

## Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization

### Policy Committee

#### Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 15, 2021

9:00 – 11:00 AM

Strafford Regional Planning Commission  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom  
Rochester, NH

The meeting was called to order at 9:07am

The chair read the following statement prior to the roll call:

The chair of the Strafford MPO Technical Advisory Committee has found that, due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-21, 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:

- *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 number 1-646-558-8656 and meeting ID 829 0534 5549, or by clicking on the following website address:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82905345549?pwd=eTQ4dEVrbjVPbm5iL2dqQmxIdXpyQT09>

- *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 [www.strafford.org](http://www.strafford.org).
- *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 603-545-1035 or email at: [jczysz@strafford.org](mailto:jczysz@strafford.org)
- *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

Steve Diamond (Barrington), Michael Williams (COAST), Glenn Davison (NHDOT), Time White (NHDES), Dave Landry (Dover), Wayne Burton (Durham), Bill Fisher (Farmington), Mark Avery (Madbury), Mike Bobinsky (Somersworth), Mark Richardson (Somersworth), Don Hamann (Rochester), Joe Boudreau (Rochester), Barb Holstein (Rochester), Peter Nelson (Newmarket), Victoria Parmele (Northwood)

### Staff

Rachel Dewey, Natalie Moles, Stefanie Casella, Nancy O'Connor, Alaina Rogers, Jackson Rand, Stephen Geis, Jen Czysz

## 2. Staff Communications

V. Parmele announced that C. Lentz would be absent today as well as in the next couple of weeks as he and his wife are expecting their first child. R. Dewey will be covering for him.

J. Czysz explained that SRPC is using a new Zoom function for public meetings. From here on out public meetings will be using webinar functions. This helps protect the meetings from “Zoom Bombing” as it creates an attendees list and a panelist list with respective controls and functions. All commissioners will enter meetings as panelists during TAC, Policy, Commission meetings, and other public meetings hosted by SRPC.

Commissioners have received an email to complete a skills matrix. The skills matrix response rate has been about 1/3. This survey is designed to learn more about our commissioner’s interest areas and experience so we can best engage them in our work and enhance their participation. S. Casella and S. Sylvia will resend on Tuesday after the long weekend.

## 3. Action Items

### 3.1 Minutes from November 20<sup>th</sup> 2020

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

Seconded by B. Fisher.

Vote: All in favor (via roll-call vote)

### 3.2 Review and approve proposed 2021 highway safety targets

R. Dewey provided an overview of the proposed 2021 highway safety performance targets. These targets are set annually. SRPC is electing to support the state targets in recognition of the fact that the locations are largely at random and acknowledges that the Strafford MPO region typically represents approximately 11% of the statewide fatalities and serious injuries.

P. Nelson noted that in the past we discussed getting standardized fatality and crash information synchronized across all police departments in the SRPC region and asked if there is any update on whether or not all police departments are now able to share standardized crash and fatality information with SRPC?

R. Dewey said that the state safety target setting meetings have been canceled for this year so there is no update on the number of police departments adopting electronic data submission. However, the overall data quality shows that there is more standardization happening. Rachel will follow up with NHDOS.

P. Nelson asked if there is a map of all crash and fatality sites in the SRPC region with the ability to drill down to get more data on the specifics of accidents and injuries happening on a repetitive or historical perspective to know if improvements have been made? The idea being it would be helpful to know if particularly bad sites have been remediated successfully. R. Dewey responded that we are working on it. SRPC just got access to the state crash data after two years of difficulty getting access due to data privacy concerns. That issue has been resolved and NHDOS is now able to share some non-identifying fields from the data with NHDOT and the regional planning commissions to complete safety analyses. This data will be used in the future and will be part of the local safety analysis.

S. Diamond noted that the fatality rate data was interesting. The SRPC region has a higher rate than the state. What is the factor that makes the discrepancy between region and state explainable? R. Dewey explained that the region typically has about 11% of the fatalities in the state and about 9% of the state's total VMT. Therefore, the larger share of fatalities divided by the lower share of VMT results in the region's rate being higher than the state's. R. Dewey can do more analysis and provide more detail another time.

J. Boudreau asked if events like Bike Week factor into the number of fatalities and serious injuries? Is this data available by age? R. Dewey has previously analyzed motorcycle crashes during Bike Week vs other weeks in the summer and there isn't a significant difference during Bike Week. This is likely due to increased visibility, as there are more motorcycles on the roads. The data includes age, so R. Dewey can do additional analysis and report back.

W. Burton asked if the cause of accidents are recorded? Specifically drug use, etc. R. Dewey answered that the fatality database has a drug type table that may have that information.

V. Parmele asked if there is any data available for 2020. C. Lentz had mentioned in another conversation that while the VMT was down due to COVID-19, the fatalities did not decrease. She noted that she has observed an increase in "whacky" driving. R. Dewey responded that the Traffic Bureau has permanent count stations that they use for estimating VMT, we can check in with them. Preliminary numbers available for 2020 fatalities. NHDOT TMC tracks fatal crashes across the state throughout the year. At the beginning of January, this site was showing somewhere around 99-101. G. Davison added that NHDOT has posted the 2019 VMT already and that the 2020 VMT data will be available around March-April. The data is collected and then factored for seasonal flux and cleaned up.

