



STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN 24

STRAFFORD
Regional Planning Commission

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Strafford Regional Planning Commission's Public Participation Plan

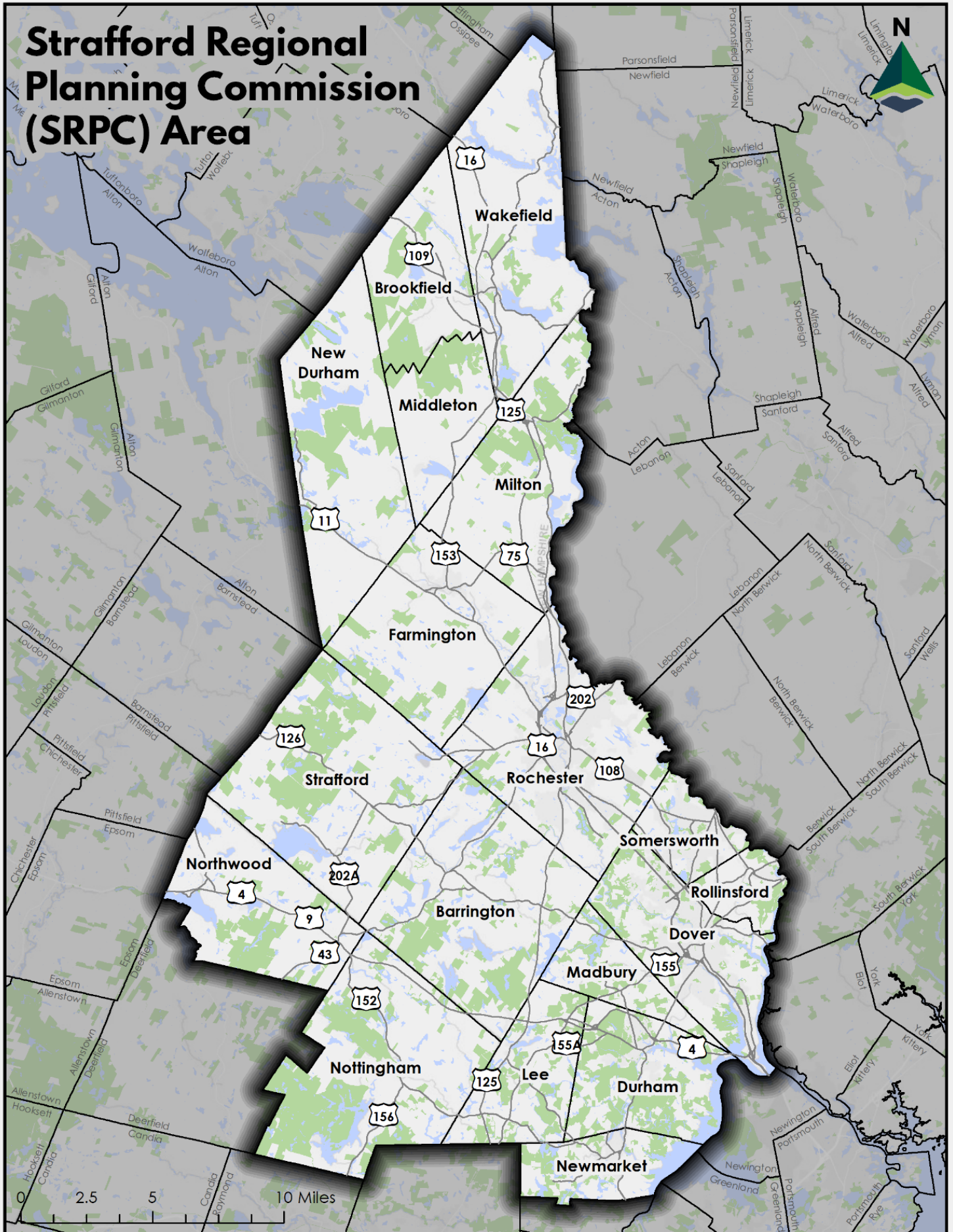
The Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dover-Rochester NH-ME urbanized area in southeastern New Hampshire, which includes 18 communities (see the map on the next page). SRPC is responsible for facilitating a regional process for transportation decision-making. Effective and inclusive public participation is vital to that decision-making process and federal law defines specific requirements under a "Continuing, Cooperative, and Comprehensive" approach to transportation planning. Those requirements and practices have evolved over decades and were upheld in the most recent update to federal transportation authorization – the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

That law requires MPOs to adopt a Public Participation Plan that establishes strategies and goals for engaging members of the public in the Strafford region and ensuring their fair and equitable representation. This plan is reviewed as part of the 4-year certification process conducted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to ensure the planning process is fully accessible to the public.

The Public Participation Plan documents the actions to be carried out by SRPC to ensure that opportunities exist for the public to be involved in transportation planning activities, pursuant to Title 23 CFR 450.316 of Statewide Planning; Metropolitan Planning and Criteria and Procedures for Determining Conformity to State or Federal Implementation Plans of Transportation Plans, Programs and Projects; and Statewide Transportation Planning Rules.

The Public Participation Plan was formally adopted by the Strafford RPC Policy Committee on August 16, 2024.

Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) Area



Public participation is essential for shaping the transportation planning activities of SRPC. This document will serve as the organization's public participation guide for implementing transportation policy and conducting project planning and development. A public participation plan is a document that:

defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. (23 CFR 450.316(a))

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN?

Transportation projects help determine the shape and character of a region. The transportation system and transportation policies play a major role in determining where people live, how they get to work, what modes of travel they choose, and where businesses develop. Transportation also plays a significant role in the environmental quality and livability of an area.

People affected by transportation planning and decisions have a right to have their voices heard in that planning process. The public should be informed about transportation decisions being made and have an opportunity. Effective public involvement is important for identifying issues, priorities, needs, and other factors that should inform transportation decision-making.

Not only is it important for an agency to understand the values of its stakeholders, it is equally important for those stakeholders to understand the planning process and their role in it. When members of the public are involved in the planning process, they gain insight into the role of government, including limitations on development such as lack of revenue.

SRPC aims to engage the public through the processes outlined in this document and the plan identifies a variety of new virtual and traditional engagement techniques. These include in-person engagement, social media, remote access to virtual platforms, targeted stakeholder interviews, and online survey and meeting options that can supplement and not replace traditional survey and meeting opportunities.

Public Participation Policy

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) builds on the foundations of transportation planning provided in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST) and other transportation authorizing statutes preceding it. The statute requires a public participation component for the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The metropolitan planning process must "include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans." (23 CFR part 450; 49 CFR part 613)

Additional metropolitan planning organization public participation requirements and criteria are presented in Appendix A, Federal Regulation on Public Participation Processes.

Review of Public Participation Process

SRPC's planning processes, including public participation practices, are reviewed every four years by FHWA and FTA. SRPC was reviewed in 2014 and again in 2018. In the past, SRPC completed a self-assessment to monitor public participation processes by answering the following questions:

- What was the success of specific strategies in attracting the public and associated comments?
- What level of public input was received for various planning products?
- Was public input considered by decision-makers?
- Should any new strategies or adjustments be considered in the following year?
- Are any changes or amendments necessary to the Public Participation Plan?

SRPC also maintains this Public Participation Plan document on a four-year cycle and tracks progress via performance measures and indicators.

Requirements Addressing Low-Income and Minority Communities

SRPC works to ensure that all citizens in the region are given the opportunity to participate in transportation planning processes. The Strafford Regional Planning Commission's Assurance of Non-Discrimination states:

The Strafford Regional Planning Commission does not discriminate in its programs, activities, or employment against individuals based on race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, sexual orientation, or national origin.

SRPC provides, upon request, reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities, including impaired vision and hearing. It is requested that anyone with a need for accommodation contact the Commission prior to meetings and other activities where assistance will be needed.

Title VI

These practices are in line with Title VI/Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states:

No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act [42 USC 2000d])

Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations, (Executive Order 12898), reinforced the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It was signed by President Clinton on February 11, 1994, and was published on February 16, 1994 in the Federal Register, Vol. 59, No. 32. Executive Order 12898 and the accompanying memorandum focus federal attention on the environmental and human health conditions in minority and low-income communities.

