

MINUTES
Rockingham Planning Commission
MPO Technical Advisory Committee
RPC Offices, 156 Water Street, Exeter NH
Thursday, December 5, 2024, 12:00 PM-2:00 PM

Members Present: S. Kizza (Brentwood); D. Sharples (Exeter), B. Dion (Greenland); J. Lynch (Hampton); P. Coffin (Kingston); C. Papachristos (Newton); T. Moore (Plaistow); J. Shaw (Rye); S. Connors (Stratham); L. St. John (NHDOT); L. Levine (FHWA);.

Staff: D. Walker (Assistant Director); M. Jerominek (Regional Planner); S. Bogle (Senior Transportation Planner).

1. Introductions

Roll call attendance was taken.

2. Minutes of 10/24/2024 Meetings

Minutes of the meetings were approved without discussion. **Motion: P. Coffin; Seconded by T. Moore. Approved – no abstentions.**

3. 2025 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Targets

D. Walker provided an overview of the safety performance measures for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). The state must coordinate with MPOs to establish set targets for measuring the safety of highways. The performance measures and targets cover five (5) areas: Number of Fatalities, Rate of Fatalities per 100 million Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT), number of serious injuries, rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT, and total non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries. This year for the first time, the MPO is exercising its ability to set additional separate targets in addition to NHDOT's statewide targets.

The 2023 values for the five existing safety measures were presented alongside the 2025 targets and desired trends. The four New Hampshire MPO's are working on comprehensive safety action plans under the SS4A (Safe Streets and Roads for All) FHWA grant program. All the MPO communities are eligible to apply for improvements under SS4A funding, which uses FHWA's adaptation of the Safe Systems Approach. After the anticipated adoption in Spring 2025, communities are eligible to apply for safety improvements aligned with the safety action plan.

D. Walker went on to present how annual targets translate into meeting long term goals. The Safety Action Plan targets are based on "getting to zero" on an established timeframe. As a result, the MPO needs to fundamentally change targets each year to move our performance targets closer to zero.

Currently, the Safe Systems Approach Principles (*Death/Serious Injury is Unacceptable, Humans Make Mistakes, Humans are Vulnerable, Responsibility is shared, Safety is Proactive, Redundancy is Crucial*) are not coordinated into the HSIP. The HSIP is largely reactive to past crashes whereas the Safety Action Plans are being completed to reflect a more proactive, precautionary approach to improving safety.

T. Moore suggested the idea of mapping fatal crash locations to determine if they occurred in an existing project area within the Ten Year Plan. D. Walker explained how the nature of fatal crash locations can be sporadic across years.

D. Walker went on to present the safety targets proposed by the MPO. Discussion ensued about adding in targets about E-Bikes, Scooters, and other forms of electrified micromobility. S. Bogle clarified E-Bike policies in New Hampshire go by E-Bike class, but challenges persist with limiting micromobility speed capabilities and age limits. D. Walker clarified that Mopeds/Sit-down Electric Scooters are quantified in MPO safety data as motorcycles, but further legislative & enforcement-related decisions beyond the MPO are needed to further improve micromobility safety.

Motion to endorse that the MPO sets specific HSIP targets for the safety performance measures including motorcycle fatalities which are not Federally Required or a measure used by NHDOT. Motion: D. Sharples; Seconded by P. Coffin. Approved – L. St. John Abstained.

4. Economic Cost of Crashes – D. Walker

Walker briefly presented on a NHTSA 2023 report showing the economic and societal costs of crashes by injury type. The calculations in the report account for the spillover costs related to insurance, healthcare, lost wages, emergency response, and other external factors beyond direct costs. Using the report calculations, Walker calculated an estimate for the MPO region's crash costs by dividing total costs per unit and multiplying by the regional total relative to the unit. According to this calculation, the cost of crashes for the region in 2023 could be anywhere from \$122 to over \$200 million, although this is just an estimate.

