

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

Friday, January 4th 2019 9:00 – 10:30 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 December 7th 2018 [VOTE]
- 4. Discussion Items**
 - 4.1. Safety Performance Targets for 2020
 - 4.2. Ten Year Plan project scoring process
- 5. Project Updates**
 - 5.1. Travel Demand Model
 - 5.2. Decision-maker communications
 - 5.3. TIP approval process
- 6. Other Business**
- 7. Citizen's Forum** – Citizens of the Strafford region are invited to speak on the subject matter of the meeting. Statements shall be limited to three minutes
- 8. 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
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Conference Room 1A
Rochester, NH 03867**

Meeting Minutes

**Friday, Dec. 7, 2018
9 – 11 a.m.**

The meeting was called to order with a quorum at 9:04 a.m.

1. Introductions

Committee Members Present: Michael Bobinsky (Somersworth), Linda Dusenberry (NHDOT), Marcia Gasses (Barrington), Michael Hoffman (Newmarket), Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), Scott Kinmond (New Durham), Chris Parker (Dover), Steve Pesci (UNH), Dianne Smith (Brookfield), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Michael Williams (COAST)

Staff Members Present: Jennifer Czysz (executive director), Colin Lentz (senior transportation planner), Rachel Dewey (planner)

2. Staff Communications

J. Czysz and C. Lentz described the previous night's SRPC Commission meeting, which focused on mobility and accessibility in downtown areas for seniors and people with disabilities.

3. Action Item(s)

3.1. Minutes from Nov. 2, 2018 [VOTE]

C. Parker moved to approve the minutes from Nov. 2
Seconded by J. Hotchkiss
Vote: unanimous in favor

3.2. Annual Listing of Obligated Projects

S. Pesci said it is important to remember that even if funds are reported as "obligated" to a project, it does not necessarily mean that the project is moving forward. He emphasized the need for members to do everything possible to help municipally managed projects move forward in a timely manner. This is extremely important due to the upcoming end of the FAST Act in 2020.

M. Bobinsky asked for details on funding for a transportation demand management program. C. Lentz explained that the funding supported Seacoast CommuteSMART, which promoted alternative transportation modes (such as public transit, biking, walking, and carpooling) in the seacoast. He added that the program was also funded through the turnpike expansion project at Newington-Dover to mitigate congestion during construction.

D. Smith asked if it would be possible to review the state of project funding obligations in July 2019 as a way of tracking project progress because of the possible rescission of federal dollars at the end of the

FAST Act in 2020. C. Parker suggested the need to also work with the state's congressional delegation to avoid a rescission and ensure that a replacement transportation authorization bill is developed.

C. Parker moved to accept the 2018 Annual Listing of Obligated projects

Seconded by M. Bobinsky

Vote: unanimous in favor

4. Discussion Items

4.1. Draft Ten Year Plan project ranking

C. Lentz reviewed the process for submitting candidate Ten Year Plan projects. He presented a list of candidate projects that had been selected by the project development sub-committee. He explained that TAC members had weighted the project scoring criteria and he had used their weightings to generate a preliminary ranking of the candidate projects. C. Lentz asked for the TAC's review and approval of the candidate list in order to get the projects to NHDOT for scoping review and cost estimates. The full TAC will have another opportunity prior to the May 1 deadline to review the projects and rank them using the weighted scoring criteria. C. Lentz said he will compile information (such as location, traffic volume, crash history, etc.) for each project to be submitted.

S. Pesci emphasized the need for a very rough cost estimate for each project that NHDOT could refine or verify. C. Lentz agreed and said he would work with project sponsors to refine project cost estimates.

J. Czysz said that projects on the list may need to be given different priority because NHDOT cannot develop estimates for projects beyond the region's theoretical highway funding allocation.

S. Pesci asked that several requests be included with the Ten Year Plan project list that would not compete with the highway funded projects:

- Transit fleet replacement due to UNH's reliance on grants for capital replacement.
- Investment in the Boston-Maine rail corridor
 - Specific need for improvements to highway/rail grade crossings.
- Confirming the need for intersection improvements at Madbury Road and NH 155 in Madbury (the need for acceleration of this project).
- Confirming the need for safety improvements at the intersection of Madbury Road and US 4 in Durham.

C. Lentz said he would include those projects and priorities with the new candidate projects.

M. Bobinsky asked what decision was needed from the TAC regarding the list. C. Lentz said the list would need to be reduced to a refined set of priorities.

S. Pesci suggested removing several projects from consideration in order to refine the list:

- #6 – a park and ride lot in Milton.
- #7 – a park and ride lot in New Durham.
- #11 – Dover soundwalls (to be included in a separate list).

