

**Meeting of the SRPC Commissioners, MPO Policy Committee, & EDD Board**

Friday, January 16, 2026 8:30 – 10:30 AM  
129 Chestnut Hill Road, Rochester, NH

Agenda Item

**1. Introductions:**

At 8:30 AM Chair Paul Rasmussen called the meeting to order and asked for introductions:

**Committee members attending in person:** Paul Rasmussen, Durham, Peter Nelson, Newmarket; John Mullen, Middleton; Kate Buzard, Middleton; Joe Boudreau, Rochester; Steve Stencil, Wakefield; Sarah Wrightsman, Newmarket; Marshall Goldberg, Brookfield; Mike Lerhman, Durham; Matt Towne, Barrington; Steve Brown, Dover; Lee Howlett, Milton; Tom Falk, Madbury; Dennis McCann, SEDC; Mike Bobinsky, Somersworth; Katrin Kasper, Lee; Mark Richardson, Somersworth; Donna Benton, Dover; Gretchen Young, Rochester

**Staff attending in person:** Jen Czysz; Colin Lentz, Stephen Geis, Mark Davie, Rachel Dewey, Megan Taylor-Fetter

Guests: Senators David Watters and Rebecca Perkins Knoka

1) **Public Hearing TIP/MTP Amendment 3**

a) **Presentation and Open Public Hearing**

C. Colin stated that Amendment #3 impacts projects listed in the 2025-2028 TIP which is part of the 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the region. Full amendments to the TIP require a public comment period, a public hearing, and approval by the SRPC Commissioners.

C. Lentz reported that there are 2 local and 2 programmatic projects in the amendment. He provided a brief overview of the projects.

- 44349 Durham: Main Street and Mast Road-a shifting of engineering and construction funds.
- Recreation Trails Program-a statewide program annual submission-in kind match.
- 45271 Tech Transfer Center
- 43552 Rochester

The group engaged in discussion on the Durham project and how traffic is affected by football games. The group also discussed the proposed widening and re-configuring of route 11 to accommodate future development by The Ridge.

**2. Vote to approve the amendment to the TIP and MTP**



M. Bobinsky motioned to approve the amendment to the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program with corresponding updates to the 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. D. Manter seconded the motion. The motion passed following a unanimous vote in favor.

### 3. Legislative Forum

#### **The Commissioners engaged in a robust discussion with the Senators. Key points discussed:**

- The state faces a projected \$60–80 million budget deficit, though revenues are stronger than expected, resulting in a budget shaped by compromises.
- Transportation infrastructure funding remains a major challenge, while there is bipartisan support for water and sewer investments to support housing development.
- The most effective time to engage legislators is during the summer, particularly during the Senate budget phase; this year, bills were due in mid-September.
- Citizens and commissioners can participate remotely or attend hearings and are encouraged to be more active, including testifying or engaging lobbyist support.
- A hearing on SB 627 (tolls) is scheduled for Tuesday at 1 PM, with proposals to:
  - Increase tolls for out-of-state transponders
  - Hold NH transponder tolls steady
  - Shift toll-setting authority from the Executive Council to the Legislature
  - Add an inflation escalator managed by DOT
  - Expand the turnpike designation on I-93 up to Route 393
- Gas Tax & Transit Funding: Republican leadership discussed the possibility of increasing the gas tax, but no legislation was filed. Transit funding remains difficult, with ongoing questions about whether gas tax revenues can constitutionally support transit and the additional challenge of lost federal funding tied to census changes.
- Workforce & Population Retention: There may be opportunities to connect transportation funding to workforce and population-retention initiatives such as Stay Work Play and the 603 initiative, which support populations critical to New Hampshire's economy.
- Route 11 Concepts: Senator Watters proposed exploring Route 11 as a complete streets project or potentially incorporating a portion into the turnpike system, and requested a meeting with Senators Gray and McConkey along with city staff to discuss these ideas.
- Benefits of Transit Investment: Transit improvements were highlighted as enhancing safety and reducing the need for additional travel lanes.
- Legislative Environment: The Senate's more collegial and bipartisan atmosphere presents opportunities to advance transportation and infrastructure efforts, including the idea of regular convenings between senators and regional planning commissioners.
- Housing Policy: The "housing champions" model was cited as a valuable approach for demonstrating the state's commitment to addressing affordable housing needs.
- There is interest in integrating child care programs into the housing champions framework, as well as into bike and pedestrian infrastructure planning.
- Zoning reforms are being considered to allow and support home-based child care.



- A new bill this year would expand child care scholarships, providing more dependable revenue for providers; Vermont's model was cited, including cases where VT families enroll children in NH child care centers.
- Senator Watters introduced legislation to allow housing on military bases (Pembroke, Pease, and Strafford) targeted to individual service members.
- There was interest in sharing an NYU student presentation on child care with senators to inform policy discussions.
- Young people are increasingly choosing not to live in New Hampshire due to factors such as underfunded public education, lack of a critical mass of peers leading to social isolation, high housing costs, and limited supports for families.
- Long-term underfunding of programs in New Hampshire has strained the state's ability to fund transportation and education, highlighting the need to seriously examine new or alternative revenue sources.
- Participants emphasized the need to move beyond partisan divisions, take a long-term perspective, and think creatively about solutions.
- Encouraging multigenerational housing and communities was identified as an important strategy for strengthening social and economic resilience.
- Seniors on fixed incomes are facing increasing pressure from rising property taxes, leading many to vote down local budgets and making it more difficult for municipalities to meet their obligations. This strain is intensified when state funding reductions shift additional costs onto towns.
- Environmental Legislation: Several environmental bills are pending, including proposals addressing cyanobacteria and other water quality concerns.
- Energy discussions include a proposed "balcony solar" bill that would allow individuals to own portable solar panels they can take with them when they move.
- There is bipartisan support in the Senate for solar energy storage and broader renewable energy initiatives, though the House remains less supportive.
- Senator Watters is exploring legislation to enable microgrid energy generation, with the goal of keeping energy produced in New Hampshire available within the state under ISO constraints.

#### **4. Other Business**

There was no other business

#### **5. Citizens Forum**

There was no citizens forum

#### **6. Adjourn**

Following a motion, a second, and a unanimous vote in favor, the meeting adjourned at 10:35 A.M.

