

BARRINGTON  
BROOKFIELD  
DOVER  
DURHAM  
FARMINGTON  
LEE  
MADBURY  
MIDDLETON  
MILTON



NEW DURHAM  
NEWMARKET  
NORTHWOOD  
NOTTINGHAM  
ROCHESTER  
ROLLINSFORD  
SOMERSWORTH  
STRAFFORD  
WAKEFIELD

## Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

**Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup> 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 September 6<sup>th</sup> 2019
- 4. Discussion Items**
  - 4.1. CMAQ projects – review of technical analysis and assumptions
  - 4.2. Examining the role of TAC and improving technical analysis
- 5. Project Updates**
- 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](mailto: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, September 6<sup>th</sup> 2019  
9 – 11 a.m.**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05

**1. Introductions**

Municipalities:

Scott Kinmond (New Durham), Michael Williams (COAST), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Michael Hoffman (Newmarket), Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Shanna Saunders (Somersworth), Christopher Parker (Dover), Dirk Timmons (UNH Wildcat)

Staff: Colin Lentz, Jennifer Czysz, Rachel Dewey

**2. Staff Communications**

C. Lentz explained that Gordon Lewis and Stephen Geis had completed their time as SRPC data collection interns. In addition to data collection (such as traffic counts and sidewalk assessments) they were both instrumental in several ongoing planning efforts. He added that Stephen will be continuing with SRPC on a part-time basis as he continues his undergrad program at UNH.

C. Lentz said Marcia Moreno Baez had resigned as SRPC's GIS planner to take a position at University of New England, but her replacement – Jackson Rand – would be starting in the next couple of weeks.

C. Lentz reminded members that he would be presenting at GACIT hearings in Dover and Rochester. Dover's hearing will be at the McConnell Center on Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup> and Rochester's will be at the Frisbee Memorial Conference Center on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Both meetings will be starting at 6:00pm. C. Lentz said his and NHDOT's presentations would be significantly shortened to ensure the majority of time would be dedicated to public comment and discussion.

**3. Action Item(s)**

**3.1. Minutes from August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019**

M. Hoffman moved to accept the minutes as written

M. Williams seconded the motion

Vote: unanimous in favor.

**4. Discussion Items**

**4.1. CMAQ project scoring process tasks between now and October TAC meeting**

- C. Lentz explained that five applications for CMAQ funding had been submitted from the region:
- Rochester is proposing improvements to a local intersection for traffic flow
  - UNH Wildcat is requesting funds to replace diesel buses from 2006 with new natural gas and biodiesel buses
  - NHDOT is proposing two projects: a park and ride at US4 and NH125, and several traffic signal improvements at locations throughout the state
  - Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority is proposing improvements to the track siding in Dover that would allow trains to travel faster and more efficiently

C. Lentz explained that the RPCs have two primary roles in the process for selecting projects for funding through the CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement) program. He provided a schedule of next steps for the CMAQ process and a sheet of the scoring criteria NHDOT will be using to rank projects. NHDOT will use to RPC priority criteria to assign each RPC's top project 10 points and their second ranked project 5 points.

C. Lentz explained that TAC members could adjust the weighting of each criterion if they thought some were more important than others. He would take that information and develop a scoring spreadsheet similar to the Ten Year Plan process. He said he would also compile information from each application and air quality analysis results so TAC

Scoring Criteria	Maximum points
Project Readiness	15 points
Financial Readiness	15 points
Stewardship	25 points
Air Quality Benefits	35 points
RPC Priority	10 points
	Total = 100

members could review projects and preliminarily score them to be reviewed and confirmed at the October TAC meeting. Members discussed the various points values for individual criteria.

J. Czysz specified that the TAC's purpose was to discuss and define what was important for the region to make sure the "RPC priority" criterion accurately reflects the region's priorities.

C. Parker said he thought the current weights [NHDOT's point assignments] were already pretty good. Air quality benefits should be the most important criterion for projects that were meant to improve air quality, and stewardship should probably be the second most important. He suggested that project readiness and financial readiness go hand-in-hand and any project proposed should have strong financial footing and be maintainable by the applicant. If an applicant doesn't have financial support and ability to maintain the infrastructure, why are they applying? C. Lentz suggested that TAC members could choose to make the project and financial readiness categories "threshold" criteria and shift their potential points to stewardship and air quality benefits. He said he would develop an excel sheet or online survey so each TAC member could assign weights for project scoring. J. Czysz suggested several potential bullet points that could help TAC further define "regional priority":

- Is the project supported in the Strafford MPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan or another regional or local plan?
- Does the project further the regional planning priorities developed by TAC and Policy committee members? How many does it correspond with?
- Does the project improve regional network connectivity or support a regional transportation planning objective?
- How many communities will the project benefit?
- Is the project on a state route or public transit route?

C. Parker said the regional network connectivity was a critical piece – how many communities are potentially impacted (positively) by the project and does it contribute to a better regional network? M. Williams agreed adding the example that replacement transit buses would have a large regional impact, but most local plans don't specifically prioritize transit bus replacement. E. Strachan noted that any air quality improvement from a project will have regional benefits because air is not localized.

J. Czysz said she and C. Lentz would summarize the discussion and bullets for TAC review with the scoring criteria exercise.

