

Meeting called to order 9:02

Present: Chair Michelle Mears, Somersworth; Vanessa Price, Barrington; Gretchen Young, Rochester; Katrin Kasper, Lee; Wayne Lehman, Lee; Michael Williams, COAST; John Mullen, Middleton; Seth Creighton, Rochester; Colin Lentz, SRPC; Jen Czysz, SRPC

Present online: Leigh Levine, FHWA; Lindsay Butler, Newmarket; Donna Benton, Dover; Bruce Woodruff, Milton, Jack Wade, DES; Mac Bevier, DES; Mark Davie, SPRC; Rachel Dewey, SRPC

### **Community Updates**

No community updates to report.

### **Action Item: Minutes from November 1, 2024**

Mr. Williams made a motion to accept the minutes; seconded by Ms. Kasper.  
Vote: Unanimous in Favor

### **Action Item: Highway Safety Target Setting**

Mr. Lentz explains target setting and reasons to support state target or set a regional target separate from the state. No government body can “promise” zero fatalities or serious injuries; this is an aspirational goal.

Mr. Mullen asks if fatalities have been trending down.

Mr. Lentz responds yes, as driving has improved, and alcohol laws have become stricter. Mr. Lentz refers to a steady decline in fatality and serious injuries.

Ms. Young states there is somewhat of a baseline risk from driving anyhow. Mr. Williams concurs, adding that laws are meant to help drive the number down as best as possible.

Mr. Mullen inquires about the presented dip in fatalities in 2019. Mr. Lentz suggests it is random. Discussion ensued about pandemic driving habits.

Mr. Lentz displays a chart with absolute “maximum” fatalities to occur for the average fatalities over time to not be on a downward trend. Mr. Mullen inquires about the calculations behind the figures presented. Ms. Dewey says 2024 would need a very low amount of crashes to replace the other very low year as it will soon not be included in this rolling average.

Ms. Young inquires about the implications of the goals set, such as grants or funding.

Mr. Lentz supplies motorcycle fatalities and serious injuries as a supplemental measure that is not federally required for SRPC.

Ms. Mears asks if target setting incorporates population. Mr. Lentz responds no. Mr. Lentz reiterates that targets are required for the TIP update.

Ms. Mears asks for a motion to adopt these targets as presented. Ms. Czysz references the memo in the meeting packet. Mr. Williams states he does not have an issue with the calculations or statistics and perceives the target setting to be a formality because some of these are out of the MPO’s or transit agencies’ control.

There may be some marginal control like sidewalks or lighting. Ms. Young concurs, stating that a desire for zero deaths is obvious. But to what end? It's not realistic to make everything 100% safe. Placing sidewalks everywhere in a city is obviously safer, but financially it is difficult. It is difficult to set a target of zero because someone could challenge the lack of a sidewalk in a given location. Mr. Lentz says it [the target-setting] is a requirement. He concurs, stating it is akin to ADA requirements. Everywhere should be accessible but that alone is not driving a city to address accessibility gaps everywhere. Ms. Czysz states the vote is meant to affirm that the numbers are on a downward trend. She states TAC is meant to vote on the summary table, gesturing to the displayed chart. Mr. Lentz elaborates on the analysis. Ms. Mears states these are not attainable goals, stating it is hard to predict and voting on a not-zero figure seems random. Ms. Czysz suggests these goals as presented may be aspirational goals. Ms. Young states that to implement these goals would contradict safety and economic development. Mr. Williams states it is difficult to have this conversation alone because it is competing for resources that have other values. Ms. Kasper says there are other forces not being seen in these statistics, naming the changing police workforce. Mr. Lentz agrees, adding that SRPC is planning for more conversations with police departments in the region in addition to the ones had this past fall. Mr. Lentz relays from these conversations that people are not disincentivized from driving poorly if that information will not get reported back to their insurance. Discussion about camera enforcement ensues. Mr. Lentz reminds the group that the safety action plan is coming and more discussion about police support can be had with that process. At this time, VHB is digging deeper into crash statistics as part of that process.

Mr. Lentz points to additional statistics and trends in the memo in the meeting packet. Discussion ensues about vulnerable road users and the place for e-bikes and other alternative wheeled modes like scooters and golf carts.

Mr. Lentz relays that there are projects municipalities are already interested in that will become eligible when the Safety Action Plan is finished.

Mr. Williams motions to recommend the targets as presented. Mr. Mullen seconds. Unanimous vote, with Mr. Wade and Ms. Bevier abstaining.

Mr. Lentz says this is the core of the targets. Additional outreach is being completed as part of the regional safety action plan process. Mr. Lentz notes that police departments need support for IT and GIS infrastructure. Municipalities may ask for an Road Safety Audit for any public road where crashes resulting in fatalities or serious injuries have occurred. SRPC will be added to the state traffic records committee soon. Ms. Mears asks if VHB can discuss further at the next TAC meeting. Ms. Czysz responds that the whole Commission should be invited to such a presentation.

### **Other Business**

Ms. Mears apologizes for missing the Amtrak "field trip" on December 10.

Mr. Wade reports that there is new clean diesel funding from EPA to replace vehicles in municipal fleets. Applications are due January 24. Ms. Kasper offers to assist any community with this process.

<https://www.des.nh.gov/business-and-community/loans-and-grants/dera>

**Adjourn**

Mr. Mullen motions to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Lehman  
Meeting adjourned at 10:25