SRPC's practices follow environmental justice protocols. Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

On April 15, 1997, U.S. DOT issued its Final Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low- Income Populations. Among other provisions, the order requires programming and planning activities to:

- Include explicit consideration of the effects of transportation decisions on minority and low-income populations.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for public involvement by members of minority and low-income populations.
- Gather, where relevant, appropriate, and practical, demographic information (race,

color, national origin, and income level) on the populations served or affected by transportation decisions.

- Minimize or mitigate any adverse impact on minority or low-income populations.

Requirements Addressing Populations with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 includes requirements regarding the involvement of persons with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation services. The ADA includes provisions that ensure those with disabilities have accommodations included in transportation facility development, are able to access the sites where public participation activities occur, and are guaranteed access to information available at those forums.

SRPC's public participation methods to address the ADA are described in Ensuring Equity in Engagement (See Appendix F).

Stakeholder Spotlight

While preparing the 2024 update, SRPC staff met with staff from Future In Sight, which has supported blind and visually impaired people in New Hampshire for over 100 years. According to their records, as of May 2023, Future In Sight has 1,807 current and past clients in the Strafford region alone. They also estimate that number only represents half the people who could benefit from support for visual impairment, which affects people of all ages.

Future In Sight staff made several recommendations on how SRPC could make its website, products, and processes more accessible to blind and visually impaired people.

State Mandates

In New Hampshire, there are certain laws for public access that relate to the planning process. Right to Know legislation conveyed in RSA 91-A:1 general preamble states that:

Openness in the conduct of public business is essential to a democratic society. The purpose of this chapter is to ensure both the greatest possible public access to the actions, discussions and records of all public bodies, and their accountability to the people.

Governmental records include all writings made, maintained, or kept by the state or any agency, institution, or political subdivision for use in the exercise of functions required or authorized by law or administrative rule, or involving the receipt or expenditure of public funds. SRPC's procedures for distributing information in accordance with the public records law of New Hampshire are discussed in the following sections.

NH RSA 91-A:2 enables governmental entities to hold electronic or telephonic meetings,

without a quorum physically present, under emergency situations where there is imperative businesses to be conducted and as determined by the chair.

Organizational Self-Assessment for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice impact

In early 2024, SRPC commissioners and staff conducted an organizational self-assessment using the Praxis “Working Principles for Health Justice & Racial Equity”. Their responses covered SRPC’s wide range of programs and services and were not exclusive to SRPC’s transportation programs. SRPC’s work often has a direct impact on communities; it is important to ensure positive benefits are equitable, and are not having a disproportionate effect on people. The Praxis assessment is structured to help SRPC ask critical questions about SRPC’s programs and engagement efforts:

- **Is SRPC acting with care?**
Proceed Thoughtfully. Be Deliberate. Seek To Understand. Build Trusting Relationships.
- **Does SRPC use an inclusive approach to outreach and engagement?**
Those Most Affected By Inequities Are In The Best Position To Define The Problem, Design Appropriate Solutions, And Define Success.
- **Is SRPC fostering authentic community collaboration?**
Authentic Community Collaboration Builds Dignity And Allows For All Perspectives To Be Considered, Integrated, And Recognized; Solutions Should Be Co-Designed, Co-Implemented, And Co-Measured/Evaluated.
- **Are the solutions or actions proposed by SRPC sustainable?**
Solutions Should Be Community-Driven, Build Community Capacity And Resident Knowledge, Deepen Relationships, Increase Programmatic Capacity, Build Lasting Infrastructure, And Ensure Respect For All.
- **Does SRPC demonstrate a commitment to transformation?**
All Participants Can Learn From One Another, Reflect On Their Own Structures And Practices, And Find Areas To Continuously Improve Organizational Culture And Practices.

Staff and Commissioners completed the Praxis evaluation independently and rated SRPC’s programs and efforts by answering a series of questions under each of five primary category questions outlined above. They rated each question with a response on a scale of 1 to 5. The results of the evaluation are summarized on the page below and more detailed results are included in appendix H.

Summary of Staff and Commissioner Organizational Evaluation

Example

Rate the following question on a 1 to 5 scale: "Our policies and programs are evaluated by their impact, not their intentions".

Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)	Total
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Is SRPC acting with care?

- SRPC has the most room for improvement in conducting risk assessments to ensure its programs and projects are not resulting in unintended harm on historically underserved communities.
- Commissioners and staff were somewhat split when asked about the *impact* of SRPC's programs versus their *intentions*. More staff felt that SRPC could do more analysis of the impact of programs and projects to see if the intent was achieved.
- Staff and Commissioners both felt that SRPC's actions could be more explicit in addressing biases around privilege, class, race, ethnicity, immigration status, gender, identity, and disability.
- Results suggest that project timelines don't always allow SRPC to fully develop relationships and trust with partners.

Does SRPC use an inclusive approach to outreach and engagement?

- Staff and Commissioners both feel SRPC can do more to ensure people impacted by actions are the ones leading the decision-making process and are supported in their leadership role.
- Even more needs to be done to increase representation from members of impacted communities. This applies to individual SRPC projects and it's governance overall.
- Staff and Commissioners varied widely in their assessment of SRPC's recognition of the differential impacts policies can have on a community because of factors like income, race, disability, etc.
- Most said that SRPC often or always recognizes and is inclusive of community members' individual identities.

Is SRPC fostering authentic community collaboration?

- Both staff and Commissioners acknowledged that community member participation in SRPC's activities is not financially or logistically compensated. Recent events held by SRPC have included options for childcare and refreshments. Other compensation is not common. Events and meetings functions do not compensate attendees for time or travel expenses.
- SRPC could do more to design its decision-making processes to value people's lived experience as much or greater than their professional experience.
- Staff and Commissioners agree that more should be done to intentionally assess and remove barriers to participation in SRPC's activities.

- Responses to other questions in this category were overall positive.

Are the solutions or actions proposed by SRPC sustainable?

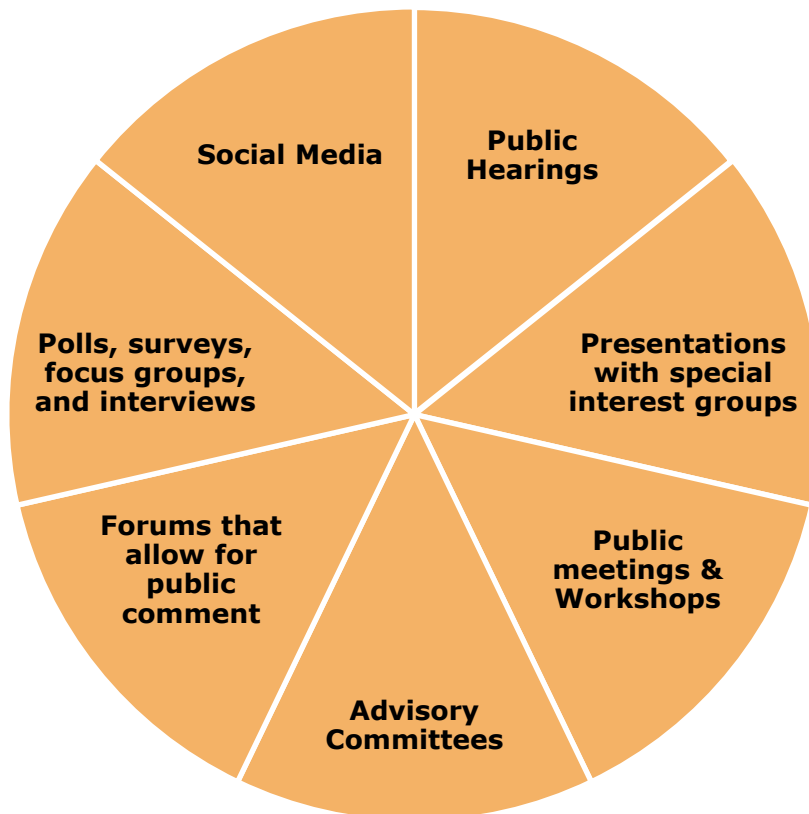
- SRPC scored the best on questions in this category.
- Staff and Commissioners were both optimistic about SRPC's performance in dedicating funding to developing assets for communities, and addressing root causes of community challenges.
- Some staff felt that SRPC's activities could do more to support community infrastructure, rather than service delivery.
- This category also included the question about compensation for community member participation – with the same results from staff and Commissioners.

