

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Friday, April 2nd 2021

9:00 – 11:00 AM

Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

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 2021-05, 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=eTQ4dEVrbjVPbm5iL2dqQmxIdXpyQT09>

- *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.trafford.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@trafford.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

Christopher Parker (Dover), Steve Pesci (UNH), Scott Kinmond (New Durham), Marcia Gasses (Barrington), Michael Williams (COAST), Linda Dusenberry (NHDOT), Tim White (NHDES), Michelle Mears (Somersworth), Shanna Saunders (Somersworth), April Talon (Durham), Michael Hoffman (Newmarket), Arthur Capello (Farmington), Leigh Levine (FHWA), Bruce Woodruff (Milton).

Staff

Jen, Czysz, Colin Lentz, Stephen Geis, Jackson Rand, Rachel Dewey, Natalie Moles, Stefanie Casella, Nancy O'Connor, Alaina Rogers

2. **Staff Communications**

C. Lentz noted that SRPC had officially begun working with the consulting firm VHB. He reminded municipalities to contact him with potential projects so that VHB can help develop planning-level scopes and cost estimates.

J. Czysz said SRPC had convened a resilience sub-committee which will be holding roundtable discussions on the third Thursday of each month at 9:30am. The first roundtable is scheduled for April 15th to discuss local hazard mitigation strategies.

3. **Action Items**

3.1 Minutes from March 5th 2021

M. Williams made a motion to approve the minutes as written.

Seconded by B. Woodruff.

Vote: A. Talon and L. Dusenberry abstaining, otherwise unanimous in favor (via roll-call vote)

3.2 Scoring and Ranking of Transportation Alternatives projects in the Strafford region

C. Lentz presented the scored ranking for the three projects proposed in the region [full scoring results attached to the minutes]:

1. Dover – Pedestrian bridge and trail to complete Community Trail extension.
2. Rochester – Filling a sidewalk gap on Portland St.
3. Durham – Bicycle and pedestrian improvements on Madbury Rd (paired with utilities).

C. Lentz explained that this is not the final decision; NHDOT will use this ranking to assign points in their scoring process. He noted that several scorers had remarked that all three projects were excellent and it was difficult to score them.

S. Pesci asked follow up questions of the project applicants.

S. Saunders made a motion to approve the TAP scores as presented.

Seconded by C. Parker.

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

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

S. Saunders said she hears from developers that it's going to be a very busy summer and people have a positive outlook. C. Parker and S. Pesci concurred and said the pandemic has shown that outdoor dining is not only possible, but beneficial. They noted that the temporary outdoor dining areas constructed a year ago were being put back in many places as the weather warms.

M. Williams said the second COVID-19 wave had impacted the return of ridership, but it is steadily growing again.

M. Hoffman said he hoped communities were seriously reconsidering policies that restricted outdoor dining and other pedestrian areas in downtowns. He noted that the pandemic may result in "zoom towns" as more people are able to work from home and are not restricted by commute distance.

S. Pesci said UNH was going to have a ribbon cutting ceremony in May for the Main St TAP project completion. UNH Wildcat transit is holding two public hearings to review changes to their service in the upcoming academic year. S. Pesci said service was being restored following the academic year that was impacted by COVID-19, but it would still be a 20% reduction in service compared to the 2019 academic year. He said UNH was planning to end the Route 5 bus to Newmarket starting in May of 2022. This is primarily due to students moving out of Newmarket to Durham and Dover which has cause Route 5 ridership to decline over five years. S. Pesci recommended that C. Lentz invite Amtrak representatives to a future TAC meeting.

J. Rand provided an overview of the Promoting Outdoor Play (POP!) project that SRPC staff were just finishing up. He presented a draft of an online map and tool that displayed hundreds of recreation sites around the region. It can be used to sort sites by type: playgrounds, trails, boat launches, etc. J. Rand said the tool would be launching the week of April 19th and there would be an outreach event in the future. N. O'Connor said the goal was to get this tool out to families.

R. Dewey reminded members that the regional Data Snapshot was still under development and asked them to provide comments on the draft metrics that C. Lentz had sent out recently.

5. **Other Business**

S. Kinmond reminded members that he had accepted a position with the town of Alton and thanked everyone for the community discussion and engagement. He said Jon Scruton will be taking over as the Town Administrator for New Durham.

B. Woodruff said Milton's Town Administrator, Ernest Creveling, would be moving on to a new job and the town was in the process of finding a replacement. He said to contact him in the interim.

6. **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.

7. Adjournment

C. Parker made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by B. Woodruff

Vote: unanimous in favor

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40am

The following project ranking was approved by the Strafford MPO Technical Advisory Committee on April 2nd 2021, and approved by the Policy Committee on April 16th 2021.

Average Rating (out of 5)

	Potential for Success			Safety		Connectivity & Community Benefits		Final Average Score
	Project Readiness and Support	Financial Readiness	Feasibility	Stress Analysis	Improve Safety Conditions	Network Connectivity	Community Benefits	
Dover	4.2	5.0	4.2	3.8	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.24
Rochester	4.1	4.4	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.21
Durham	4.3	4.3	4.1	3.7	4.2	4.0	3.9	4.09

Criteria Weighting