## 5. Project Updates

E. Strachan explained that NHDES would be holding a new round of funding through the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) program managed by EPA. She said usually around \$250,000 in base federal funding is available, but \$700,000 is available this round because additional match is being included from NH's Volkswagen settlement funds, which generates an additional bonus from EPA. NHDES is finalizing budgets but has a tentative date of October 1<sup>st</sup> to begin accepting proposals. She will be updating the application and posting it on the website soon. E. Strachan outlined eligibility requirements and project types:

- The primary purpose is to replace older diesel engines or whole vehicles with new models
  - Can include retroactive exhaust controls and idle reduction
  - Can be stationary engines and heavy equipment
  - Generators must see at least 500 hrs of use per year to be eligible
- State and local government (including schools and contracted school bus companies), and businesses are eligible applicants
- Local match requirement depends on type of project but applications for engine replacement or exhaust control will get more DERA funding than for a full vehicle replacement

E. Strachan handed out a flyer and said Jessica Wilcox at NHDES is the primary contact for information. She noted several successful applications from the past including Waste Management replacing old diesel garbage trucks with new compressed natural gas trucks. She said as long as the program keeps getting proposals for the available funding, NH Office of Strategic Investments is interested in continuing to invest Volkswagen funding to increase matching funds.

C. Lentz noted that work had begun on the deck replacement of the Interstate 95 bridge between Maine and New Hampshire so traffic will be intermittently delayed.

C. Lentz said the statewide bike and pedestrian plan is still in the public outreach phase and he would be at the Dover farmers' market from 10:00 to 2:00 on Sunday [September 8<sup>th</sup>] with members of the consultant team and NHDOT to talk to Dover residents about the plan and get their input.

C. Lentz reminded TAC that SRPC was working on a regional project to research public transit in the seacoast – economic impact, needs assessment, and future improvements planning. He said Gordon Lewis had conducted literature review and compiled an annotated bibliography. This will be used to develop next steps for the project.

**6. Other Business**

J. Hotchkiss noted that a new cell tower had recently been installed in Middleton that would provide improved service for the surrounding area.

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**

C. Parker made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by M. Hoffman

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45am

Minutes approved by

Print \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## MEMO

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Hello TAC members. The October agenda includes two primary topics for discussion: CMAQ project review, and discussing TAC's role in the MPO process and improving technical analysis.

### CMAQ projects

NHDOT received \$14.5 million in CMAQ project applications and has \$13.5 million to fund new projects. They are reviewing the project applications for eligibility and working to equalize the funds requested with the funds available. If requested and available funds match, NHDOT will recommend to GACIT (through the Ten Year Plan process) that all eligible projects be funded. This would eliminate the need for regional and statewide project scoring and ranking. Each project needs to show a positive air quality benefit and RPCs are still working to finalize air quality analyses. I will provide more details for each project at the meeting but below is a quick summary of each project's progress:

- Rochester (Intersection improvements at Columbus and Summer St)
  - Counts completed, QAQC in process
  - Air quality analysis 95% complete
- NNEPRA (Rail siding improvement in Dover)
  - Air quality analysis 100% complete
  - Project identical to last round in Rockingham region so adapted analysis and assumptions
- UNH Wildcat transit (fleet bus replacement)
  - Simple plug-and-play analysis through CMAQ toolkit
  - Air quality analysis 100% complete
- NHDOT (statewide traffic signal improvements)
  - Five individual signals in project
  - Air quality analysis 85% complete but on-the-ground data are lacking
  - can't complete full counts in time for submission
- NHDOT (Park and Ride near US4/NH125 intersection in Lee)
  - Air quality analysis 80% complete
  - Using EPA analysis carpooling toolkit and a park and ride toolkit developed by SNHPC
  - Need to verify and document assumptions about park and ride use

### Reexamining TAC's role & Improving technical analysis

I'd like to increase opportunities for TAC members in doing technical work related to the MPO's requirements and goals. There should be a stronger connection and flow between the work of the Policy committee and TAC. I'd like to discuss the work TAC has been doing, discuss upcoming opportunities for development, and get feedback from TAC members about their perceived role and priorities. So for the October meeting let's start with basic questions that we haven't asked in several years:

- What do you see as the role of TAC in continuing the work of the MPO?
- What do you see as the role of SRPC staff relative to the TAC's work?
- What technical expertise do you bring to the table (perhaps that is not being included in the conversation)?
- Do we have technical expertise missing from the table?

If we have time at the meeting we can get into immediate next steps. As far as tasks for the immediate future, we're still in the early/middle stages of developing the Metro Plan. We're preparing for focus

group workshops which will help the Policy committee begin developing goals and objectives for the Metro Plan. The TAC can help staff prioritize the data development process to inform those discussions.

- What information about regional trends (traffic volume, demographics, economic development, landuse, natural resources etc.) should SRPC staff focus on in order to support workshops and goal-setting?

At this point proposed focus groups/topic areas are: housing and economic development; municipal staff; emergency response and preparedness; and environmental/natural resources. These were discussed at the September Policy Committee meeting.

### **Future topics “on-deck”**

Below is a list of topics for upcoming projects and planning that we’ll need to tackle. It’s not meant to be complete and exhaustive; just a start. We’ll need to discuss and prioritize work so SRPC staff can do their homework efficiently moving forward.

- Metro Plan
  - Improve the connection between regional data and programmed projects
  - Improved project development, identification, and ranking
  - Tie federal and regional performance metrics to planning and projects
  - Fiscal constraint
  - Include more detail on statewide and regional operations and maintenance funds
- Bicycle level of traffic stress model analysis and implementation
- Corridor planning (funding in the TYP)
  - Define process for prioritizing regional corridors (will require collaboration with neighboring RPCs)
- Implementation of the travel demand model
- Incorporate potential environmental mitigation strategies