Does SRPC demonstrate a commitment to transformation?

- Staff felt that program and project timelines need to include more time for self-reflection and peer-to-peer feedback.
- Staff also expressed that organizational operations could assess power dynamics, and projects sometimes lack built-in accountability systems to ensure work is consistently aligned with community values.
- Commissioners were more positive in their evaluation of the questions in this category, but several of them agreed that programs could include more time for self-reflection and feedback.

SRPC and Public Participation Strategies

SRPC's practice is to adopt strategies that enable the organization to meet state and federal policies for public participation procedures and encourage a robust public participation process. The contents of this plan provide the framework in which SRPC will meet the state and federal requirements for public participation and outreach.



SRPC Public Participation Goals

Transportation decision-makers must consider the concerns of the public and users who may be affected by a proposed project. SRPC's goals incorporate the outreach techniques in 23 CFR 450.316(a) (See Appendix A) and aim to:

- Educate and inform the public about transportation planning processes.
- Solicit public input to identify transportation-related needs, desires, issues, and concerns.
- Advocate on behalf of regional communities, acting as a conduit between municipalities and statewide/federal entities.
- Foster collaboration and lasting relationships between citizens, municipalities, the business community, and statewide organizations.

Strengthening public awareness of the services provided by SRPC and sharing information developed through transportation planning activities are main points of emphasis for the organization. The development of required federal documents remains a major component of the SRPC work program, and these documents are one of the primary tools for informing the public about transportation planning in the region. SRPC creates numerous planning documents to track regional transportation activities. Most plans provide a framework for achieving planning goals outlined in the documents or by federal regulations. Topics can range from reporting four years of federally funded transportation projects, to laying out a 25+ year vision for regional transportation development.

SRPC has also developed more data collection and analysis programs that make technical information more accessible to the public. The regional data snapshot was first published in 2021 and contains a wealth of metrics on demographics, economics, quality of life, mobility, and infrastructure. The 2024 edition of the data snapshot includes individualized community profiles and an interactive map viewer.

Direct, in-person outreach to the public and stakeholders remains one of SRPC's most effective ways to engage with the public and partners on specific issues regarding improvement of the transportation system. Staff have found that going to meet people on their terms increases participation and engagement by the public.

GOAL 1 - Educate and inform the public about transportation planning processes

Partners

- Provide partners with information about beneficial funding opportunities.
- Educate partners on regional transportation planning processes via presentations, meetings, outreach materials, and reports.
- Serve as a conduit between state and federal agencies to disseminate information to partners relative to transportation planning.
- Provide information about meetings and public hearings to provide opportunities for partners to participate in the planning process.
- Create accessible materials for events, projects, programs, and other transportation planning using plain language and color contrast.
- Communicate best practices for transportation planning to partners, the public, and decision- makers.

Public

- Provide timely, adequate, and understandable information to the public.
- Educate the public on the regional transportation planning processes via presentations, meetings, outreach materials, and reports.
- Explain the SRPC structure including committees & tasks of the planning organization.
- Provide information about meetings and public hearings to provide opportunities for the public to participate in the planning process.
- Create informational materials for events, projects, programs, and other transportation planning.
- Communicate best practices for transportation planning to the public and decision-makers.

Goal 2 - Solicit public input to identify transportation-related needs, desires, issues, and concerns

Partners

- Emphasize participation from partners early and often for planning efforts, key decision points, & when final draft products are released.

- Ensure availability of draft documents so that partners may share public comments and express concerns during the planning process.
- Schedule and organize accessible meetings with both in-person and virtual opportunities for public comment and information sharing.

Public

- Emphasize public participation early and often particularly at key decision points and release of public review documents.
- Ensure availability of draft documents to citizens to share public comments and concerns during the planning process. These comments will be considered and documented.
- Schedule and organize meetings for public comment opportunities and information sharing.
- When possible, develop project timelines so public outreach coincides with popular, scheduled events to maximize contact with the interested public (for example: farmer's markets or town voting day).

GOAL #3- Advocate on behalf of regional partners, acting as a conduit between municipalities and statewide/ federal entities

Partners

- Maintain consistent contact with municipal, agency, and business partners to understand emerging transportation issues and potential points of advocacy. Reach out to new potential partners as the opportunity arises.
- Make local and regional partners early and active participants in the development of transportation plans, programs, and projects to reflect their priorities and needs.
- Represent partner concerns to New Hampshire's congressional delegation, the state legislature, and state agencies such as the New Hampshire Department of Transportation.

Public

- Include opportunities for early and active input from the public for the development of transportation plans, programs, and projects to reflect local and regional priorities and needs.
- Increase the ability of citizens to share their comments and express concerns about transportation challenges. Ensure comments are effectively considered, documented, and responded to.

GOAL #4 - Foster collaboration and lasting relationships between citizens, the business community, and statewide organizations

Partners

- Provide opportunities for partners to voice their concerns to state and federal agencies at meetings and other events for public comment.
- Facilitate opportunities for teamwork among regional communities, organizations, and entities.
- Encourage the integration of transportation with other areas of planning (economic development) when input opportunities arise.

Public

- Provide opportunities for citizens to voice their concerns to state and federal agencies at meetings and other opportunities for public comment.

Specific tasks and objectives for 2024-2027

Make the transportation project management process more interactive and accessible to the public with online tools.

SRPC maintains a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which includes federally funded projects progressing through the next four years. Projects in the TIP are regularly modified and updated as they are engineered and constructed. The process for modifying projects is conducted cooperatively with NHDOT and includes public comment opportunities. SRPC's documents related to the TIP management process is not currently interactive. For example, the most current TIP is posted on the SRPC website, but only as a static document and without a map. SRPC will work to integrate modern web-based tools that enable members of the public to navigate and search through TIP projects, see project funding and history, and view projects in an interactive map.

Conduct more direct outreach to communities in the region who are underrepresented in the transportation process, underserved by transportation services, or vulnerable because of demographic and socioeconomic factors.

Reaching people who are transportation limited is an important role for a metropolitan planning organization like SRPC. SRPC's transportation programs and plans include federally-required public input opportunities, but SRPC should do more to engage with people in the region directly. SRPC will use geographic and demographic data, and partner contacts to identify people who are transportation limited. Included in this effort will be people who are vulnerable to climate change and socioeconomic impacts.

Include early opportunities for public input in the biennial regional project solicitation process.

SRPC conducts a region-wide project solicitation process every two years. The goal is to develop projects for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The process begins with direct discussion with municipal staff and decision-makers, who know their community's transportation challenges and priorities. The process and candidate projects are reviewed by SRPC's technical and policy committees at their regularly scheduled public meetings. However, the process lacks more direct outreach to the public to solicit ideas about transportation challenges and potential improvements.

Continue and expand strategic use of online surveys on specific plans and projects to reach more individuals for input

SRPC has had recent success generating public input for projects and planning efforts by using online survey tools. For example, an update of the transportation chapter of

Barrington's master plan included an online survey that received 614 responses. The survey was timed to include promotion at town voting day and through annual tax notifications through the mail. This model could serve SRPC's future transportation programs and other planning efforts. SRPC generally organizes outreach efforts to coincide with large events in the region, such as farmers markets.

Stakeholder Spotlight

In 2024 SRPC began meeting with staff from the University of New Hampshire Institute on Diversity (IOD). The IOD envisions a future where all people, including individuals living with disabilities, are fully engaged members of communities and where culturally appropriate supports that lead to independence, productivity, and a satisfying quality of life are available to individuals and families across the life span. This mission fits well with SRPC's role in working to ensure all people can participate in the regional transportation planning process. SRPC will continue to work with the Institute on Disability and find opportunities to collaborate.

INFORMING THE PUBLIC

Along with creating and maintaining required planning documents, SRPC collects, standardizes, analyzes, and shares a variety of transportation data. Finding ways to make data more useful and accessible to communities, regional organizations, and the public is a primary focus of SRPC.

Data is playing a more significant role in everyday life. While data were once collected and stored, often for limited purposes, today's technology makes it possible to widely distribute data. Finding ways to efficiently and effectively communicate and share data using online tools allows others to find meaningful uses for data that can go beyond the original purpose for its collection.

Documents

Documents remain an important way SRPC communicates with the public. Much of the work SRPC does in the region can be understood by reading the transportation documents created by the organization, which are available online (www.strafford.org) and in our office.

