

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Friday, August 7th 2020

9:00 – 11:00 AM

Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Rochester, NH

The meeting was called to order at 9:03am

The chair read the following statement prior to the roll call:

The chair of the Strafford MPO Technical Advisory Committee has found that, due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-08, this Committee is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to the meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, this is to confirm that we are:

- *Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means.* We are utilizing the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting. All members of the Committee have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through the Zoom platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone number 1-646-558-8656 and meeting ID 845 7090 3562, or by clicking on the following website address:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84570903562>

- *Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting.* We previously gave notice to the public of how to access the meeting using Zoom, and instructions are provided on the SRPC website at www.strafford.org.
- *Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access.* If anybody has a problem, please call 603-994-3500 (ext. 106) or email at: clentz@strafford.org.
- *Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting.* In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, we will adjourn the meeting and have it rescheduled at that time. Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote. Let's start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their presence, also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

1. Attendance:

Committee Members

Marcia Gasses (Barrington), Chris Parker (Dover), Michael Williams (COAST), Scott Kinmond (New Durham), Michael Hoffman (Newmarket), Bill Watson (NHDOT), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Tim White (NHDES), Dirk Timmons (UNH), Gretchen Young (Dover), Michael Bobinsky (Somersworth), Arthur Capello (Farmington), Caren Rossi (Lee),

Staff

Jennifer Czysz, Colin Lentz, Jack Aponas, Stephen Geis

2. Staff Communications

J. Czysz gave several updates on SRPC staff and projects.

- Staff are working on an update to the Pathway's to Plan project that was recently completed. The second phase is called "Promoting Outdoor Play". SRPC staff will be reaching out to solicit volunteers to visit recreation sites throughout the region to do on-the-ground data collection and verify existing GIS data. The final product will be an online story map that documents recreation sites.
- SRPC recently received a grant through the Tufts foundation to focus on planning age-friendly communities. She said staff would be reaching out to communities about the project soon.
- Alaina Rogers has been hired full time as an environmental planner and will be working with Kyle Pimental.
- The traffic count team was ahead of schedule and would likely be done with counts in early September.
- Because of the success in getting additional grants and the continued growth of the local circuit riding program, SRPC is looking into hiring a temporary transportation planner to assist with UPWP technical work.
- SRPC has applied for CARES Act funds through the Economic Development Administration. If awarded, SRPC will hire a temporary planner to focus on economic recovery and resilience planning in the region.

3. Action Item(s)

3.1 Officers

M. Williams volunteered to stay on as Vice Chair; S. Kinmond volunteered to be the new Chair

C. Parker made a motion to approve the slate of candidates for Chair and Vice Chair for the 2021 State Fiscal Year; seconded by M. Hoffman

Vote: unanimous in favor (via roll-call vote)

3.2 Minutes from June 5th 2020

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

Seconded by D. Timmons

Vote: A. Capello and B. Watson abstaining; otherwise unanimous in favor (via roll-call vote)

3.3 Ten Year Plan project scoring criteria

C. Lentz explained that he had received input from individual TAC members on the weighting of Ten Year Plan. He compiled the individual weightings and calculated an overall average. C. Lentz noted that the overall weighting was not dramatically different from the previous round. He noted that all RPCs will be using the same set of criteria to score projects.

M. Gasses made a motion to approve the draft criteria weightings.

Seconded by A. Capello

Vote: unanimous in favor (via roll call)

4. Discussion Items

4.1 Ten Year Plan – update on projects, criteria, and scoring

C. Lentz explained that the Policy Committee would review the weightings and he would use them to score candidate projects preliminarily for committee review in September. He shared a list of the candidate projects for the committee's review. C. Lentz said he would send out an updated schedule of tasks for finishing the Ten Year Plan project scoring. He briefly described some next steps and deadlines: review draft project scoring in September; send initial list of projects for NHDOT review by the end of October; NHDOT will review projects for engineering and cost estimates between November and January; SRPC will meet with NHDOT early in 2021 to discuss their engineering and cost estimate review; SRPC will do a final review and scoring of candidate projects which need to be submitted by March 31st, 2021. C. Lentz said he hoped the timeline would allow for plenty of time for deliberation by committee members to review each project's metrics on a quantitative and qualitative basis.

