

Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization
Technical Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Friday, March 4, 2022
9:00 – 11:00 AM
Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Rochester, NH

Chairman Woodruff read a statement stating that due to Covid and the weather conditions, under RSA 91-A:2 III (b) as chair he is waiving the requirement of a quorum at the physical location of the meeting. Whereas, in order to ensure an uninterrupted flow of federal transportation funding to the region the Stafford MPO TAC must act on items specified in the agenda which have time constraints.

Whereas, the RPC chair has decided that immediate action is imperative and the physical presence of a quorum is not reasonably practical within the period of time requiring action due to the ongoing pandemic. Therefore, the Stafford MPO TAC will invoke this emergency provision and waive requirement of a quorum at the physical location of the meeting

Chair Bruce Woodruff called the meeting to order at 9:00am and asked for introductions.

1. Introductions.

Member attending in person: Bruce Woodruff, Milton; Michael Williams, COAST; Michele Mears, Somersworth;

Staff attending in person: Nancy OConnor

Members attending on Zoom: Katrin Kasper, Lee; Leigh Levine, FHA; Donna Benton, Dover; Tim White, NH DES; Jill Semprini, Shanna Saunders, Dover; Dawn Weeks, Lee; Linda Wescott DOT

Staff attending on Zoom: Colin Lentz; Rachel Dewey, Jackson Rand, Zuzy Duffy

Guests: Carin Rossi, Lee,

2. Staff Communications

Alaina Rogers has resigned from SRPC - we will miss her and her efforts on environmental planning.

3. Action Item(s) [Motion required]

a. Minutes from February 4, 2022

M. Williams MOTIONED to approve the February 4, 2022 minutes as written SECONDED by M. Mears. A roll call vote was taken: M. Williams, M. Mears, B. Woodruff, S. Saunders, T. White in FAVOR. C. Rossi, D. Benton, J. Semprini, L. Wescott, D. Weeks, L. Levine ABSTAIN. None OPPOSED. MOTION PASSED with a unanimous vote in favor by voting members.

4. Discussion Items

a. Update to Title VI Plan

N. O'Connor presented a draft of SRPC updated Nondiscrimination Plan. It lays out the requirements for SRPC as a public (federally funded) organization under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. There will be additional opportunities to review draft materials before the final vote in July. N. explained that she was looking for input from members specifically on goals and objectives content on pages 5 and notification procedures on page 6.

Members discussed language related to outreach methods listed in the plan. They recommended that SRPC be about what outreach methods would be used in specific circumstances. Members also recommended being specific about when methods would be used because radio and newspaper ads are expensive. Members made suggestions about language in the notification procedures. L. Levine thanked N. O'Connor for her efforts on the updates and noted he had shared the draft with public engagement and civil rights compliance staff at FHWA. He said they might request that the Title VI portions of the plan be separate, and he recommended that SRPC staff review the report from the 2018 MPO review.

b. Regional Bike Ped Plan Survey

S. Sylvia demonstrated a tool called MetroQuest that SRPC would be using to distribute a regional survey to get input on a regional active transportation plan. She asked for any feedback on the draft survey questions that were sent out prior to the meeting. B. Woodruff noted that a digital/online survey discourages people who don't have internet access or would rather print it out.

S. Sylvia said they were able to make the survey printable and include printed versions.

S. Sylvia said the survey would be launched and distributed by May of 2022. The overarching purposes of the survey are to gather information on what types of active transportation people use, where they wish they could do more and what barriers exist, and to identify potential projects. She explained that “active transportation” is a catch-all term for things like biking, walking, running, using a wheelchair, rollerblading, riding a scooter, etc. It includes state and town roads, and on-road activities and off-road activities.

S. Saunders recommended the survey ensure the survey language is inclusive of as many types of active transportation to get as wide a range of respondents as possible.

c. Preview of Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy

C. Lentz provided a brief introduction to recently announced National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The NEVI program includes \$17 million specifically for NH to build out an electric vehicle charging network. The funding will be distributed over the next 5 years and will initially focused on Interstate highways and designated alternative fuels corridors. The Strafford region currently has two corridors (US4 and NH16) that are designated “EV-Pending”, meaning they do not meet federal criteria for “EV-Ready”. EV-ready corridors must have DC fast chargers no-more than 50 miles apart and no farther than 1 travel mile from the highway. C. Lentz noted that SRPC was starting a solicitation process to identify potential sites for EV chargers; the goal is to be as ready as possible when funding becomes available. The initial solicitation will focus on municipally owned properties or others where permitting would not be difficult. Potential sites would then be prioritized using available tools and a range of criteria that need to be developed.

C. Lentz explained that the first step at the state level is for NHDOT to develop an EV charging plan, which is due by August 1st. Once that plan is approved early in the fall, NEVI funding would become available. C. Lentz noted that there would be additional discretionary funding programs for community charging.

S. Saunders noted that it would benefit the region if NH11 was also designated as an EV corridor. She added that the region should consider the commercial development opportunities. Rochester just approved a private EV charging site along NH11. C. Lentz said the current NEVI program includes a call for corridor nominations. T. White said NHDES and NHDOT would be meeting to discuss future corridor nominations.

C. Lentz reiterated to members that they can send potential sites to him and Zuzy Duffy. They will be sending out a questionnaire to compile sites.

5. Other Business

a. Ten Year Plan Project Solicitation

C. Lentz reminded members that he had recently sent out a form to submit candidate transportation projects. he requested that municipalities fill out the form because he uses that to add information to the SRPC database. SRPC has hired VHB to provide engineering support to develop planning-level cost estimates for candidate projects.

Michelle Mears explained that Somersworth's CMAQ-funded project on High St was scheduled for construction in 2022, and the cities TAP-funded sidewalk project was scheduled for 2022.

B. Woodruff said Milton was in the process of developing a business overlay district that would include consideration for EV charging.

C. Lentz reminded members that there would be funding rounds for both CMAQ and TAP. He said NHDOT staff had indicated that a CMAQ round would be held late in 2022. The BIL included significantly more funds for both programs which would potentially allow NHDOT to fund more projects.

6. Citizen's Forum: There were no citizens present.

7. Adjourn

M. Williams made a motion to adjourn, seconded by M. Mears.
None OPPOSED. MOTION PASSED with a unanimous vote in favor by voting members.