Document Update Schedule

Each document prepared by the SRPC is updated on a set schedule, or as needed. The following chart details the schedule for updates.

Performance Measures Reporting	Updated every 1 Year
<u>Purpose</u>	
The performance measures annual report allows transportation planning metrics to be tracked, rated, and reported.	
<u>Engagement Opportunity</u>	
The public can attend an SRPC Policy or Technical Advisory Committee meeting to learn about the process. They also can review reports on the SRPC website.	

Annual Listing of Obligated Projects	Updated every 1 Year
<u>Purpose</u>	
The Annual Listing of Obligated Projects is a requirement of the federal government. Each year, Metropolitan Planning Organizations report on the total amount of federal funds that were obligated to transportation improvement projects during the preceding fiscal year.	

Engagement Opportunity

The public can view the Annual Listing on the SRPC website, or attend an SRPC Policy or Technical Advisory Committee meeting to learn about the document.

Transportation Improvement Program

Updated every **2** Years

Purpose

The TIP is a fiscally constrained four-year program of multi-modal transportation projects selected from the state's Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan. In order to move from the Ten Year Plan into the TIP, projects in the TIP must be fully developed with engineering scopes of work and cost estimates. Individual projects in the program are updated regularly. Smaller changes to funding occur monthly, while larger changes to funding and project scopes occur quarterly.

Engagement Opportunity

There is a public review period that lasts between 10 and 30 days ending with a public hearing. During this time the document is available in the SRPC office, online at www.straftford.org, and at the three city libraries in the region.

Project Solicitation

Updated every **2** Years

Purpose

SRPC solicits new projects for its Metropolitan Transportation Plan every two years. This process begins with direct outreach to municipal staff and representatives. They verify projects currently in the plan and discuss new projects for development. Local projects are reviewed and ranked by SRPC committee members. Those priority projects are elevated to undergo professional engineering assessment and prepare them for future funding opportunities.

Engagement Opportunity

The project solicitation and development process takes many months. Several Public committee meetings take place during that period to review the process and projects themselves. There is a public review period that lasts between 10 and 30 days ending with a public hearing. During this time the document is available in the SRPC office, online at www.straftford.org, and at the three city libraries in the region.

Unified Planning Working Program

Updated every **2** Years

Purpose

The UPWP identifies the specific planning priorities and work tasks that SRPC will address during a particular program period.

Engagement Opportunity

The document is available in the SRPC office, [online at www.straftford.org](http://www.straftford.org).

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Updated every **4** Years

Purpose

The metro plan is a long- range plan with a 20+ year horizon that encourages and promotes the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of surface transportation systems in the region.

Engagement Opportunity

There is a public review period of 30 days ending with a public hearing. During this time the document is available in the SRPC office, online at www.straftford.org, and at the three city libraries in the region.

ITS Architecture & Strategic Plan

Updated as needed

Purpose

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) are interrelated systems that work together to deliver transportation services. Integration of these systems requires an architecture to illustrate and gain consensus on the approach to be taken by a group of stakeholders regarding their particular systems. An ITS Architecture defines the systems and the interconnections and information exchanges between these systems.

Engagement Opportunity

There is a public review period of 30 days ending with a public hearing. During this time the document is available in the SRPC office, online at www.straftford.org, and at the three city libraries in the region.

Public Participation Plan

Updated every **4** Years

Purpose

The public participation plan documents the actions to be carried out to ensure opportunities exist for the public to be involved in transportation planning activities.

Engagement Opportunity

There is a public review period of 45 days ending with a public hearing. During this time the document is available in the SRPC office, online at www.straftford.org, and at the three city libraries in the region.

Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan

Updated every **5** Years

Purpose

The “Coordinated Plan” identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. It provides strategies for meeting their needs and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation.

Engagement Opportunity

There is a public review period of 30 days ending with a public hearing. During this time the document is available in the SRPC office, online at www.strafford.org, and at the three city libraries in the region.

Transportation Related Studies (Route 125 Corridor Study, Park and Ride Toolkit, etc...)

Purpose

These studies provide information on potential projects that are to be included in the planning documents SRPC creates.

Engagement Opportunity

There are public meetings and potential public review periods depending on the document or report. During public comment periods the document is available in the SRPC office, online at www.strafford.org, and at the three city libraries in the region.

Prospectus

Updated as needed

Purpose

The Prospectus defines the roles of various federal, state, and local agencies and entities involved in the transportation planning process. It also documents the interagency agreements that have been entered into between SRPC and other organizations (COAST, NHDOT, etc.).

Engagement Opportunity

There is a public review period of 30 days ending with a public hearing. During this time the document is available in the SRPC office, [online at www.strafford.org](http://www.strafford.org), and at the three city libraries in the region.

New Hampshire State Plans & Processes

(HSIP, Ten Year Plan, other)

Purpose

Statewide plans encompass planning processes and projects from each of the four Metropolitan Planning Organizations and allow for the expansion of current and future transportation planning in the state.

Engagement Opportunity

There are public meetings and potential public review periods depending on the document or report. During public comment periods the document is available in the SRPC office, online at www.straftford.org, and at the three city libraries in the region.

Public Notices & Public Hearings

As discussed in the previous chapter, public notices and public hearings are long-standing ways SRPC informs and engages the public. Public notices are primarily used to announce public comment periods and public hearings. Notices are distributed widely to ensure the public is well informed about opportunities to participate in reviewing documents, projects, and plans. SRPC maintains a comprehensive mailing list of elected officials, public officials, special interest groups, and others to ensure the widest distribution of documents. A list of interested parties includes the following:

- Boards of Selectmen and Town/City Councils.
- Planning Boards, Traffic Safety Committees, Public Works Officials/ Road Agents.
- Public and private transit and taxi operators, including demand-responsive operators.
- Human Service agencies with low-income, elderly, and disabled clients.
- Representatives from adjoining RPCs.
- Traffic safety and enforcement agencies.
- Chambers of Commerce, economic development organizations.
- Members of the State legislature.
- Appropriate state and federal agencies, including NHDOT, NHDES- Air Resources, NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs, and the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Pease Development Authority, FHWA, FTA, FAA, EPA.
- Individuals and groups with a demonstrated interest in transportation issues.
- Major businesses and business and industry associations.
- Schools and colleges.
- Transportation and highway user groups.
- Neighborhood associations.
- Those traditionally underserved by the transportation system.
- Members of the Technical Advisory Committee and SRPC Policy Committee not otherwise listed.

Public hearings often involve the use of PowerPoint presentations, live GIS mapping, and other visualizations to aid in the communication of information. There is also a citizen's forum on the meeting agenda to ensure all attendees can share their thoughts.

Meetings

SRPC meetings are one way the organization informs the public about the organization's planning activities. Approving documents, making planning policy decisions, and receiving feedback take place at meetings, which also allow the organization to educate and communicate about transportation trends, topics, projects, and regulations. Education and information-sharing make meetings an important outreach tool.

SRPC holds monthly Transportation Advisory Committee meetings (every first Friday at 9 a.m.) and Policy Committee meetings (every third Friday at 9 a.m.) at the SRPC offices at 150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Rochester, NH 03867 or virtually when it is deemed unsafe by the Governor to hold in-person meetings or the chair declares an emergency in accordance with 91-A:2. In addition to SRPC monthly meetings, staff members attend meetings outside the organization to inform the public about SRPC planning activities and transportation-related topics.

When electronic meetings must be used during emergency conditions, the meeting information is sent out to all affected stakeholders and posted on the SRPC website one week prior to the meeting. In the spring of 2020, the State of New Hampshire began strategic measures in dealing with COVID-19 and a world-wide pandemic. Under these extreme circumstances SRPC shared resources and tips to Commissioners and other stakeholders to ensure continuity of operations and meetings could be held successfully online.

When electronic meetings must be used, a virtual quorum of the members of the body must be accounted for by a roll call. The Chair of SRPC must authorize, with justification, meeting electronically. This statement is read by the chair.

Meetings may be recorded to ensure the meeting minutes are accurate. All voting requires an individual roll call.

Minutes are prepared for all meetings of the Technical Advisory and Policy committees. These are available on the SRPC website and upon request from SRPC.

