

**Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Conference Room 1A
Rochester, NH 03867**

Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 1, 2019

9 – 11 a.m.

The meeting was called to order with a quorum at 9:12 a.m.

Introductions

Committee Members Present: James Campbell (Linda Dusenberry (NHDOT), Scott Kinmond (New Durham), Dianne Smith (Brookfield), Marcia Gasses (Barrington), Dianne Smith (Brookfield), Shanna Saunders (Somersworth), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Michael Williams (COAST), Gretchen Young (Dover)

Staff Members Present: Jennifer Czysz (Executive Director), Colin Lentz (Senior Transportation Planner), Rachel Dewey (Planner)

1. Staff Communications

2. Action Item(s)

2.1. Minutes from January 4th 2019 [VOTE]

D. Smith made a motion to accept the minutes as written

Seconded by S. Kinmond

Vote: Unanimous in favor (L. Dusenberry abstaining)

2.2. Safety Performance Targets for 2019

R. Dewey presented information on the setting of safety performance measures that is required for MPOs every February. She described the federal measures required for targets:

- Number of Fatalities
- Rate of Fatalities
- Number of Serious Injuries
- Rate of Serious Injuries
- Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Non-motorized Serious Injuries

R. Dewey explained that MPO staff were recommending that the TAC and Policy Committees adopt the targets set by NHDOT in June of 2018. She showed the state targets (table below) and noted that targets are based on a five-year rolling average. This is an incremental approach to improving safety on public highways. R. Dewey explained that New Hampshire's underlying goal is to have zero deaths on public highways so supporting the state target of 116 fatalities is not saying that 116 fatalities is acceptable. It is a benchmark by which to measure success. M. Gasses pointed out that after the state set targets in June, the number of fatal crashes had increased dramatically to end the year at 145. R. Dewey acknowledged this and noted that an unexpected number of crashes had occurred in the 2018 calendar

year. This will impact future target setting because year five had fewer fatal crashes but will be removed from the five-year rolling average, while the most recent year with 145 will be added. This will skew the curve up and dictate a rising target, rather than a lower one (which is a confusing message).

Statewide 2019 Safety Performance data and targets based on 5-year rolling average (2013-2017)					
Measure	2017 Value	Previous	Current	2019 Target	SRPC target: Not more than...
Number of Fatalities:	102	117.6	116.4	116.4	10% (15)
Rate of Fatalities:	0.746	0.900	.881	0.879	1.244
Number of Serious Injuries:	410	499.8	457.2	433.2	11% (46)
Rate of Serious Injuries:	3.567	3.847	3.462	3.207	5.323
Non-Motorized Fatalities and Non-motorized Serious Injuries:	54	56.4	53.4	53.4	14% (8)

R. Dewey highlighted the regional proportion of fatalities and injuries in the table. This is a regional benchmark to track how many of the total statewide fatalities and severe injuries happen in the Strafford region.

R. Dewey explained that a new statewide database is being implemented that would be a single source of crash data that state agencies would have access to. This will improve data access and reporting that support crash analysis and project development.

M. Williams observed that the trend in statewide crashes was surprisingly consistent – with a symmetrical wave pattern with alternating high and low crash years. Dewey noted that long-term trends in crashes are affected by the national economy – when economic downturns result in higher unemployment, there are fewer people driving.

M. Williams asked what the region’s proportion of statewide VMT is. R. Dewey displayed a separate spreadsheet that showed the region had a slightly higher rate of fatal and severe crashes compared to the state average. D. Smith asked if staff had analyzed why the rate was higher. R. Dewey responded that it wasn’t anything infrastructure related due to the randomness of crashes, but she would have to look into specific causes. Members discussed various causal effects of crashes. J. Czynski noted that Strafford County had the highest rate of hospital admissions due to substance abuse in NH [health and human services data].

M. Williams asked what the real impact of target setting was on decision-making, project development, and other MPO or state actions. C. Lentz responded that the critical factor will be laws such as the hands-free law, and enabling police to enforce laws. Performance targets are a valuable tool in engaging decision-makers and demonstrating the need for highway safety laws.

S. Kinmond suggested that it would be beneficial to separate crash data by specific causes. For example separate out the crashes that are related to infrastructure vs. the ones caused by human error. R. Dewey agreed but noted that such analyses were limited until the statewide database update was complete. M. Gassess asked how many police departments in the region had equipment like

computerized reporting that was compatible with the new statewide database and GPS units in cruisers. R. Dewey said some cities like Dover and Somersworth had equipment like GPS units, but their computerized systems if they have them may not be compatible with the state database.

