length but provide more detail

Majority of members were split: they thought the themes contained the right amount of information, but also thought more detail could be included.

3. What do you think about the implementation sections ("What We Can Do")?

Answer 1: They present reasonable strategies for implementation

Answer 2: They could include more ambitious strategies

Answer 3: Good strategies but I need more detail

Majority of members said the strategies were good, but more detail should be provided.

With the time left in the meeting, C. Lentz proposed postponing detailed discussion of the draft Metro Plan themes till next meeting. He provided the polling results and requested that committee members follow up with him if they had specific suggestions or requests for the themes. C. Lentz the Metro Plan needed to be complete and approved by the end June 2021. Staff are working on individual components of the plan so committee members can review each individual component rather than trying to review the entire plan at once.

## 6. Other Business

### 6.1 POP! Data Collection training

J. Rand and N. O' Connor gave a presentation on SRPC's project Promoting Outdoor Play (or POP!). N O' Connor explained that POP! Was the evolution of a separate project looking at access

to recreation facilities (Pathways to Play), which was funded by the NH Children's Health Foundation. A goal of that project was to address childhood obesity and increase access to places for outdoor activity. As a pilot project from Pathways to Play, data were compiled to create multiple maps of demographics and local recreation sites in Somersworth. SRPC staff applied again to NH Children's Health Foundation to take the information developed through Pathways to Play and develop online maps and resources that will help people reach more outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the region. She said POP! will include a full assessment of over 400 local recreation sites in the region to be included in an online map. SRPC is looking for local volunteers to go to their nearby park and complete an assessment using a smartphone survey app.

J. Rand gave a presentation on how to use the smartphone app he had developed and conduct local assessments of their local recreation sites. He walked members through downloading and using the app to conduct surveys at local recreation sites. He demonstrated how an online story map and dashboard will look for users. Members discussed how to use the data and made recommendations how to implement the results of the survey and maps.

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.

No members of the public were present to provide comments

## 8. **Adjournment**

B. Fisher made a motion to adjourn; seconded by D. Hamann

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30am