

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

**Meeting Minutes**

**Friday, May 3, 2019  
9 – 11 a.m.**

**1. Introductions**

Committee Members Present:

Michael Williams (COAST), Gretchen Young (Dover), Chris Parker (Dover), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Michael Hoffman (Newmarket) Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), Bruce Woodruff (Milton), Shanna Saunders (Somersworth),

Guests/Public Present:

Staff: Shayna Sylvia, Jennifer Czysz, Colin Lentz

A quorum was not present at the beginning of the meeting, so an informational session started at 9:08am. A quorum was achieved at 9:15; the committee finished discussing the main discussion item, then returned to the vote on the minutes.

**2. Staff Communications**

S. Sylvia said SRPC and other agencies and businesses in the seacoast had been participating in a CommuteSMART challenge specifically for the Seacoast. She explained that there was going to be a statewide CommuteSMART challenge for the month of June. The goal of the challenge is for municipalities (staff), agencies, and businesses to form teams and to encourage friendly competition between them to see who can complete the greatest number of commutes by a mode other than driving alone. Individuals and teams get credit for biking, walking, taking public transit, carpooling, telecommuting, and several others. S. Sylvia said each RPC was trying to get 10 businesses in their region to participate.

**3. Action Item(s)**

**3.1 Minutes from April 5<sup>th</sup> 2019**

C. Parker made a motion to accept the minutes as written

Seconded by J. Hotchkiss

Vote: unanimous in favor

**4. Discussion Items**

**4.1 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Development**

C. Lentz presented a draft outline of the future updated Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Metro Plan). He reviewed a list of planning themes that could serve as chapters in the plan and asked for input on the proposed themes to ensure they would cover the full range of topics that

were important for regional transportation planning. The proposed overall structure includes three primary sections: 1) an overview introduction chapter that describes the role of the Metro Plan and presents baseline federal requirements; 2) an overview of the region with broad-scope issues and the results from public engagement efforts; and 3) a set of regional themes that each act as their own “chapter” and include:

- A Data profile (infographic data digest and analysis)
- SRPC goals and objectives (build off FHWA goals and Policy “resolutions”)
- Performance measures and targets
- Specific discussion of policy and laws affecting transportation issues
- Actions (both in the form of projects and policy initiatives)

The Metro Plan would also include the full list of future infrastructure projects and fiscal constraint analysis for expected available funding.

C. Lentz noted that Nancy O’Connor was developing a general survey to gather public input from the region, and later in the summer SRPC would be organizing local focus groups with municipal staff. He reviewed a proposed set of planning themes:

- Demographics & Network Travel
  - Employment
  - Housing
  - Identify network gaps between key origins and destinations
  - Potential CMAQ projects? (focus on improving network connectivity, not just reducing congestion)
- Overall System Performance
  - Traffic volume and congestion trends
    - Peak travel flow and seasonal fluctuations
  - Bicycle network analysis
  - Walkability measures
  - Federal Performance Measures
- Safety
  - Analysis of regional crash “hotspots”
  - Examples from crash modification factors clearinghouse (effectiveness + cost/benefit)
  - Discussion of key factors in safety (infrastructure improvements + policy changes for countermeasures)
  - Federal performance measures
- (Intra)Regional Public transit
  - COAST and UNH Wildcat route planning and coordination
  - UNH Wildcat
  - Local & regional economic return on investment
  - Aging population and access to services
  - Federal performance measures
- Infrastructure Condition
  - Pavement and bridge conditions
  - Coordination with NHDOT maintenance districts
    - Paving and maintenance schedules (coordinate potential projects)

- Emphasize maintain existing infrastructure, no new infrastructure
  - Federal performance measures
- Climate Change Impacts (mitigation, adaptation, and recovery preparedness)
  - Increased storms and flooding
  - Sea level Rise
  - Extreme heat impacts on infrastructure
  - Use travel demand model to model infrastructure damage scenarios
- Environmental Impacts
  - Natural resources and services
  - Contamination of storm water
  - Review by NHDOT Natural resource bureau
- Economic Competitiveness
  - Regional Multimodal Network Development
    - Amtrak
    - C&J
  - Freight
  - Tourism
  - Interregional port and airport connections
- Community Vitality
  - Downtowns
  - Bicycle & Pedestrian improvements
  - Complete Streets
- Transportation Technology
  - NH Transportation System Operations and Maintenance (TSMO)
  - ITS applications
  - EV charging
  - Automated and connected vehicles

J. Czysz noted that several topics were recently discussed by the staff, including incorporating climate change and environmental impacts, whether to have subjects like complete streets on their own or combined under overarching themes.