5. Transit Safety Targets – S. Bogle

Bogle presented on the draft transit safety targets. It was explained that just as NHDOT sets highway safety targets, the FTA requires that MPO areas develop a regional transit safety plan with accompanying performance measures & targets. This requirement became effective in 2019. The Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) rule (49 CFR Part 673) includes requirements for public transit providers in urbanized areas, but the requirement does not apply to rural communities.

COAST last updated its PTASP in November 2024, MTA updated in August 2024, and Boston Express updated their PTASP in December 2023. Since Wildcat Transit is designated as a University transit system and not public, they are not required to produce a PTASP. The same is true for C&J, which only receives Federal funding for capital but not service.

Bogle went on to share the public transit safety targets set by COAST, Boston Express, and MTA for both fixed route transit and demand response services. The targets deal with four areas of transit safety: Fatalities, Injuries, Safety Events, and System Reliability. The targets are:

- Total number of reportable fatalities and rate per total vehicle revenue miles, by mode
 - Total number of reportable injuries and rate per total vehicle revenue miles, by mode
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- Total number of reportable events and rate per total vehicle revenue miles, by mode
- Mean distance between major mechanical failures, by mode.

Bogle shared that there is a new directive for transit agencies via the FTA requiring safety reporting on incidents of assaults on transit employees. This is largely due to an increase in assaults on transit employees after Covid-19's onset, when masking & social distancing policies caused frustration for transit users.

Motion to recommend that the MPO Policy Committee vote to adopt the proposed MPO Public Transit Safety Targets for FY2025 at their meeting in January 2025: P. Coffin; Seconded by B. Dion. Approved – L. St. John abstained.

6. Long Range Transportation Plan Draft Goals – M. Jerominek

Jerominek presented on the draft goals and objectives for Long Range Transportation Plan update. The original 11 MPO goals have been condensed into 6 goals to minimize duplication & recognize co-benefits between the existing goals. Jerominek shared out on each of the draft goals, which are: Housing & Community Connections, Energy & Environment, Economic Vitality, Safety & Security, Resilient & Well-Maintained, and Access & Choice.

Jerominek explained that no priorities were dropped because of culling goals but were rather re-organized in a simpler way for improving system performance & ease of understanding. Strategies & objectives aiming to address the goals from a three-tiered approach were discussed, with the three tiers being proactive prevention, mitigation during construction or planning, and corrective/post-care for impacts that have already taken place.

J. Shaw asked how the plan goals would be incorporated into the overall transportation planning & project selection process. Jerominek gave a short explanation of how the plan goals factor into selection criteria and where the Long-Range Plan falls in the planning cycle. Walker further explained how the Long Range plan is typically updated every five years, but recent updates have been minor updates for accuracy as opposed to a ground-up overhaul. Walker explained how this iteration of the Plan will be a major update emphasizing culling the wordiness and technical jargon that can make prior plan versions hard to read through.

Walker explained how the timing of the transportation planning cycle makes it more beneficial to break down the plan into more reviewable elements as not to overload meeting agendas with multiple full-length documents for review. Walker shared that the next steps will be another review at the January & February TAC meetings for adoption in March. Jerominek shared that any comments or feedback on the goals could be sent to her via email or by phone.

7. East Coast Greenway Update – Tabled until future meeting.

8. Agency Updates and Announcements

B. Dion shared that he thinks we should begin planning earlier to establish guidelines for using Long-Range plan-aligned priorities in the project selection process. He clarified that this should be for a smaller selection of projects and not the entire potential list of projects.

Enforcement and data analysis for highway speeding was also discussed. B. Dion proposed that fines collected from speeding and other unsafe driving violations could be used to fund transportation projects.

B. Dion discussed the Stratham railroad bridge fire that occurred early in the evening Wednesday Dec 4th. Rail access to Portsmouth will be impacted by the fire.

Walker shared that he would send out the report on the economic cost of crashes, the TAC calendar for 2025, and meeting materials for the Long-Range Plan draft goals.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Walker, Recording Secretary
