

MPO Commission and Policy Committee Meeting

Friday, April 18, 2025 9:00-10:30 AM

Hybrid Meeting

Location: Rochester Childcare Center, 95 Charles Street, Rochester, NH 03867

In accordance with RSA 91:A, the Commission requires an in-person quorum. So long as an in-person quorum, Commissioners may participate virtually. Guests may attend the meeting virtually or at the SRPC Office. All participants, both in-person and virtual, can communicate contemporaneously.

Meeting URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85802372877>

Meeting ID: 858 0237 2877

Telephone-only Access: +1 646 558 8656

These instructions have also been provided at www.straftford.org. If anybody is unable to access the meeting, please email mtaylorfetter@straftford.org or call 603-994-3500 (x115).

Agenda Item	Time
1) Welcome and Introductions	9:00-9:05
2) Commissioner Roundtable	9:05-9:15
3) NYU-SRPC Regional Childcare Presentation Natalie Gemma, SRPC Senior Planner Danya Rubenstein-Markiewicz, NYU Graduate Student Hannah Leverenz, NYU Graduate Student Hanyan Su, NYU Graduate Student Kevin Sullivan, NYU Graduate Student	9:15-10:15
3) Other Business and Announcements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Snapshot • State Funding for Target Block Grant • 2-year Transportation Uniform Planning Work Program • Safe Streets for All Action Plan 	10:15-10:25
4) Citizens Forum	10:25-10:30
5) Adjourn	10:30

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. Include a detailed description of the accommodation you will need along with your contact info. Please make your request as early as possible; allowing 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@straftford.org.



RULES OF PROCEDURE

*Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization, and
Strafford Economic Development District*

Meeting Etiquette

Be present at the scheduled start of the meeting.

Be respectful of the views of others.

Ensure that only one person talks at a time. Raising your hand to be recognized by the chair or facilitator is good practice.

Do not interrupt others or start talking before someone finishes.

Do not engage in cross talk.

Avoid individual discussions in small groups during the meeting. When one person speaks, others should listen.

Active participation is encouraged from all members.

When speaking, participants should adhere to topics of discussion directly related to agenda items.

When speaking, individuals should be brief and concise when speaking.

The Strafford Regional Planning Commission & Metropolitan Planning Organization holds both public meetings and public hearings.

For public meetings, guests are welcome to observe, but should follow proper meeting etiquette allowing the meeting to proceed uninterrupted. Members of the public who wish to be involved and heard should use venues such as Citizen Forum, Public Hearings, Public Comment Periods, outreach events, seminars, workshops, listening sessions, etc.



STRAFFORD

Regional Planning Commission

DATE: April 14, 2025

TO: SRPC Commissioners

FROM: Jen Czysz, Executive Director
Natalie Gemma, Senior Regional Planner
Rachel Dewey, Senior Data Analyst
Colin Lentz, Principal Transportation Planner

RE: April 18, 2025 Meeting Discussion Items & Upcoming Meeting Schedule

NYU Childcare Presentation: Solutions for the Strafford Region

Since October 2024, SRPC has been collaborating with students from the NYU Wagner Graduate School of Public Service on a project aimed at addressing the childcare challenges that have impacted economic growth in the Strafford region. As part of their Capstone, and with the guidance of staff and a wide range of stakeholders, students have worked to conduct extensive research and outreach, data collection, form best practices and recommendations, and create a resource guide for municipal leaders, businesses, and families that can help support the childcare industry in our region and beyond. The team of students will be traveling to our region from NYC to share their final findings during this engaging presentation. Following the presentation, there will be a brief tour of the Rochester Child Care facility.

