

**Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization
Technical Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes

Friday, November 5th, 2021, 9:00 – 11:00 AM

**Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Rochester, NH**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00am

1. Introductions

Chairman Bruce Woodruff called the meeting to order and asked for introductions.

Members Present: Bruce Woodruff, Milton, Arthur Capello, Farmington, Michael Williams, COAST, Chris Parker, Dover, Michele Mears, Somersworth, Marshall Goldberg, Brookfield

Staff Present: Colin Lentz and Jen Czysz of SRPC

Members participating remotely: Katrin Kasper, Lee, Tim White, DES, Shanna Saunders, Rochester, Kim Rummo, DOT, Leah Levine, FHA,

Staff participating remotely: Rachel Dewey, Jackson Rand, Natalie Moles, Megan Taylor-Fetter

Presenters: Julie Murphy, VHB, joining remotely

2. Staff Communications

C. Lentz stated that Autumn Scott, formally an intern for SRPC from UNH, has been hired as part time regional planner. He further explained that Autumn, along with recently hired regional planner Blair Haney, are both working as planners under circuit riders.

J. Czysz stated that SRPC is seeking interns and volunteers to assist with municipal records digitization. The scanner is on the way and should be delivered soon. SRPC is coordinating with local high schools to recruit honor students who need volunteer hours.

C. Lentz added that SRPC accountant Kathy Foster has sold her accounting business and is now working as a part time employee performing the same duties but now as an employee.

3. Action Item(s) [Motion required]

3.1. Minutes from August 6, 2021

C. Parker motioned to approve the August 6, 2021 minutes seconded by M. Williams. Discussion: M. Williams pointed out that on the 2nd page, in discussion item 4, where it states 25% to managed response, it should state demand

response. A roll call vote was taken to approve the minutes as amended: A. Capello, M. Williams, C. Parker, M. Mears, M. Goldberg, K. Kasper, T. White, S. Saunders, K. Rummo, L. Levine. The motion passed with all in favor.

3.2. Recommend targets for Public Transit safety measures

C. Lentz explained that what is being presented is a new(ish) set of measures that will be incorporated into the planning documents for federally funded public transit providers. COAST has a transit asset management plan that has been approved. These measures are directly from that and include the number and rate of fatalities, number, and rate of injuries number of safety events, rate of safety events and system reliability. Colin explained that a safety event is something that cannot be treated on site and that COAST has an excellent record so there are very few. Rate targets are based on incidents per 500,000 vehicle revenue miles. System reliability targets are based on the mean distance or number of miles driven between mechanical failures. Colin stated that he recommends the targets in the transit asset management plan and asked members for comments.

M. Williams stated that COAST will have their 2022 targets out in January.

M. Williams motioned, seconded by C. Parker to recommend to the Policy Committee to adopt the public transit safety performance targets as proposed.

A roll call vote was taken: A. Capello, M. Williams, C. Parker, M. Mears, M. Goldberg, K. Kasper, T. White, S. Saunders, K. Rummo, L. Levine. The motion passed with all in favor.

4. Discussion Items

4.1. Travel demand model – How can this tool be used for transportation planning in the region?

C. Lentz welcomed Julie Murphy from VHB and explained that SRPC hired VHB to work on the project data base as well as the travel demand model update. A while back SRPC used the seacoast model while working on air quality assessments for updates and for project inclusion.

Julie Murphy introduced herself and explained that this model includes both Strafford and Rockingham counties. J. Murphy explained that there are two major backbones of a travel demand model which are the roadway network and the TAZ (traffic analysis zone) which hold all the land use. These include information on population and employment.

J. Murphy presented a closer look at the Dover area and outlined the total number of TAZs and their numbers. She outlined the model and gave a summary on what is contained in the model.

B. Woodruff asked if on the volume count comparison, is that used to calibrate the model?

J. Murphy answered yes, there are 2015 counts for daily and peak period in the model so you can compare the counts to the model volumes.

C. Lentz explained that the amount of data decreases as the road size decreases. C. Lentz stated that there is better data on interstates than the smaller roadways. He added that there could be ways to improve that data including supplemental counts to do small scale modeling. Currently the model is fine for corridor analysis but not for intersection analysis.

B. Woodruff asked if municipalities did counts on their roads could that data be incorporated into the model.

J. Murphy answered yes, it is a database, the more counts we have, the more calibration we can look at specific corridors, not just a regional basis. Sometimes the TAZs are too big for localized roads. Much more detail can be done on a location of the centroid connectors, the size of the TAZ if there was additional count information in the region.

L. Levine stated that it looks like there is transit ridership included to make this a mode split model.

J. Murphy replied that there are busses in there, it is a small percentage of the traffic. The walk bike share is done on the density of the TAZ, the model is calibrated more on vehicles. It is estimating the transit as a mode share in the model, but it is a small percentage.

L. Levine stated that with the census 2020 coming out and new information on urbanized areas, it was the plan to look at that and to integrate the data and possible functional reclassification that might come from the data.

B. Woodruff asked where the employment data comes from and what year.

J. Czysz answered that it comes from the NH Employment Agency and is from 2015.

M. Goldberg asked if municipalities conduct their own traffic counts and if the methodology is the same or different.

C. Lentz answered that SRPC is assigned traffic counts through the DOT for all the communities for their data collection. Some municipalities do their own counts but that is not reflected in the model.

R. Dewey stated that SRPC collects 110-130 traffic counts every year and DOT assigns counts on state roads. It's a mix at different locations, some are vehicle class, others volume or direction. The federal highways have a set of rules of what percentage of each road class needs to be classification vs directional vs volume. It's a good mix.