SRPC regularly attends and participates in a number of regional boards that provide the opportunity to reach members of the public. They include the Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST) board, the Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT), and CommuteSMART Seacoast.

COAST

The SRPC executive director and regional transportation planner both serve on the COAST board of directors as member and alternate, respectively. The COAST board meets on the third or fourth Wednesday of each month.

ACT

The regional transportation planner represents SRPC as a member of ACT and of its executive committee. ACT focuses on coordinated human services transportation activities and implementation and works to provide expanded reliable transportation services to disadvantaged populations. The ACT executive committee meets monthly, and the ACT member meetings are held quarterly.

CommuteSMART Seacoast

The SRPC communications and outreach planner co-chairs the advisory board of CommuteSMARTseacoast. This organization is a transportation management association (TMA) whose mission is “to promote smart commuting options— carpooling, vanpooling, transit, bicycling, walking, and teleworking—that will support a livable and economically vibrant greater Seacoast community.” The group meets quarterly and holds annual challenges to engage the community in smart commuting practices.

CommuteSmart NH

The SRPC communications and outreach planner participates on the CommuteSmart NH (CSNH) Coordination Committee. CSNH is dedicated to encouraging and assisting people to choose sustainable transportation options in place of driving single occupancy vehicles. Partners actively support the development and provision of strategies and policies to reduce travel demand across the state including walking, bicycling, carpooling, telecommuting and using public transportation. The group meets monthly and holds annual challenges to engage the state in smart commuting practices.

Web-Based Outreach

The SRPC Website

The internet is one of the most popular and powerful ways of communicating information today. It can transfer complex ideas and information nearly instantaneously over long distances and on the user’s schedule. The internet also allows more members of the public to participate from home, the office, and just about anywhere in between. This is one of the ways SRPC addresses the challenge of communicating with disadvantaged populations and mobility-challenged individuals.

Content pertinent to SRPC is under the “transportation” tab on the SRPC website at www.straftford.org. The SRPC area of the website contains links to plans, studies, and documents. The website is continually updated to ensure accessibility for all parties. The transportation content on the website includes the following:

- A calendar of meetings, notices, and events.

- Agendas and meeting minutes.
- Links to a range of regional demographic, economic, and traffic data.
- Downloadable versions of planning documents
- GIS content.
- Informational flyers

SRPC launched a new website in 2020. It is designed to present and organize information in an intuitive, accessible fashion to maximize engagement. SRPC uses ArcGIS online, a mapping tool that allows geographic data to be shared widely. All of SRPC's standardized maps, including the transportation map, have been converted to ArcOnline and can now be viewed by the public on an interactive interface. A variety of project-specific interactive maps have also been added to our ArcOnline site, such as traffic counts. Additionally, we have created an Open Data Portal within our ArcOnline site that allows the public to download many of our GIS layers as shapefiles, KML's, and excel spreadsheets. The website includes a comprehensive regional data snapshot, which is updated annually. The snapshot includes approximately 130 metrics related to Demographics, Economic Vitality, Livability & Quality of Life, Mobility & Accessibility, and Resilience. The snapshot also includes customized profiles for each municipality based on many of the metrics in the snapshot.

Social Media

SRPC, the SRPC, and the Strafford Economic Development District use Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to stay current on trending planning topics and to provide followers with updated planning information. Each social media platform enables staff members to share surveys, photos, information, publications, and meeting dates.

SRPC uses YouTube to host videos of Transportation Advisory Committee and Policy Committee meetings. Videos of select Strafford meetings have been uploaded, and the organization plans to upload all TAC and Policy Committee meeting videos in FY 2021.

Constant Contact

SRPC relies heavily on email marketing software, Constant Contact. This program enables SRPC to create targeted contact lists of transportation stakeholders and send e-communications such as press releases, surveys, newsletters, weekly updates, meeting materials, and other communications.

This tool is used regularly and integrates with Strafford's social media, enabling e-communications not only to be sent to targeted email contact groups, but also to be posted to Strafford's social media. Posts can even be scheduled so the SRPC audience can receive reminders to check out news they may have missed. The program also offers analytical functions which let the Strafford staff track statistics such as open rate.

Mailing Lists

Mailing list databases help the Strafford staff organize and update its public communications. Using mailing lists, SRPC reaches target audiences with announcements of upcoming events, meeting invitations, newsletters, summary reports, email blasts, and other information about its activities and those of its partners and funders. The Strafford staff updates the mailing lists regularly, and often creates targeted mailing lists for surveys or other project-specific communications. The master mailing list includes approximately 1,000 individuals and organizations.

Blogs & Newsletters

As with the website, SRPC shares a newsletter and blog site with the Strafford Regional Planning Commission. Blogs and newsletters are part of SRPC's public outreach strategy because they are an effective way to distribute planning news and information throughout the region and the state.

The organization produces 36 weekly updates, which include a specific transportation section; 12 newsletters, which include transportation funding opportunities and other information; and close to 12 blog entries annually to ensure regular communication concerning regionally relevant planning topics. Roughly half of these blogs are focused on transportation planning topics.

Other Media Techniques

Visualization Techniques

Visualizations use images, maps, graphs, and other visual techniques to help clearly convey information and data. Visualizations are a tool to help communicate information about projects and programs and lead to better decision-making. Examples of visualization techniques used in the Strafford region include the following:

- Maps to better communicate transportation project locations and information to communities in the region.
- Online regional data snapshot with interactive map tool
- Aerial projections of how alternative land use policy scenarios could affect development and the transportation system in 20 years. Renderings or photo simulations to show how a widened roadway or streetscaping could change the character of a community.
- Flow charts to clearly depict the transportation planning process.
- Graphs to depict transportation project-funding distributions.

Opportunities for Public Participation

Throughout the transportation planning process, there are numerous opportunities for the public to contribute, offer feedback, and inform decision-making. Since the last Public Participation Plan update, SRPC has sought out and embraced new technologies in order to expand the ease and opportunities for public participation.

For all relevant events, meetings, forums, etc., SRPC follows the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act to ensure reasonable accommodations are made for those with disabilities. Included in notices and meeting agendas is the following statement:

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. Include a description of the accommodation you will need including as much detail as you can provide. Also include a way we can contact you if we need more information. Last minute requests will be accepted but may be impossible to fill. Send an email to srpc@strafford.org or call 603-994-3500.

Public Forums, Workshops, & Focus Interviews

Public forums, workshops, and focus groups provide a setting for public discussion. These events are intermittently held by SRPC to gather feedback from the public about a specific topic and will often include multiple sessions to cover different content or capture an evolving view of a topic. Such forums may include open houses/interaction periods, activities to engage public input, formal presentations, brainstorming sessions, small break-out groups, focus interviews, and charettes.

Surveys and Questionnaires

SRPC uses surveys to gather information for major document updates and to help guide general transportation planning. Electronic surveys and our staff's ability to incorporate more information and visualizations through digital media are making it more efficient to collect information in this way. However, digital media are limited in who they reach; one pitfall of using electronic versions of surveys and information-sharing is that some segments of the population can be missed. So, while more costly and time consuming, SRPC maintains a balance between soliciting information electronically and through old-fashioned face-to-face surveys and interviews.

SRPC used surveys when working on the most recent iteration of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan in 2015. This engagement strategy allowed staff to gather input from the public on several issues related to transportation planning. Staff used person to person surveys, and also made use of an application called Quick Tap Survey, which was used in conjunction with iPads.

Outreach Events

Soliciting input from the public can be challenging. A strategy SRPC has adopted to address this challenge is to attend public events throughout the region. Doing so gives our staff additional opportunities to collect input from members of public who may not be able to attend meetings or who are unaware of transportation planning in the region.

Surveys and dialogue are often used at these events to gather information to inform the planning process. Attending public events also provides the organization with an opportunity to introduce our planning activities and educate people on where they can find more information about SRPC's work.

SRPC will often join the Strafford Regional Planning Commission at these events to educate and solicit information about a wide array of planning topics including transportation, land use, economic development, energy, and the environment. This can be valuable for understanding planning impacts from a holistic perspective.

Ensuring Equity in Engagement

Ensuring equity in engagement processes is often challenging. Public participation policies, addressed at the beginning of this document, require that all citizens in the region are given the opportunity to participate in transportation planning processes. Legislation such as Title VI and environmental justice laws lay out the requirements and steps SRPC must follow in its planning processes. In addition, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 includes requirements regarding the involvement of persons with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation services.

