

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

Meeting Minutes

**Friday, August 2nd, 2019
9 – 11 a.m.**

1. Introductions

Municipalities:

Scott Kinmond (New Durham), Michael Williams (COAST), Bruce Woodruff (Milton), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Michael Hoffman (Newmarket), Marcia Gasses (Barrington), Kelley Collins (Wakefield), Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Shanna Saunders (Somersworth)

Staff:

Colin Lentz, Jennifer Czysz, Gordon Lewis, Stephen Geis, Marcia Moreno-Baez, Stef Casella

Nick faucet (guest)

2. Staff Communications

3. Action Item(s)

3.1. Minutes from June 7th 2019 (no July meeting)

K. Collins moved to accept the minutes

J. Hotchkiss seconded the motion but asked for a correction: the second paragraph, second line was "inter" but should be "intern".

Vote: unanimous in favor with the correction.

3.2. Officer Elections

C. Lentz explained that officer elections were held at the first TAC meeting after the start of the new fiscal year (per the bylaws). He said Jon Hotchkiss and Michael Williams had volunteered to continue as officers but switch roles (Michael currently the chair, and Jon the Vice chair). He thanked them for their service and for volunteering to continue. He said the floor was also open for additional nominations.

No other nominations were made.

B. Woodruff made a motion to approve the slate of candidates; with Jon Hotchkiss as Chair and Michael Williams as Vice Chair). S. Saunders seconded the motion.

Vote: Unanimous in favor

4. Discussion Items

4.1. Regional Population Data snapshot for the 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

C. Lentz explained that Gordon Lewis and Stephen Geis had been working on data collection efforts during the spring and summer but had also helped with various ongoing projects in the office. Stephen had been working with GIS staff on several mapping and analysis projects; Gordon had been helping with literature review for an FTA grant to study public transit in the seacoast and compiling demographic data for the Metro Plan. C. Lentz noted that they would be leaving at the end of August to continue UNH undergrad programs and he wanted to give them an opportunity to present some of their work to the TAC.

C. Lentz introduced the Metro Plan data analysis saying they were hoping for feedback on the data that were used, whether the analysis was visualized effectively, and if there were any other questions the TAC wished to answer with demographic data. He specified that the demographic data were important for setting the context in the Metro Plan to ask core planning questions for establishing goals and objectives in the future. G. Lewis provided a presentation of the demographic data he had compiled and analyzed. He noted that the analysis used data from the Census (decennial and American Community Survey) and NH Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI). The ACS data have a fairly high margin of error since they are a sample, compared to the decennial census which is essentially a full count of the U.S. population. OSI develops estimates of population growth based on census data. G. Lewis presented a range of graphs portraying analyses of the data:

- Total population change in the Strafford region (and for each municipality) between 2000 and 2010
- Annual population change estimates starting in 2009
- Regional and municipal growth estimates in specific age groups – “school age” (0-19), “working age” (20-54), and “retiree/seniors” (55+)
- Growth estimates by town organized by urban, suburban, and rural

G. Lewis pointed out that OSI data were organized by county and weren't granular enough to allow him to incorporate the other SRPC towns in Carrol and Rockingham counties. He noted that several communities had been selected for pilot analysis. For instance, Wakefield had a relatively low margin of error for ACS data. M. Gasses said Barrington had seen their school age population peak in 2006, then level off. She noted that the census/ACS data only started in 2010/2009. C. Lentz said this was just a first cut of data and could be supplemented with local data and additional analysis. Unfortunately, the 2020 census data will not come out for at least of couple of years.

C. Lentz noted that he and G. Lewis had been discussing anecdotal observations and seeing some reflection of those observations in the data. For instance, he had observed a dramatic change in downtown Dover since he had moved to the seacoast in 2010 to the present. Anecdotally, he observed an increase in the overall number of people downtown and the number of young families in that time.

S. Saunders asked if it was possible to demonstrate the reasons for population changes (e.g. migration between towns vs. aging out of one age group to the next vs. birth/death rates). G. Lewis said they hadn't figured out how to do that yet and would have to investigate that further with a deeper dive into the data. S. Saunders agreed, noting that it would be good to be able to

show how many “baby-boomers” were moving into the retiree group vs. new retirees moving to the region. J. Czysz added that it would be possible to calculate the change in age group from each decennial census and use that to find the amount of in-migration, but it would have to wait until the 2020 census data came out.