M. Richardson noted that he has observed that there seems to be a lot of people running red lights along High Street and the four-way stop at the intersection of Indigo Hill Road and Green Street in Somersworth. Is it that no one is on the road and people think if there is less traffic, then what's the point in waiting? M. Bobinsky noticed that as well.

M. Bobinsky noted a substantial drop in serious crashes in 2019 and asked if this is a result of education or campaigns? R. Dewey answered that the data fluctuates year to year, and that the 2018 fatalities were much higher than the 2017 crashes. Based on the preliminary 2020 fatality totals, it seems that 2019-2020 is the closest to a flat trend that the state has seen in a while.

M. Bobinsky moved to approve the highway safety improvement targets as recommended by the TAC.

Seconded by D. Hamann.

P. Nelson noted he is less interested in hypothesizing reasons for bad behavior and more interested in how we can use the data to look at whether safety improvements have been successful. R. Dewey will investigate it more. There are a few HSIP projects that were completed in recent years that could be analyzed to see if there has been a reduction in crashes.

Vote: all in favor (via roll call vote).

S. Diamond noted that it has been challenging to know how long it will take to get from place to place. It seems more variable lately than in the past.

#### 4. **Project Updates**

##### 4.1 Metro Plan

Stephen Geis and R. Dewey are processing lots of data metrics for the Metro Plan. These data metrics are being prepared as a Data Snapshot document. The metrics include analysis of the 2019 ACS data, looking closely at vulnerable communities and underrepresented communities, as well as mobility, resiliency, economic vitality, and livability.

A. Rogers is working on writing sections about Resiliency and Climate Change, as well as Environmental Justice and Equity.

##### 4.2 STIP Update

C. Lentz is currently working to have the Draft TIP posted and available for adoption in March. This will put the State TIP (STIP) into the hands of FHWA around April/May of 2021 2012-2022 UPWP

R. Dewey updated that the SRPC staff are currently updating the contract with DOT known as the Unified Program Work Plan (UPWP). This update will include more specific objectives and outcomes in areas that were previously vague. Such updates include public health, climate change adaptation, emergency preparedness, and infrastructure improvements. Additionally, there is a request for qualifications on the SRPC website to hire an engineer to provide direct technical assistance for project scoping, budgeting, on-call travel demand modeling support, and developing a new project database.

J. Czysz added that the engineer would provide direct assistance to the municipalities and the UPWP draft is due to NHDOT by February, meaning that the draft will be available for the February TAC and Policy meetings.

#### 5. **Municipal Roundtable – Updates on local COVID-19 adaptation** Are there ways that SRPC can help your community recover from COVID-19?

The round table is designed to share new things happening in the region.

W. Burton started off with an update from Durham. In addition to 1500 UNH students returning in the next week or so Durham has joined the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCOM). This initiative will bring discipline to reducing carbon emissions, provides technical

assistance, and provides bench marks for reaching certain goals. This will be a good thing for our region to keep an eye on.

The committee discussed mask mandates and how the regional municipalities are responding and enforcement.

P. Nelson and V. Parmele gave a brief update on a proposed energy bill at the state level.

M Williams, gave an update to COAST schedule changes. Tomorrow (1/16/2021) is the first day of a new schedule. This new schedule encompasses minor changes to in response to schedule changes at the Navel Shipyard.

D. Landry updated the committee on a new development in Dover. This project is in the technical review phase and will have 40 plus rental units all under 400 sq ft. This project will be done under transfer of development rights. These units are designed to be more affordable for the rental community

D. Hamann was made aware of group of people going around to town and city halls filming. There is no illegal activity occurring but municipal officials should be aware that this is happening in region.

M. Bobinsky submitted comments via the chat box that the City of Somersworth recently joined 6 other communities in filing a complaint with the PUC against Consolidated Communications regarding dual poles. They also submitted a Hazardous Mitigation Grant to NH DES and HSEM for a preliminary engineering grant to redesign the Salmon Falls Road. This will protect from flood conditions and will look at future elevations to prevent damages. The \$150,000 grant is in review and the city will not learn if it is approved until later in the summer or fall.

Additionally, the State DOT, in collaboration with NH DES-HSEM, is wanting DPW agencies to populate staffing resource data on a weekly basis to reflect staffing levels impacted by COVID. This is mostly to track how cities and towns are doing with impacts on winter operations and to allow neighboring communities to be aware of staffing issues for possible mutual aid.

#### **6. Other Business**

No other business was conducted.

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 citizens were present to provide input.

#### **8. Adjournment**

M. Bobinsky made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by M. Williams

Vote: unanimous in favor

The meeting was adjourned at 10:18 am