In adhering to these policies, SRPC aims to create opportunities for wider participation from both usual participants and underserved, underrepresented populations. Reaching out to diverse populations and providing multiple ways in which to participate helps those who are uncomfortable in public meetings to provide their input.

Title VI

In accordance with Title VI (defined on page 8), SRPC has developed several outreach strategies to connect with underrepresented persons and groups, including low-income, minority populations, and those with Limited English Proficiency in order to ensure that decisions that affect them regarding transportation planning are made with their input.

Strategies and related performance measures are reported each year in the Title VI Goals and Accomplishments that is shared on the Strafford Regional Planning Commission website and with the NH Department of Transportation. Some of the goals laid out in this report include the following:

1. Reach out to underrepresented persons and groups, including low-income and minority populations and those with limited proficiency in English to ensure that decisions are made with their input taken into consideration.
2. Ensure that no person is denied access to or participation in Metropolitan Planning Organization programs.
3. Provide notice to the public that the Strafford Regional Planning Commission/SRPC operates its programs and conducts its planning activities subject to the nondiscrimination requirement of Title VI and that members of the public can request additional information regarding the obligations of the SRPC.

Strategies and measures identified in order for SRPC to achieve these goals include the following:

- Inviting up to three speakers to TAC and or Policy Committee meetings to discuss updates to regional and statewide federally funded projects. Presentations will be focused on education and engagement regarding transportation planning and processes. Post videos of these presentations (with permission of the presenters) on the SRPC YouTube channel and include news about such projects on the SRPC home page at least once a quarter. This will help get vital information to individuals who are unable to attend our meetings due to health issues, employment obligations, or for other reasons.
- Reaching out to groups involved with underrepresented populations to (e.g., Dover Adult Learning Center, cultural organizations) get advice on how to best reach these populations.
- Holding the majority of Technical Advisory, Policy, and Commission meetings in locations that are accessible by public transportation.
- Providing ample public notice for meetings, considering that some people might need transportation to meetings. Exploring options for working with COAST and ACT to provide transportation upon request, or scheduling meetings during times that buses run.

Environmental Justice

As explained by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Similar strategies are taken to ensure participation and fair treatment to all citizens and visitors in SRPC region as are explained in the Title VI section, above.

SRPC staff members have completed environmental justice training to ensure that tools and policies are implemented through the organization's planning and outreach processes.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA includes requirements regarding the involvement of persons with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation services. SRPC does its best to ensure that these individuals are able to participate through attendance at meetings or at outreach events. SRPC holds the majority, if not all, of its public meetings in locations accessible from the COAST bus route.

In addition, SRPC includes the following language on its meeting agendas:

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. Include a description of the accommodation you will need including as much detail as you can. Also include a way we can contact you if we need more information. Make your request as early as possible; please allow at least 5 days advance notice. Last minute requests will be accepted, but may be impossible to fill. Please call (603) 994- 3500 or email srpc@strafford.org.

Other Equity Based Strategies

SRPC uses other strategies to ensure residents have an equal opportunity to participate in transportation planning processes. Documents out for public review are brought to accessible community locations such as libraries. In addition, SRPC makes a concerted effort to widen distribution of these public comment drafts to locations such as the Dover Adult Learning Center and Rochester Community Center, among others. Documents use language that is clear and easy to read and using large fonts. All documents are offered virtually as well as physically.

As noted above, most of SRPC's meetings are held at locations accessible by public transportation. SRPC staffers attempt to conduct outreach in locations that are accessible and at events which underrepresented populations may attend.

SRPC continually looks to integrate new techniques, such as polling applications, to gather input from those who may not normally voice their opinions. Recently, SRPC used a polling app, Quick Tap Survey, running on iPads to create surveys that individuals took at different outreach events. This allowed citizens to share input without directly sharing their views with staff members. This approach was found to be an effective means to gather additional information from the public.

SRPC staff also refer to the Equity and Engagement checklist (see Appendix F) created by a subcommittee of the statewide Granite State Future Project of 2012-2015. This is still an effective tool.

SRPC staff work not only to ensure that members of the public have an equitable opportunity to participate, but that municipalities in the region have "early and often" opportunities to participate in all transportation planning processes

MUNICIPAL ENGAGEMENT

Informing Municipalities

SRPC provides municipalities with information through many different channels. Their extensive contact list includes planning and administrative staff, public works staff, road agents, and other transportation contacts. SRPC uses email to inform municipalities about funding programs that could benefit them, about meetings on projects in and around their locations, and about training and materials that promote best practices for transportation planning. Municipalities are also informed about opportunities to appoint representatives to SRPC committees, and they are made aware of regional and statewide documents that SRPC has created which may be useful to them.

Opportunities for Participation

There are multiple opportunities for municipalities to participate in SRPC's planning efforts. SRPC takes pride in its role as a conduit between state and federal agencies to disseminate information to municipalities related to transportation planning and to communicate municipal concerns to the NH Department of Transportation and other state and federal agencies.

Committee Participation

Each municipality in the region can nominate representatives to the SRPC TAC and Policy Committee. The number of representatives a community can have, and whether they can vote (which is dependent on membership), are explained in the SRPC Bylaws (See Appendix G). Policy Committee members are appointed from the ranks of the SRPC Commission. The planning boards in each community nominate a resident, and the select board or town council appoint the individual, who will serve a four-year term on the Commission. TAC members are nominated for a two-year term concurrent with the Unified Planning Working Program (UPWP) cycle. When a new UPWP cycle begins, communities and relevant agencies are asked to nominate two representatives. Municipal staffers can also attend at their discretion, since TAC and Policy Committee meetings are public.

Focus and Work Groups

SRPC staff members often form sub-committees and focus groups. Staffers will often reach out to municipal officials and stakeholders in these instances. These smaller groups allow for more detailed discussion of topics such as regional collaboration, specific projects, project ranking, and various planning topics such as complete streets.

Project Solicitation

Projects included in the NH Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan are based on the regional and state transportation priorities outlined in the state long-range plan and the regional metropolitan transportation plans. To set these priorities, SRPC solicits project proposals from communities and other local and regional organizations for consideration. The resulting project lists and identified transportation priorities serve as the basis for transportation planning in the region.

SRPC solicits projects on a continuous two-year cycle. As part of this process, SRPC verifies project priorities submitted through past project solicitation rounds and solicits new proposals for transportation improvement projects. The staff contacts the communities in the Strafford region, along with agencies and organizations that have a role in regional transportation, and encourages them to provide input about their transportation projects and priorities. The project solicitation effort results in a list of highway, bridge, bike/pedestrian, transit, rail, recreational trail, and other surface transportation projects that illuminates the regional priorities for transportation investments in the future.

Public Comment Periods

As explained earlier in this document, public comment periods are a good opportunity for engagement. Transportation planning documents are made available in the libraries of the region's cities, online, and at the SRPC office. SRPC notifies municipalities of public comment periods online and through e-communications.

Public hearings are held at the end of the public comment periods and allow municipal staff to comment through their representatives on the TAC or Policy Committees, or as a guest.

HOW WE MEASURE UP

What is Performance Based Planning?

Federal law requires metropolitan planning organizations to use a performance-based approach to planning. SRPC and NHDOT are required to set targets for a range of measures in several performance areas:

- Pavement and bridge conditions on the Interstate System and the National Highway System.
- Reliability of the Interstate and National Highway System (travel times and congestion).
- Highway safety for vehicles and non-motorized transportation (number and rate of fatalities and serious injuries).
- Condition of public transit assets (vehicles and facilities)

It is also important for SRPC to understand the efficacy of public outreach efforts. This is critical for improving and adapting outreach efforts.

SRPC has been using performance measures for public participation since the 2007 Public Participation Plan. The measures help track items like the number of meetings held annually, social media posts and interaction, outreach and presentations, and members of the public involved and providing feedback. Measuring these indicators holds the organization accountable in its attempts to meet targets. To build on efforts set forth in earlier Public Participation Plans, SRPC staff members refined the indicators for each subsequent update.