G. Lewis noted that Durham was an interesting case for analysis because of the UNH student population and recent developments like the Riverwoods retirement community. G. Lewis said understanding the senior population was a critical factor in asking transportation questions and setting goals. He noted that he had a friend from UNH who graduated and chose to live in Durham but commute to a job in Boston on Amtrak, so there may be specific cases where more people are choosing the lower cost of living in NH and work in Boston or northern MA.

C. Lentz said they would continue to get more detail out of the available data and analysis in the coming months.

5. Project Updates

5.1. Statewide Level of Traffic Stress Analysis

C. Lentz provided a brief update on the project to analyze level of traffic stress on roads throughout the state. He explained that the project used four levels of “traffic stress” to categorize different riders and assess whether they would be comfortable on a given segment of road. A level-one rider could be defined as a first-time rider or a family with children (who are only going to be comfortable on a bicycle path that is completely separated from traffic. A level-four rider is extremely confident about riding in traffic with potentially high volumes and speeds. Several RPCs are working with staff from Plymouth State University to refine a model that looks at multiple road characteristics to assign it a level of stress. For instance, a road with very narrow shoulders and high traffic volumes and speeds is likely to be suitable only for level four riders; a slow-speed urban street could be a level two or three; and a separated bike path could be a level one. C. Lentz said the model will be used to assign a stress level for each segment of road in the region, then the regional analyses will be joined up for a statewide picture. He noted that the project group and the MPO committees would have to discuss several questions regarding how to use the model. For instance, is it more valuable for bicycle improvements to focus on the roads that connect the greatest number of people to important destinations such as schools? Or should the focus be on the whole network (e.g. work on getting all level three roads to be level 2)?

5.2. Pathways to Play Data & Outreach

S. Geis gave a presentation on SRPC’s “Pathways to Play” project funded by the NH Children’s Health Foundation. The project focuses on children and families, reducing obesity, and increasing access to parks and other recreational areas in the region. S. Geis explained that staff used databases such as GRANIT to identify local recreational sites, then sent draft maps and data to municipal staff and officials to provide any input or corrections. The analysis included a range of recreation site types. S. Geis displayed an example of mapping analysis from Dover that showed where recreation sites were located, how many amenities each site had, and the distance between individual sites. SRPC then worked with the city of Somersworth for more focused analysis. The city focused on three different parks in the city that were underutilized. SRPC made an online survey, conducted direct outreach with visitors at the parks and at

Somersworth's National Night Out. S. Geis noted that many people reported driving to parks in town. He said SRPC had engaged children by bringing drawing sheets with the outline of the park which children could use to design their ideal park.

M. Williams asked what stage the project was at and if there were going to be a set of recommendations that could be reviewed prior to publication. S. Geis said Somersworth was the pilot community and hopefully the process could be repeated in other communities. He said SRPC staff would be generating a set of recommendations for Somersworth and they would be happy to provide a draft.

L. Levine asked if the recreation inventory and analysis could be used to inform future TAP project development and ranking. C. Lentz said he had not been directly involved in the Pathways to Play project, but it sounded like great analysis for identifying TAP projects. M. Moreno Baez said hopefully other data sources and analyses (such as bicycle level of traffic stress) to strengthen project development and technical assistance tools.

5.3. GACIT outreach process

C. Lentz explained that the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) would be holding their meetings on the Statewide Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan soon. He said they would get their first look at NHDOT's draft plan on August 14th and there were planned public meetings in the region: September 10th at 6:00pm in Dover; and October 2nd at 6:00pm in Rochester. C. Lentz noted that NHDOT would be developing a survey on behalf of GACIT to gather more public input during their phase of the Ten Year Plan development process.

5.4. CMAQ projects

C. Lentz said there were currently four agencies and municipalities that had proposed projects for the current CMAQ round: COAST, UNH Wildcat, Rochester, and the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA). He briefly described the projects and said full applications were due on September 6th. He had already begun working on the air quality analysis that he would need to complete in order for NHDOT to score projects so GACIT could incorporate the proposed projects into the Ten Year Plan by the end of December.

6. Other Business

B. Woodruff described his process for developing an application for a federal BUILD grant for the town of Milton. He said the proposed project incorporated several improvements in the vicinity of the town center for traffic safety, pedestrian access, and stormwater treatment. He asked if SRPC would be willing to provide a letter of support in the future for the project. C. Lentz said they would definitely write a letter of support.

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 comments before the committee.

8. Adjournment

J. Hotchkiss made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by M. Williams

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00am

Minutes approved by

Print Jonathan B. Hotchkiss

Signed J. B. Hotchkiss Date 6 SEP 2019