C. Lentz asked, going back the mode split question, can the data from COAST bus be used to validate the data?

J. Murphy answered that if there was information on boarding and ridership, that could be looked at.

M. Williams asked if the transit related outputs are used to syphon off the numbers to keep them out of the road counts.

J. Murphy answered its mostly siphoned off. The total number of daily bus trips is about 9000. The percentage is very small. (1%)

M. Williams asked how covid factored into the data.

C. Lentz answered the model does not show the recent counts that dropped.

B. Woodruff asked is this model is precise enough to use as a tool for large developments that are being proposed.

C. Lentz answered that at this point it is used for larger scale corridor analysis and congestion outputs. For more detail, we need supplemental counts.

J. Murphy added if there was a specific project more detail analysis could be performed.

Further discussion ensued on the potential uses for the model.

M. Williams asked when you think about air quality impacts, are congested areas determined to be increased or decreasing air quality and then fixing that congestion is presumed to increase air quality, does it factor in potential increased vip's from induced demands when you remove congested conditions. Does it factor in that balance at all, or does it assume that the increased congestion has no impact on road usage quality.

J. Murphy answered in the regional model no. Induced travel is not incorporated in the model.

4.2. Sharing the cost of infrastructure resilience investment

C. Lentz presented a regional infrastructure resilience planning and funding approach idea. He questioned can we use the model to project a climate impact

scenario where we lose a piece of the network, and the model shows what will happen to the traffic pattern. He stated that it is imperative that we do something and focus on areas that are vulnerable and important. Who owns the structure and who would end up paying for it? What is the feasibility of designing a process or a framework for collectively investing in the resilience of that piece of infrastructure if multiple communities and individuals rely on it. He stated he is interested in discussing ways to fund resilience in a targeted way and to decrease the financial burden on individual communities.

W. Burton stated that the first step is to take an inventory of the vulnerable infrastructure and prioritize those. There is a funding mechanism available for bridges that is a municipal agreement with the state and multiple towns, but it is a long process.

The members engaged in a discussion on funding responsibility and opportunities. And expressed concern over already taxed budgets and having their own projects to complete.

J. C. added that with the various appropriation funding bills that are working their way thru congress there is a potential for additional funding. As a region we want to make sure we are well poised to proactively go after those dollars. This as an opportunity for us to identify what is important to us as a region.

The members engaged in discussion on local hazard mitigation plans and how that information could be used.

J. Czysz as part of the contract with VHB, there is their project scoping team, so we have the ability to work on the planning level scopes and budgets for potential transportation budgets.

C. Lentz stated the first step is to collect information from existing hazard mitigation plans and inventory and rank vulnerable infrastructure in the region. VHB can provide engineering support for planning level cost estimates and projects. Planning next TAC meeting to talk about that. There are number of things that must happen between now and when we submit another batch of projects to DOT in 2023.

5. Other Business

C. Lentz stated that for the Ten-Year Plan he is keeping an eye out for when the next public hearings are going to happen. The Ten-Year plan is moving forward, Wednesday night was the final GACIT hearing.

T. White stated that the state put out an RFP for clean diesel on November 1 1. Understanding that the grants coordinator will be contacting SRPC regarding the possibility of DES doing short presentation and give background on state

clean diesel program in anticipation of the possibility of communities in the region submitting projects.

6. Municipal Roundtable – Updates from your community

B. Woodruff stated that he was contacted by a private firm that was trying to identify a site that was eligible for the state RFP for electrical charging stations. The rules of the RFP include that there has to be a parking area that exists and it has to be a certain distance from the Turnpike. B. Woodruff stated that the rules on distance are too stringent. Milton has a parking lot but it was not eligible due to that rule.

C. Parker stated that Dover had feedback from the state regarding the RFP and were told that if 20 miles from major route, so 95 inhibits a lot of communities as does 236 and others. We were looking at the exit 9 park and ride. The hidden costs would be charging costs which would have to be paid for through fees or other options.

T. White stated that on the DES website there is a recent an amendment to the wording in the RFP pertaining to the distance of proposed charging sites from the corridors included in the RFP as well as the spacing between charging sites. T. White encouraged members to go onto the website for the update and other materials.

L. Levine sent a message though CHAT that DOT's transportation asset management plan is online.

M. Williams stated that as of November 13 COAST will be reducing service again solely due to lack of CDL drivers. COAST now needs ten more CDL drivers. COAST is pursuing options to increase the size of the non CDL fleet.

C. Parker stated that on November 13 Dover will be hosting an electric vehicle showcase. C. Parker stated that after five years Dover will be going out to bid for design services for the downtown merge of one way to two way. The cost is estimated at about 20 million. He added that the Dover City Council should be adopting the capital improvements program which includes a roundabout on Dover Point Road and other transportation projects.

M. Mears asked if there is an update on complete streets project to which C. Lentz answered they are still working on it last he heard they were meeting with DOT on alternative analysis.

M. Goldberg stated that in Brookfield Route 109, a state road, seems to be getting more volume, trucks and activity. The town is looking into having the

speed reduced but as it is a state road that may be difficult. He asked for feedback on the subject.

C. Lentz answered that SRPC can look at data on counts and has radar counters which give an idea of the speed of vehicles.

S. Saunders informed members that in Rochester phase two at the Ridge is on pause. Economic Development is moving forward with a potential zoning rewrite to allow residential which is a possible reason for the pause. S. Saunders stated that Planning is not in support of that. She stated that the Hoffman building and Old Slims building have both been purchased by a developer. With approval by Historic District Commission and pending approval by the planning board they will tear down those buildings and construct a new building that meets new height ordinance. They are working with the architects on an art deco design. The Hoffman building is the last standing art deco building in Rochester. The new building will consist of 50 residential units and commercial space on the first floor.

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 were present to provide input.
8. Adjournment
C. Parker motioned to adjourn seconded by D. Hamann. Motion passed all in favor none opposed.