S. Kinmond suggested that his experience was that crash reporting was one of the weakest areas for local police training, and a great opportunity for RPCs to engage law enforcement. R. Dewey said she had been in contact with local police departments about crash reporting.

R. Dewey provided information on motorcycle fatalities at the regional level. She noted that the graph looked drastic but that was because fatal motorcycle crashes varied between 0 and 3 per year in the Strafford region. She said the MPOs had included motorcycle fatalities as a supplemental measure. Members discussed the possible causes of motorcycle crashes in NH. R. Dewey noted that there were generally very few motorcycle crashes during NH Bike Week – most likely because there are so many motorcycles, drivers have higher visibility.

M. Gasses made a motion to recommend to the Policy Committee that Strafford MPO adopt and support the state safety targets.

Seconded by S. Kinmond

2.3. 2019-2022 Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and 2019-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

C. Lentz provide a presentation on the draft TIP, including new projects and completed projects, public transit funding, fiscal constraint, and what projects are associated with federal performance measures. He noted several improvements to the internal TIP management processes that were planned for the near future. These included implementing a new project database that would make regular project tracking more efficient, a process for tracking obligated funds throughout the year, and projecting what projects were next in the queue of the statewide Ten Year Plan.

D. Smith asked why turnpike projects were included in the TIP when turnpike funding was not included in fiscal constraint calculations and the turnpike did not use federal funding. C. Lentz explained that he included turnpike projects in the TIP because they are important for improving the regional network.

C. Lentz's presentation continued with updates to the Financial Chapter of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. When the TIP gets updated, new projects move into the TIP from the Ten Year Plan, and the out-years projects in the Metro Plan need to be updated. This impacts fiscal constraint in all three plans, so the TIP and financial chapter and project list of the Metro Plan must be updated concurrently. C. Lentz presented fiscal constraint information, including estimated funding for individual projects, public transit, and regional highway operations and maintenance. He identified several improvements to be made to the overall Metro Plan over the spring and summer: establishing specific goals and objectives that are tied to projects; more realistically tying projects to regional data, performance trends, and timeframes; utilize tools like the travel demand model; and ensuring projects have accurate scopes and cost estimates.

E. Strachan asked when the public comment period was ending; she needed to check the air quality language in the documents and may have comments in the future. C. Lentz said the comment period was ending on February 14th before the public hearing on the 15th (at the Policy Committee meeting).

M. Gasses made a motion to recommend the draft TIP and Metro Plan to the Policy Committee.

Seconded by S. Saunders.
Vote: Unanimous in favor

3. Discussion Items

3.1. Transportation Alternative Program – project scoring results

C. Lentz explained that NHDOT had released its scoring results for Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) project applications. He said he was surprised at the result because none of the projects submitted from the region was selected. NHDOT’s scoring process included the results of the process facilitated by the Regional Planning Commissions, but C. Lentz said he was not alone among the RPCs in feeling that the scoring process lacked transparency and the results lacked equity.

M. Gasses asked if one particular region benefitted over the others. C. Lentz responded that several regions did not receive any funding, while a majority of the funding went to a handful of regions (he couldn’t remember which ones off-hand). He noted that the regions that had fared well in the scoring had been very vocal about the lack of transparency and equity in the scoring process.

G. Young asked if there were data on the cost to municipalities for administering federally funded projects through the Local Public Agency process. Members discussed the complicated process and cost to communities in navigating the Local Public Agency process.

4. Project Updates

4.1. FHWA Connectivity pilot project – regional bicycle level of stress analysis

C. Lentz explained that he had started working on a project with five other RPCs and Plymouth State University to conduct a region-wide analysis of bicycle level-of-stress. Regional analyses will be incorporated into a model developed by Plymouth State University that will map level-of-stress and identify gaps in the transportation network for cyclists.

L. Strachan noted that the timing was good because a consultant was working on a Statewide Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan.

5. Other Business

L. Strachan noted that the state contract for municipal vehicles was recently released. Municipalities can apply for funding to replace a town/city-owned vehicle with alternative fuel or electric alternatives.

6. 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

7. Adjournment

J. Campbell moved to adjourn

Seconded by S. Saunders

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Approved by
Name Printed: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____