The table below comprises the measures SRPC uses to track the performance of its public outreach and engagement techniques. The techniques are organized by goal. SRPC is constantly conducting outreach and engagement for its transportation, regional planning, and economic development programs so there are overlapping impacts in the measures below. An individual blog post, survey, or workshop may be focused on transportation issues but also concern economic development. Since the Public Participation Plan is only updated every 4 years, the actual data on outreach measures are published in the SRPC Annual Report. SRPC will periodically monitor these techniques and indicators to ensure it is moving towards its organizational goals.

Measure	Goal 1: Educate and inform the public about transportation planning processes	Goal 2: Solicit public input to identify transportation-related needs, desires, issues, and concerns	Goal 3: Advocate on behalf of regional communities, acting as a conduit between municipalities and statewide/federal entities	Goal 4: Foster collaboration and lasting relationships between citizens, municipalities, the business community, and statewide organizations.
Average number of people receiving e-communication (newsletter, Bits and Pieces, PB Updates, press releases, Newsletter subsections, and other)	P	S	S	S
Total Number of Social Media Posts (Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook combined)	P	S		P
Number of social media followers	P			
Number of informational transportation presentations given (outside of TAC and Policy meetings)	P	S	P	S
Number of outreach events held	P	X		P
Engagement with social media posts.	P	S		
Average number of guests attending (TAC/Policy/Commission meetings)	P	X	P	P
Total Number of responses to surveys		X		S
All committees (local, regional, and statewide) which SRPC staff regularly attends			P	S
Attendance/Participation at legislative hearings (GACIT, legislative hearings) - includes letters submitted as testimony	S		P	
Percentage of meetings that have a quorum (TAC - Policy - Commission)			P	P
Number of interviews/meetings/events with EJ population advocates and/or stakeholders	P	P	S	S
KEY - "P" denotes that the metric is a primary measure for the goal. "S" denotes that the metric is a secondary measure for the goal.				

Measure	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY2024
Average number of people receiving e-communication (newsletter, Bits and Pieces, PB Updates, press releases, Newsletter subsections, and other)	1,333 people	1150 people	1,515 people
Total Number of Social Media Posts (Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook combined)	160 posts	Count unclear	330 posts
Number of social media followers	944 followers • 445 Facebook • 287 Twitter • 212 Instagram	591 followers • 407 on Facebook • 148 on LinkedIn Twitter discontinued	1,082 followers • 450 Facebook • 370 LinkedIn • 262 Instagram
Number of informational transportation presentations given (outside of TAC and Policy meetings)	7 presentations	5 presentations	7 presentations
Number of outreach events held	6 events	5 events	10 events
Engagement with social media posts.	1,021 on Facebook 774 on Twitter 5,563 Twitter Impressions 272 on Instagram	357 on Facebook 81 on Instagram 84 on LinkedIn Twitter discontinued	2445 on Facebook 3986 on Instagram 3986 on LinkedIn
Total number of guests attending (TAC/ Policy/Commission meetings)	55 guests	3 guests	7 guests
Total Number of responses to surveys	1,336 responses	967 responses	3,349 responses
All committees (local, regional, and statewide) which SRPC staff regularly attends	32 committees	21 committees	22 committees
Attendance/Participation at legislative hearings (GACIT, legislative hearings) - includes letters submitted as testimony	19 instances	None: legislative hearings occur bi-ennially	5 instances
Percentage of meetings that have a quorum (TAC & Policy)	TAC-37.50%, Policy-100%,	TAC – 80% Policy – 100%	TAC – 66.67% Policy – 100%
Number of interviews/meetings/events with EJ population advocates and/or stakeholders	1 event	ROC walkability audit	3 interviews, events, or meetings

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – TITLE 23 PART 450.316

Interested Parties, Participation, and Consultation

(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

(1) The MPO shall develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

(i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;

(iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;

(iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;

(v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

(vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;

(viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;

(ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and

(x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93, subpart A), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

(3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.

(b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, the MPO(s) shall develop the metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

(1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;

(2) Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and

(3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 201- 204.

(c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO(s) shall appropriately involve the Indian

Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO(s) shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under

§ 450.314.

[81 FR 34135, May 27, 2016, as amended at 81 FR 93473, Dec. 20, 2016]

APPENDIX B – The United States Code, reflecting changes made in the FAST Act (Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act), Defines “Interested Parties” By Plan Type

The Long Range Statewide Transportation Plan, the STIP, and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan each list the same interested parties. The Metropolitan TIP does not list the interested parties, but refers back to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan in 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(5).

23 U.S.C. 135 (f) Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan (3): Participation by interested parties.

(A) In general - In developing the statewide transportation plan, the State shall provide to-

- (i) nonmetropolitan local elected officials or, if applicable, through regional transportation planning organizations described in subsection (m), an opportunity to participate in accordance with subparagraph (B)(i); and
- (ii) citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as a carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, providers of freight transportation services, and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed plan.

23 U.S.C. 135 (g) Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.

3) Participation by interested parties.-In developing the program, the State shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators), providers of freight transportation services, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed program.

23 U.S.C. 134 (i) Development of Transportation Plan (6)Participation by interested parties

(A) In general.-Each metropolitan planning organization shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as a carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan.

23 U.S.C. 134 (j) Metropolitan TIP

(B) Opportunity for comment.-In developing the TIP, the metropolitan planning organization, in cooperation with the State and any affected public transportation operator, shall provide an opportunity for participation by interested parties in the development of the program, in accordance with subsection (i)(5).

APPENDIX C – Code 40 CFR 93.134 TIP/STIP Exempt Projects

Certain amendments under the following general categories may, upon written request and at the discretion of the MPO, be made to the TIP without requiring a public participation process. Such projects shall include only ones which are exempt from air quality conformity determination under provisions of the Clean Air Act Amendment of 1990 and 40 CFR 93.134 and which are otherwise minor in nature, both in terms of scope and potential negative impact.

Exempt Projects under 40 CFR 93.134	
Safety Railroad/highway crossing. Hazard elimination program. Safer non-Federal-aid system roads. Shoulder improvements. Increasing sight distance. Safety improvement program. Traffic control devices and operating assistance other than signalization projects. Railroad/highway crossing warning devices. Guardrails, median barriers, crash cushions. Pavement resurfacing and/or rehabilitation. Pavement marking demonstration. Emergency relief (23 U.S.C. 125). Fencing. Skid treatments. Safety roadside rest areas. Adding medians. Truck climbing lanes outside the urbanized area. Lighting improvements. Widening narrow pavements or reconstructing bridges (no additional travel lanes). Emergency truck pullovers.	Mass Transit Operating assistance to transit agencies. Purchase of support vehicles. Rehabilitation of transit vehicles. Purchase of office, shop, and operating equipment for existing facilities. Purchase of operating equipment for vehicles (e.g., radios, fareboxes, lifts, etc.). Construction or renovation of power, signal, and communications systems. Construction of small passenger shelters and information kiosks. Reconstruction or renovation of transit buildings and structures (e.g., rail or bus buildings, storage and maintenance facilities, stations, terminals, and ancillary structures). Rehabilitation or reconstruction of track structures, track, and trackbed in existing rights-of-way. Purchase of new buses and rail cars to replace existing vehicles or for minor expansions of the fleet. Construction of new bus or rail storage/maintenance facilities categorically excluded in 23 CFR part 771.

Air Quality Continuation of ride-sharing and van-pooling promotion activities at current levels. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities.	Other Specific activities which do not involve or lead directly to construction, such as: Planning and technical studies; Grants for training and research programs; Planning activities conducted pursuant to titles 23 and 49 U.S.C.; and Federal-aid systems revisions. Engineering to assess social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed action or alternatives to that action. Noise attenuation. Advance land acquisitions (23 CFR part 712 or 23 CFR part 771). Acquisition of scenic easements. Plantings, landscaping, etc. Sign removal. Directional and informational signs. Transportation enhancement activities (except rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities). Repair of damage caused by natural disasters, civil unrest, or terrorist acts, except projects involving substantial functional, locational or capacity changes.
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APPENDIX D – Adopting Resolution for the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization

WHEREAS, the urban transportation planning process is required to have a PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN which delineates currently valid organizational responsibilities, operating procedures, and a summary of the planning program; and

WHEREAS, the PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN establishes the multi-year framework within which the Unified Planning Work Program for transportation planning in the SRPC Study Area is accomplished; and

WHEREAS, the responsibilities for cooperatively carrying out the urban transportation planning process are clearly defined in the PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN and via executed agreements or memorandum of understanding attached to the PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization adopts the PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN dated .