S. Pesci said project #5 (Northwood US 4 turning lane) needed to be much more carefully defined before it could be included on the candidate list.

M. Gasses asked about the Dover soundwall project at Exit 7 off the Spaulding Turnpike. This came up in discussion of potential funding sources for the project. Local CIP funds have been programmed for the project, which is a prerequisite for one of the potential funding sources.

C. Lentz explained that the project would not affect highway funding for other projects, but it needed to be included in the Ten Year Plan to be eligible for the Type II soundwalls program.

M. Williams emphasized the need for future Ten Year Plan rounds to consider park and rides on sections of the highway network already at capacity for traffic. Members discussed possible locations for future park and ride lots along major corridors.

C. Lentz asked for confirmation of the list of candidate projects. Members discussed the list of projects and agreed that the list submitted to NHDOT should include the following projects:

Rochester	Intersection sequence of Charles St/NH 125 (Columbus Ave)/Old Dover Rd
Dover	130/099 NH Route 108 over Bellamy
Somersworth	W. High Street –south side: (Cemetery Road to High Street) High Street –west side: (High Street to Memorial Drive)
Dover	Chestnut St
Northwood	School St (107) & US 4/US 202 Intersection
Dover	Oak St bridge over RR
Rochester	NH125/Columbus Ave. bridge over Cocheco

The Dover soundwalls project was included in a list separate from the highway-funded Ten Year Plan projects.

5. Project Updates

5.1. Travel Demand Model

C. Lentz said that, because of a recent court ruling on a case that started in California, New Hampshire's MPOs would not be required to prove that they are in compliance with the 1997 air quality standards. The MPOs had been updating their models to conduct air quality analyses that would be required before the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) could be updated. C. Lentz said staffers were continuing to update the travel demand model so it could be used as a planning tool in the near future.

5.2. Decision maker communications

C. Lentz said he will generate draft language for a resolution emphasizing the need for communication on the impact of the rescission of federal dollars at the end of the FAST Act in 2020. The committee discussed the importance of having close relationships with congressional and state representatives. C. Lentz will pay attention to state legislature committee assignments so there may be direct communications about transportation-related issues. SRPC will also monitor U.S. Rep.-elect Chris Pappas' committee assignments in order to establish contact regarding transportation issues.

6. Other Business

S. Pesci asked the status of this year’s traffic count data collection and when last year’s data may be available on the NHDOT web database. R. Dewey responded that all but two 2018 count assignments were completed; two counts were rejected. She added that all of the 2017 counts should be on the MS2 site, but she will check in with NHDOT staff to confirm.

M. Gasses asked when SRPC would begin taking additional traffic count location requests from the towns. R. Dewey responded that supplemental traffic count location requests can be taken at any time. Stefanie Casella, data collection and analysis assistant, will receive NHDOT data collection assignments in early 2019 and will send letters to all towns noting the assigned locations and asking whether they want to add locations to the list. Traffic data collection will resume when the last snow melts in the spring.

M. Williams reminded members that COAST is conducting a comprehensive operations analysis to plan for future improvements to the COAST transit network. He said there is a survey out and encouraged members to fill it out. The survey is available on the COAST website under the “Our Future” tab.

7. Citizen’s Forum – Citizens of the Strafford region are invited to speak on the subject matter of the meeting. Statements shall be limited to three minutes

No citizens brought forward comments at the meeting

8. Adjournment

J. Hotchkiss moved to adjourn
Seconded by M. Hoffman
The meeting adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

Approved by
Name Printed: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Regional Transportation Priority Communication

Major takeaways from NHDOT presentation

1. Ten Year Plan (TYP) constraint & delivery of projects hinges on federal program
2. Federal Highway Trust Fund & State Highway Fund are insolvent without infusion of funding or reduction in spending (cuts in projects & reduction in level of service)
3. Road & Bridge conditions are projected to decline based on current levels of investment in TYP (particularly on Tier 3 & 4 network)
4. Toll Proposal (Nov 2017) offers many benefits statewide beyond the Turnpike System

Requested RPC Action Items

To help guide the Department & TYP process and confirm regional priorities, NHDOT requested RPCs & MPOs review the following and determine their position with letters and/or policy statements regarding:

1. Importance of Congress addressing issues associated with the Highway Trust Fund and need for more federal funding for transportation
2. Need for increased revenue in the State Highway Fund for increased investment in the state's infrastructure
3. Need for a toll increase
4. Need for restoration of general funds for rural public transit operating costs

Regional Priorities

Resolution Adopted - (for discussion & consideration)

