

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 8, 2021

9:00 – 11:00 AM

Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Rochester, NH

The meeting was called to order at 9:05am

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 2020-21, 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 829 0534 5549, or by clicking on the following website address: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82905345549?pwd=eTQ4dEVrbjVPbm5lL2dqQmxIdXpyQT09>
- *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 603-948-9483 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), Scott Kinmond (New Durham), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Michael Williams (COAST), Tim White (NHDES), Michael Hoffman (Newmarket), Michelle Mears (Somersworth), Michael Bobinsky (Somersworth), Christopher Parker (Dover), Linda Dusenberry (NHDOT)

Staff

Rachel Dewey, Natalie Moles, Stefanie Casella, Nancy O'Connor, Alaina Rogers

2. Staff Communications

Colin Lentz (SRPC) was unavailable today. R. Dewey filled in.

3. Action Items

3.1 Minutes from December 4th 2020

C. Parker made a motion to approve the minutes as written.
Seconded by M. Williams.

Vote: L. Dusenberry abstaining; otherwise unanimous in favor (via roll-call vote)

3.2 Review and approve proposed 2021 highway safety targets

R. Dewey provided an overview of the proposed 2021 highway safety performance targets. These targets are set annually. SRPC is electing to support the state targets in recognition of the fact that the locations are largely at random and acknowledges that the Strafford MPO region typically represents approximately 11% of the statewide fatalities and serious injuries.

M. Bobinsky asked what happened in 2018 and 2019 to cause declines in the rate of fatalities and serious injuries. R. Dewey noted that the targets are based on five year averages, and that the difference between the number from 6 years ago and one year ago impacts the direction of the trend line the most. Specific causes are not clear, but R. Dewey will investigate the data further.

T. White noted one edit to be made on page 2 of the memo. The word "region" will be added after "MPO" in the third sentence to read "... therefore the MPO region will not contribute more than usual to the statewide totals [*of fatalities and serious injuries*]."

M. Bobinsky moved to recommend the targets to the Policy Committee with the one revision.
Seconded by M. Hoffman.

Vote: all in favor (via roll call vote).

4. Discussion Items

4.1 How to make safety planning and improvements more comprehensive

4.2 Local Road Safety Plans – how to prioritize municipalities?

S. Kinmond and C. Lentz participated in an UNH series of trainings focused on rural safety. The MPO would like to assist with local safety plans as a follow up to the discussions started at the UNH

trainings. The goals of these plans would be to take a proactive approach to safety instead of reacting to crashes. TAC will revisit this with Colin in the future.

4.3 Geometric GIS Analysis

R. Dewey added that part of the local safety plans would include using GIS to analyze the road data to identify the angles of intersections to identify the intersection type. This would highlight intersection types that are prone to more severe crashes. For example, Y intersections are angled such that visibility may be low when turning. This analysis would allow the MPO to identify these intersections and work with communities to plan projects to realign them before there is a fatal crash.

5. **Project Updates**

R. Dewey gave a brief update on the data analysis for the planning metric database. This database consists of a series of one to two-page snapshots of various metrics that can be used in a variety of documents that the SRPC develops. Previews of these metrics will be sent out to TAC members in small batches over the coming months so that they can be reviewed over time rather than all at once.

S. Casella and A. Rogers provided updates on their efforts in the content development for the Metro Plan. S. Casella will be working on bicycle and pedestrian safety and planning for future improvements. A. Rogers is working on incorporating climate adaptation into the plan with an emphasis on resilience strategies. She is also working on equity and looking at Title VI and Environmental Justice in the plan to ensure that the plan addresses the needs of underserved populations.

6. **Municipal Roundtable – Updates on local COVID-19 adaptation** Are there ways that SRPC can help your community recover from COVID-19?

M. Gasses noted that Barrington is working on a couple of FEMA funded grants, one of which is replacing a culvert on a private road. While the road is privately owned, it provides access to the Swains Lake dam. The dam is considered critical infrastructure and has been identified as high hazard. If the dam were to fail, people could die. FEMA has been great to work with on this project. The second project is replacing several culverts in different areas. FEMA is paying 80% of the cost. FEMA has been great to work with on this project. She urges smaller communities to keep FEMA in mind as a potential funding source.

C. Parker said that Dover is considering what regulation changes may happen this year. The city wants to continue to support businesses by allowing outdoor dining this summer along with other changes.

M. Hoffman noted that Newmarket has received negative feedback on the rectangular mid-block crossing beacons. These beacons are designed to be visible in daylight, and as a result they can be too bright at night, especially when it is raining. The main complaint is that the light makes it harder to see pedestrians when it is dark out. This is a similar concern with some emergency vehicles' lights. S. Kinmond noted that NHDOT sent out an email to Departments of Public Works about an effort with Homeland Security to use an emergency management online portal to report DPW staffing shortages due to COVID-19. M. Bobinsky said that the Somersworth Fire Chief had briefed him on the same resource. Additional resources include UNH T2's monthly DPW meeting, Chit-Chat and Chew. These meetings offer DPW staff an opportunity to share ideas and collaborate.

7. **Other Business**

7.1 Transportation Alternatives round of funding

L. Dusenberry provided information about the current round of Transportation Alternatives funding. She advised that there are three steps to applying for funding. The first is to submit a letter of interest by February 5, 2021. The other two steps are to attend a pre-application informational meeting hosted by the DOT and submit an application. More information is available on the DOT website at <https://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/tap/index.htm>.

M. Bobinsky asked whether a project listed in the Metro Plan out years is eligible for this funding source. L. Dusenberry will follow up on this question.

7.2 Request for Qualifications for on-call engineering services

R. Dewey noted that Strafford MPO has posted an RFQ for on-call engineering services, assistance in developing a new project database, or on-call travel demand modelling support. An on-call engineer would be able to assist in project development by completing preliminary engineering on projects to help with project prioritization for various funding sources. Assistance with developing a new project database would help Strafford MPO staff to better manage data that has been compiled for various projects including anything from Metro Plan out year project scopes to current TIP project funding changes.

7.3 Other Business

S. Kinmond asked how others were preparing for town meetings. M. Williams cautioned that Teams Public Meetings have not been without challenges. M. Gasses said that Barrington is considering a typical town meeting but providing space for social distancing. Barrington typically has about 100 citizens present for town meeting, so if the meeting is held in the school gymnasium, then social distancing should be manageable. In addition to the in-person space, there may also be a live stream available for others to watch. S. Kinmond said New Durham has similar plans and will also host a Zoom meeting that will allow for online participants to comment, but not vote.

8. **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.

No citizens were present to provide input.

9. **Adjournment**

M. Williams made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by M. Bobinsky

Vote: unanimous in favor

The meeting was adjourned at 10 am