M. Williams said he appreciated that the list of topics had public transit as an individual topic, rather than being grouped under a “multi-modal” section. He asked if the survey under development included questions about public transit. C. Lentz confirmed that it did, and said they had designed it with broad questions that wouldn’t duplicate questions that had been asked by COAST in their recent public outreach. J. Czysz asked if any members would be willing to test the draft survey once it’s in a final draft. M. Williams and E. Strachan said they would review the draft survey. C. Lentz added that SRPC had a years’ subscription to Survey Monkey that enabled them to use survey response analytics.

C. Lentz summarized by saying that the Metro Plan was ultimately a tool for ensuring wise investment of federal transportation funding for projects in the region. He said he would be working with the TAC over the course of the Metro Plan to improve the project development and selection process.

M. Hoffman asked for clarification about the transportation planning factors. C. Lentz explained that they were from the federal enabling legislation that established the framework for the role of MPOs. M. Hoffman noted that one of the planning factors referenced increasing global competitiveness and questioned whether that was a realistic goal for the Strafford region. C. Lentz acknowledged this and noted that most of the individual projects currently in the Metro Plan were exclusively within the region. He noted that the Metro Plan couldn't include projects within ports and airports but could discuss projects that improve access and connectivity to the Pease Tradeport, the Port of NH, and Skyhaven airport. Inter-regional projects would have to be collaborative with Rockingham RPC. C. Lentz added that transportation played a major role in employment access and economic development at the regional scale. M. Hoffman also asked about transportation impacts on natural resources and the environment. C. Lentz responded that economic development and environmental impacts were originally separate criteria in the Ten Year Plan project scoring methodology. He said they were removed because of the difficulty with objectively quantifying those issues for individual projects. He hoped to work with the TAC to incorporate issues like economic benefits and environmental impacts into a regional project development process. B. Woodruff said that would require closer examination of municipal master plans and what goals they included for transportation improvements. He emphasized the need to promote and improve consistency in transportation improvements between state and local goals for economic development patterns [also referenced in the federal planning factors]. B. Woodruff noted that this should be a greater focus for smaller, rural communities in the Strafford region. C. Lentz noted that he had considered merging several individual topics into a "Community Vitality" theme/chapter that included issues like complete streets and focused on the linkage between transportation and economic development. He referenced a project in Somersworth that combined downtown streetscape improvements and local tax incentives to revitalize vacant storefronts.

C. Lentz said improvements to the project development process would require establishing resources for developing accurate cost estimates for infrastructure projects. He suggested that if each municipality could identify their top three projects, he could then work with them to develop those projects with scopes and cost estimates so they were ready for future funding availability. J. Czysz said SRPC would need help from municipalities with filling out project sheets that would include scopes and cost estimates. The cost estimate can be a range because of the uncertainty of future funding, but the Metro Plan would have to be constrained to the higher number in each range.

## **5. Other Business**

C. Lentz noted that NHDOT had opened a new round of CMAQ funding. \$13 million is available for new projects and proposals require a 20% match of local funding. Potential projects include proposals to reduce congestion and vehicle emission reductions, transit vehicle replacement, etc. He said letters of interest are due to NHDOT by June 7<sup>th</sup>; they are mandatory for all potential applicants along with a mandatory meeting to be scheduled in June. Full applications are due September 6<sup>th</sup>. C. Lentz said SRPC would be conducting air quality analysis for all projects proposed in the region. J. Czysz said if anyone had any specific questions about the CMAQ round they could send them to her because she would be meeting with Tom Jameson [who administers the CMAQ program] next week.

C. Lentz said FHWA had also announced the availability of funding for projects under the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) program. The program is for surface transportation improvement projects and requires a 20% match of local funds. He noted that the BUILD program replaced TIGER grants but placed a greater emphasis on rural projects. Under the BUILD program the minimum project cost for BUILD proposals in urban areas is \$5 million, but is only \$1 million in "rural" areas. any community in an urbanized area with a population below 200,000 is considered rural, so all the Strafford region qualifies as rural. C. Lentz said the application deadline was July 15<sup>th</sup>.

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 items forward to the committee.

## 7. **Adjournment**

C. Parker made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by J. Hotchkiss

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10am

Minutes approved by

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