

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization

Policy Committee

Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 21st 2021

9:00 – 11:00 AM

Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Rochester, NH

The meeting was called to order at 9:05am

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

The chair of the Strafford MPO Policy 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 2021-04, 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.
- *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 603-948-9483 or email at: clentz@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

Peter Nelson (Newmarket), Mark Richardson (Somersworth), Joe Boudreau (Rochester), Barb Holstein (Rochester), Michael Williams (COAST), Glenn Davison (NHDOT), Jessica Wilcox (NHDES), Dave Landry (Dover), Wayne Burton (Durham), Mike Bobinsky (Somersworth), Don Hamann (Rochester)

Guests

Julian Long (Rochester),

Staff

Rachel Dewey, Zuzanna Duffy, Mark Davies, Natalie Moles, Nancy O'Connor, Alaina Rogers, Jen Czysz, Colin Lentz

2. **Staff Communications**

C. Lentz noted that Mark Davies and Zuzanna (“Zuzy”) Duffy had recently joined the SRPC team for the summer to help set traffic counts, conduct other data collection efforts, and work with staff on existing projects. He said Stef Casella had recently accepted a position with the planning department in the City of Portsmouth, and wished her well.

J. Czysz reminded commissioners that Shayna had requested volunteers to serve as alternates on the SRPC Executive Committee.

3. **Public Hearing** – Draft 2021-2045 metropolitan Transportation Plan

M. Bobinsky made a motion to open the public hearing,

Seconded by D. Hamann

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

C. Lentz made a presentation on the draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Metro Plan). It included a description of the full reorganization of the plan, condensed discussion of regional planning “themes”, updated performance measures, expanded implementation chapter, new approach to fiscal constraint, and the new regional data snapshot which contained relevant data and metrics. C. Lentz also reviewed public comments and requested edits and additions he had received to-date.

D. Landry asked for details about the graph on page 80 that shows programmed funding for projects out to 2045 and predicted available funding. C. Lentz said the very expensive projects are programmed far into the future because they will be complex and require additional funding. He noted that there is room to program projects in the early out years. The ultimate goal is to have a wide variety of projects in the Metro Plan that are ready for future funding opportunities. Just because a project is listed in year 2035 in the Metro Plan, that doesn’t mean that we have to wait till 2035 to fund and construct it.

D. Landry said there was a lot of useful information in the Metro Plan and it would be great to have some concise talking points for commissioners to take back to local boards for discussion. C. Lentz agreed and said he would work to develop something like that, including the project development

process. He noted that SRPC had recently contracted with VHB for engineering services to develop planning level scopes and cost estimates for prospective projects from municipalities.

P. Nelson suggested that there be an online resource to view what projects are programmed in each year, ideally on a data-driven webpage. He asked about the possibility of adding goals and strategies specific to revenue generation. C. Lentz thanked P. Nelson for the question and said there were currently barriers to a fully data-driven website as described, but SRPC is working on improvements to make documents like the Metro Plan less static.

M. Bobinsky asked about the process for submitting prospective projects and requesting additional traffic counts. C. Lentz said traffic count requests could be made to Stephen Geis and said prospective projects could be proposed and discussed with SRPC and VHB. They had already had discussions with Wakefield to develop a range of projects along the local section of NH16.

D. Hamann made a motion to close the public hearing,

Seconded by M. Bobinsky

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

4. **Action Items**

4.1 Minutes from April 16th 2021

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

Seconded by M. Richardson

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

4.2 Approve the Draft 2021-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

D. Hamann made a motion to approve the draft Metro Plan

Seconded by D. Landry

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

5. **Discussion Items**

5.1 Update Regional Planning Priorities for Ten Year Plan and legislative process

C. Lentz explained that the RPC project prioritization phase of the Ten Year Plan development process was wrapping up soon and the next phase would be review and deliberation by members of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT). This is an opportunity to communicate with them and advocate for regional planning priorities. C. Lentz reminded members of the regional priorities from the 2019 Ten Year Plan round in their packet. Those priorities were used to advocate at GACIT meetings and legislative hearings. He asked members for their input on edits and updates on the planning priorities to be used for the upcoming Ten Year Plan round. He referenced the goals in the Metro Plan which was just approved.

P. Nelson asked about goals in the Metro Plan for new and increased revenue generation to pay for projects and infrastructure maintenance. C. Lentz said the revenue generation had been left as implicit, rather than specific goals. Such as advocating for increased state and federal funding to increase frequency of public transit routes. C. Lentz said he thought was P. Nelson was describing was more on the strategy level and there would be opportunities in the future to update or add

Metro Plan goals. J. Czynsz reiterated that the question was on priorities for the Ten Year Plan process, which focuses on a specific range of existing financial resources. The legislative process presented a better opportunity to advocate for new revenue generation approaches.

C. Lentz noted that COVID-19 has meant dramatic changes in a single year. What issues related to COVID-19 did the Policy board wish to communicate to GACIT? This is an opportunity to turn the Metro Plan goals into funding priorities through the Ten Year Plan.

W. Burton said that reduction of transportation emissions should be a primary goal of the Metro Plan. J. Czynsz explained that SRPC would be working on a major climate sustainability and adaptation effort in the coming months. She said the current conversation was really getting back to big picture discussions that form the basis for the Metro Plan. The focus should be on issues to advocate to GACIT and legislators on behalf of the region.

C. Lentz said he would rework the materials to refocus the discussion.

6. Project Updates

C. Lentz said SRPC was working with VHB to develop a new project database and implement the travel demand model. SRPC was also finishing up a study on the economic impacts of public transit in the region that would be published at the end of June.

J. Czynsz reminded members that the SRPC annual meeting was coming up on June 24th and would be a live online webinar/workshop. The focus is on project implementation post-pandemic. The business portion of the annual meeting will be taken care of at an up-coming Policy meeting.

7. Commissioner Roundtable

D. Hamann noted that the underground utilities work was commencing on the Strafford Square roundabout project in Rochester.

P. Nelson noted that he had been working on a data collection website based on NHDOT's project database. He said he would be demonstrating the model in the near future.

M. Bobinsky said Somersworth would be submitting project proposals to Senator Shaheen and Representative Pappas for their consideration for potential earmarks in future transportation funding.

8. Adjournment

M. Bobinsky made a motion to adjourne

Seconded by D. Hamann

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30am