The policy committee, as the recognized governing body of the 18 municipalities comprising the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization (designated by federal law) and the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (designated by state law), makes the following resolutions related to transportation needs and goals:

- 1) Development of the New Hampshire transportation network should be focused on moving people, not just cars.
 - a. State transportation policy should support the development of a multimodal network and include funding support to accomplish this work
- 2) New Hampshire needs to find more ways to increase the sustainability of transportation funding
 - a. New Hampshire needs a range of funding options and revenue models. In-depth discussion about options for generating revenues for transportation improvement should include state agency staff, regional planning commissions, and other stakeholders
 - b. Due to increased vehicle fuel efficiency, gas taxes are not an effective revenue generator. New policy and revenue generation should not discourage the continued adoption of more fuel-efficient vehicles and alternative fuel technology. However, an alternative user-fee based approach could be considered to generate adequate funds for infrastructure maintenance and ensure an equitable cost. Several states have investigated a vehicle miles traveled (VMT) model that assess a fee based on actual mileage driven on highways.

- c. The FAST Act will expire on September 30th 2020 and a replacement is vital for continued health and development of the transportation system. A new transportation authorization bill should reexamine federal funding formulas to provide a more equitable apportionment of federal transportation improvement funding to states (New Hampshire currently receives the lowest amount of federal highway dollars).
 - d. New Hampshire needs to provide more matching funds for federal dollars. Turnpike toll credits are currently used in place of a 20% match. They should be used in specific instances to support projects, but purchasing power of federal dollars is decreased without state match.
 - e. An increase in toll rates is necessary to keep up with maintenance and operations costs on the turnpike. Expansion of the turnpike sections of Interstate 93 to Concord should be approved to enable federal funds to be invested in other projects. Expansion of the turnpike should be matched with additional toll collection as appropriate.
 - f. Through SB 38 in 2017, additional block grant funds were distributed to municipalities for additional transportation infrastructure investment. This was an important resource for communities with aging infrastructure and rising operations and maintenance costs.
 - g. SB 367 in 2014 is a good example of strategic investment of state revenue because it leveraged a loan through the Transportation Infrastructure Finance Innovation Act (TIFIA) that is paying for the repair of roads and bridges in poor condition.
- 3) State support for public transit service is inadequate to meet the needs of rural and urban residents.
- a. Statewide, the age-65 and older population is growing and New Hampshire seniors are better able to age-in-place if they have responsive, accessible transportation options.
 - b. The towns and cities of the Strafford region are focusing on downtown revitalization and city staff are hearing from business-owners and residents that public transportation is critical for economic development.
 - c. The cost of maintenance and operation of public highway infrastructure is increasing; incentivizing public transit adoption is an important method for reducing congestion and wear and tear on the highway network.
- 4) Passenger rail continues to be a missed opportunity for New Hampshire. Passenger/commuter rail development could lead to significant benefits for highway congestion reduction, access to jobs, and economic development at the local and regional level.
- a. Amtrak's Downeaster service has been growing steadily but is at-capacity. Passenger rail service is critical for enabling New Hampshire residents commuting to jobs in the Boston metro area.
 - b. Cities in the Strafford region (and greater seacoast) are planning for increased density as residents move to downtowns. In general, residents want to drive less and be closer to services. Much urban development is focused on bringing housing and services closer together around a multimodal transportation network (commonly called transit-oriented development).
- 5) New Hampshire needs a set of clear policies for addressing climate change to inform the work of NHDOT and other state agencies. This should include:
- a. *Mitigation* – reducing factors that contribute to the continued acceleration of impacts from climate change (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions).

- b. *Adaptation* - do state agencies have support to implement adaptation strategies that will increase resilience against impacts from climate change? (e.g. replacing undersized culverts with ones that are compatible with increased flooding and storm frequency).
 - c. *Disaster response and recovery* – climate change represents an increased risk to critical infrastructure. Do state agencies have the resources to prepare for and respond to impacts from climate change? NHDOT recently developed a Transportation Asset Management Plan that will require additional resources for implementation.
- 6) Transportation is a critical factor for broad economic development opportunities for New Hampshire. Demographic trends and emerging technologies should be considered for statewide economic development strategies (e.g. Amazon’s requirement for passenger rail access in their new headquarters RFP)

Upcoming Outreach Opportunities

January-April 2019

- Track appointments from SRPC communities to legislative committees
- Communicate with House & Senate finance and other transportation-related committee members during development of state budget (HB1 and SB1)

May-July 2019

- Regional TYP projects have been prioritized and submitted to NHDOT
- Meet with state Executive Councilors to discuss regional projects and priorities for the Ten Year Plan before they receive a draft from NHDOT