The undersigned duly qualified Chairpersons of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution, adopted at legally convened meeting of the SRPC Policy Committee held on the following date:

For Strafford Regional Planning Commission

Commission Chair

Date

APPENDIX E – Equity and Engagement Checklist

Equity and Engagement Checklist

In order to assure maximum and equitable participation by all residents of a community or region, the Equity and Engagement Technical Assistance Subcommittee of the Granite State Future project has developed the following suggestions for conducting planning initiatives.

- 1. Strive for demographically representative engagement that reflects the community or region where planning is occurring. This may entail special efforts to reach out and engage groups that traditionally have not participated in such work, for reasons of place, economic status, age, education levels, mobility limitations or other disabilities, or cultural and ethnic differences.**
- 2. To the extent that is legally permissible, create opportunities for participatory decision making as the first principle in planning activities. Planners have special expertise and knowledge. That expertise and knowledge should be shared with community partners as much as possible, in order to increase informed participation, a shared sense of investment in decisions and implementation, and equitable relationships. The goal of mutual empowerment of planners and community members is crucial**
- 3. As planning goals are set and decisions are made, consider the impact of those decisions (before they are finalized) on all constituent groups and sectors in a community or region.**
- 4. In public conversations, media releases, and reports published for public consumption, use plain, everyday language accessible to anyone (including considerations of reading level and translation from English to other languages as appropriate).**
- 5. As plans and goals are developed, take into account their impact on diverse groups, including best judgments about what groups could be advantaged and what groups could be disadvantaged by those decisions, and taking steps to mitigate any anticipated losses of resources, status, or power by those who might be disadvantaged.**
- 6. Design effective feedback loops to inform participants about the ways their input was considered and acted upon.**
- 7. Respect the core value of local control that characterizes New Hampshire's political and community culture. Plans and goals that require regional collaboration (for example in areas such as transportation, natural resource management, public school governance, economic development) should strive to maintain community identity and integrity as much as possible.**
- 8. Planning processes must attend to the "soft infrastructure" of communities—the people who live, work, and interact with each other, not just the built environment that serves those people.**
- 9. Specific planning decisions concerned with principles of equity will take into account such matters as where stores and businesses are located with respect to walking and transportation routes used by less affluent or minority populations or those with special mobility needs; access to fresh, affordable foods; personal safety; and other criteria that reflect the goal of maximum access and participation in community life.**
- 10. Practices of equitable engagement in local and regional planning efforts should be sufficiently consistent across sites so that residents moving from one community to another will have similar access to and be able to understand planning and decision making processes.**

APPENDIX F – SRPC Bylaws

APPENDIX H – Praxis Evaluation Results

Is SRPC acting with care?		
Question	Average Rating (Out of 5)	Narrative Summary
Our policies and programs are evaluated by their impact, not their intentions.	4.24	Commissioners and staff were somewhat split when asked about the impact of SRPC's programs versus their intentions. More staff felt that SRPC could do more analysis of the impact of programs and projects to see if the intent was achieved.
We conduct formal or informal risk assessments to prevent any potential unintended harm on historically underserved communities for every project or program.	4	SRPC has the most room for improvement in conducting risk assessments to ensure its programs and projects are not resulting in unintended harm on historically underserved communities.
Our organization or program intentionally establishes timelines that enable us to build relationships and trust with community partners.	4	Results suggest that project timelines don't always allow SRPC to fully develop relationships and trust with partners.
Our organization's actions - not just our mission statement -explicitly address bias and stigmatized statuses that are based on privilege, class, race, ethnicity, immigration status, gender, identity, and ability.	3.76	Staff and Commissioners both felt that SRPC's actions could be more explicit in addressing biases around privilege, class, race, ethnicity, immigration status, gender, identity, and ability.
Does SRPC use an inclusive approach to outreach and engagement?		
Question	Average Rating (Out of 5)	Narrative Summary
Members of impacted communities are leading the decision-making process of issues that directly affect their community, and/or are supported in developing their capacity to lead the process.	3.59	Staff and Commissioners both feel SRPC can do more to ensure people impacted by actions are the ones leading the decision-making process and are supported in their leadership role.

Members of impacted communities are meaningfully represented in all levels of our organization through institutionalized policies (i.e. Inclusive recruitment, interview, hiring and retention processes).	3.88	Even more needs to be done to increase representation from members of impacted communities. This applies to individual SRPC projects and it's governance overall.
We intentionally identify and name the differential impact that policies have on different communities and individuals due to varying experiences of oppression (i.e. recognizing that certain financial benefits do not reach undocumented communities; the financial burden certain land use regulations could place on low-income residents, etc.).	3.71	Staff and Commissioners varied widely in their assessment of SRPC's recognition of the differential impacts policies can have on a community because of factors like income, race, disability, etc.
We recognize and respect community partners' identities through intentional inclusivity.	4.06	Most said that SRPC often or always recognizes and is inclusive of community members' individual identities.
Is SRPC fostering authentic community collaboration?		
Question	Average Rating (Out of 5)	Narrative Summary
Our organization has a clear, shared understanding of who our prioritized community is that we serve.	4.18	Responses to this category were overall positive.
We adjust and tailor our policy solutions to accommodate the priorities of the groups we are working with.	4.24	Responses to this category were overall positive.
Our decision-making processes value lived experience as much or greater than professional experience.	3.82	SRPC could do more to design its decision-making processes to value people's lived experience as much or greater than their professional experience.
We have implemented and use processes for transparency and communication with our community partners.	4.47	Responses to this category were overall positive.
We intentionally assess and remove barriers to participation in our organizational activities.	4.18	Staff and Commissioners agree that more should be done to intentionally assess and remove barriers to participation in SRPC's activities.

We provide financial and logistical compensation for all community member participation.	3.25	Both staff and Commissioners acknowledged that community member participation in SRPC's activities is not financially or logistically compensated. Recent events held by SRPC have included options for childcare and refreshments. Other compensation is uncommon. Events facilitated for MPO functions do not compensate attendees for time or travel expenses.
Are the solutions or actions proposed by SRPC sustainable?		
Question	Average Rating (Out of 5)	Narrative Summary
The majority of our funding is dedicated to asset-based programming(i.e. building coastal resilience, supporting age-friendliness, creative placemaking) vs. deficit-based programming (i.e. prevention or reduction of negative-perceived community attributes).	4.35	Staff and Commissioners were both optimistic about SRPC's performance in dedicating funding to developing assets for communities, and addressing root causes of community challenges.
Our organization or program redistributes the majority of our resources, power and opportunities directly back to the communities we are serving.	4.47	SRPC scored the best in this category.
Our solutions address the root causes of issues facing the community(not behavior change within communities experiencing disparities).	4	Overall responses were good for this question.
The majority of our funding specifically develops and supports community infrastructure (creating/building organizational capacity, professional development, etc.) vs. service delivery.	4.18	Some staff felt that SRPC's activities could do more to support community infrastructure, rather than service delivery.
We provide financial and logistical compensation for all community member participation.	3.50	This category also included the question about compensation for community member participation – with the same results from staff and Commissioners.
Does SRPC demonstrate a commitment to transformation?		

Question	Average Rating (Out of 5)	Narrative Summary
Our organization or program intentionally establishes timelines that include space for self-reflection and peer-to-peer feedback.	3.82	Staff felt that program and project timelines need to include more time for self-reflection and peer-to-peer feedback.
We have established accessible channels for feedback from community members and partners.	4.12	Comments for this question were positive
When we receive feedback, we discuss it and make appropriate organizational changes in response.	4.06	Comments for this question were positive
We regularly assess our organizational operations and processes for power dynamics, health justice and racial equity.	4.07	Staff also expressed that organizational operations could assess power dynamics, and projects sometimes lack built-in accountability systems to ensure work is consistently aligned with community values.
We have an established accountability system (i.e. regular check-ins or report-outs to our constituents) in place to ensure our work is consistently aligned with our community's values.	4.12	Commissioners were more positive in their evaluation of the questions in this category, but several of them agreed that programs could include more time for self-reflection and feedback.

APPENDIX H – Public Comment Record

To be filled in following the public comment period and public hearing.