C. Lentz noted that on July 24th, Governor Sununu signed the draft Ten Year Plan that had been recently approved by the legislature. It was included with a number of other bills related to transportation. One of those bills allowed NHDOT to access crash data and share it with RPCs. The bill specifies that no personal driver information can be shared, but NHDOT and RPCs don't need that information to review crashes and their causes. This information will be critical to developing safety improvement projects.

M. Bobinsky asked for confirmation that the list of candidate projects was just a draft at this point.

C. Lentz confirmed this. M. Bobinsky asked for clarification about what happens after NHDOT reviews the candidate projects for engineering and cost estimates. C. Lentz said he would bring back the results of NHDOT's review for a final review and ranking of projects by committee members. He noted that he had more confidence in the scoping and cost estimates of projects than in previous rounds.

L. Levine asked about new STIP update schedule since the Ten Year Plan had been signed by the Governor. C. Lentz explained that SRPC is working on an update to the Public Participation Plan which needs to incorporate specific consideration for virtual public involvement as a result of the Pandemic. This will be required to hold the public comment period and hearing for the draft STIP. B. Watson said the estimated timeline for the STIP update schedule was that MPOs would receive the draft STIP sometime in late September/early October, MPOs will generate their draft TIPs, and the goal is to have the full STIP updated in January 2021.

C. Lentz asked for clarification for the estimated final approval in January 2021; his original understanding was that NHDOT was hoping for a full update in the March timeframe. B. Watson said NHDOT was cognizant of the MPO timing and would share a full draft schedule with the RPCs soon.

C. Lentz asked that if municipalities have any additional projects they want to add to the list of candidate projects, please send them to him by August 14th so he can incorporate them.

C. Lentz said Rachel Dewey was currently working with staff to improve SRPC's data management and analysis capacity (in addition to solving all SRPC's IT problems related to staff transitioning to working from home). He said new data analysis and several new tools would enable staff to work with TAC and Policy members to more directly identify and develop projects. C. Lentz said first Rachel is working to create a central database that will include many metrics related to regional planning. They will cover transportation, housing, economic development, and other core planning topics. The goal is to ensure the database will have up-to-date data with minimal staff input. Future analysis tools that are in the works include: the travel demand model for system wide traffic analysis; implementation of the bicycle level-of-stress model; a tool to identify locations for new electric vehicle charging stations; and additional bicycle and pedestrian data collection for project development. C. Lentz said as these tools are finished, they will provide data that TAC and Policy can use to develop and prioritize potential projects.

5. Local COVID-19 updates –

C. Lentz said he wanted to check in with communities about the COVID-19 crisis and how recovery and adaptation is progressing.

A. Capello said Farmington public buildings are open to the public and town boards are meeting in person. Restaurants are allowed to have outdoor seating even in not part of their original site plan approval.

S. Kinmond said New Durham still has a walkup window for town business. The building is closed to public access for the time being. Town board meetings are still primarily being held virtually and businesses are beginning to rebound.

M. Hoffman said Newmarket has been adapting local ordinance to help businesses continue operations. He said he's concerned about safe routes to school for pedestrians and bussing as the school year gets closer. He's been advocating for more outdoor class time which is safer for students and teachers.

M. Gasses said the Barrington town office is open, but they have a drop box for resident paperwork and have the option of virtual appointments. Boards are still holding virtual meetings because there is no large indoor space locally.

D. Timmons said there is an official mask requirement in the town of Durham. UNH staff have testing once a week; students can choose in-class or virtual attendance. There are new protocols for student housing and some students are opting to stay home.

M. Williams said COAST is running full service and ridership has been increasing each week – it's just over half of pre-COVID levels.

6. **Other Business**

No other business was brought before the committee.

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

8. **Adjournment**

M. Gasses made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by M. Hoffman

Vote: unanimous in favor

The meeting was adjourned at 11:13 am