2025 Regional Data Snapshot

The 2025 Regional Data Snapshot will be released by the end of the day April 18th. This is the fifth annual Data Snapshot and covers over 160 data metrics for the region. The accompanying Community Profile series and the interactive web map will be available over the summer. Once published the data snapshot will be available here: <https://strafford.org/measure/data-snapshot/>

FY2026-2027 State Budget

Last week the House voted on a state budget that is now moving to the Senate for consideration. Of critical note, the House removed the nine NH regional planning commissions' Target Block Grant, administered by the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs. TBG is a modest but critical source of funding that provides a total of \$100,000 per year—or \$11,111 for each of the 9 RPCs—enabling RPCs to plan for the unique, evolving needs of NH municipalities before they arise. SRPC uses these funds to assist with local planning efforts, review developments of regional impacts, and to meet our match requirements on our federal \$70,000 grant from the Economic Development Administration. Jen will continue to update commissioners on the status of this funding including providing template letters you may use to contact your Senators and the Senate's finance committee. To follow the budget:

- All budget documents and presentations:
https://gc.nh.gov/lba/budget/fy2026_2027_budget.aspx
- Hearing schedule (TBD in Senate):
https://gc.nh.gov/bill_status/billinfo.aspx?id=1183&inflect=2

STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Rochester, NH 03867

Barrington | Brookfield | Dover | Durham | Farmington | Lee | Madbury | Middleton | Milton | New Durham
Newmarket | Northwood | Nottingham | Rochester | Rollinsford | Somersworth | Strafford | Wakefield



Uniform Planning Work Program

SRPC will be starting a new two-year transportation work program on July 1st 2025. All transportation-related tasks and activities to be conducted over the next two years will be included in the 2026-2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). SRPC and NHDOT staff have developed and edited a final draft that will be posted for comments from committee members. The budget is flat funded from the previous UPWP, and little has changed in the overall scope of work tasks. The timeline on approval of the UPWP is unfortunately compressed as it coincided with several other major NHDOT deadlines, and requires approval by Governor and Council. NHDOT has requested all comments and a signed final draft from SRPC by April 18th in order to get it on a Governor and Council agenda in time for approval so work can start on July 1st.

Safe Streets for All Action Plan

SRPC staff have received a draft of the Regional Safety Action Plan from our consultant VHB. This is a strategic document that will enable all municipalities to apply for funds to implement safety improvement projects through the Safe Streets and Roads for All program (SS4A). The plan includes comprehensive analysis of crash data and presents strategies for reducing and eventually eliminating crashes that kill and injure people. It has a special focus on vulnerable users such as bicyclists, pedestrians, and people with disabilities, and includes demographic analysis to identify possible transportation equity gaps.

The action plan needs to be approved before June 26th. The draft plan will be shared with SRPC committee members on Friday, April 18th. **SRPC staff are requesting feedback on the draft from committee members by April 25th in time to finalize edits with VHB prior to adoption at the Commission meeting on May 16th.**

The federal SS4A program is currently soliciting new applications and includes funding for full construction projects and additional planning efforts such as "demonstration" or "quick-build" projects that use inexpensive, temporary materials to test new configurations for streets and intersections. If interested, municipalities are encouraged to reach out to Colin Lentz to discuss possible projects.

Draft Schedule of Upcoming Meetings (subject to change)

Monthly Meetings: 3rd Friday of the month, 9-10:30 AM, SRPC Office, Conf. Room 1A

Quarterly Field Trips: Thursdays, 3:45-5:30 PM, in Sept., Dec., Feb., and Jun.

Date	Location	Program	Tentative Agenda Items
Friday May 16, 2025, 9-10:30 AM	SRPC	MPO/EDD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CEDS presentation and public comment period kick off• Approve 2-year transportation Uniform Planning Work Program• Approve Safe Streets for All Action Plan
Friday June 20, 2025, 9-10:30 AM	SRPC	RPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SRPC Annual Business items• Adopt the CEDS• Preview Snapshot data viewer
Thursday June 26, 2025, 11 AM-2 PM	Browne Center, UNH	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Meeting Luncheon• Guest speaker TBD – focus on the SRPC Comprehensive Plan

Childcare in New Hampshire: A Resource Guide for Families, Providers, Businesses & Advocates

Contact SRPC

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Rochester, New Hampshire
03867

Tel. (603) 994-3500

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STRAFFORD
Regional Planning Commission

Parents and Families:

Find quality, affordable childcare and explore financial help through programs like the [NH Child Care Scholarship](#).

Learn about resources like [NH Connections](#), [Waypoint](#), and the [Parent Information Center](#).

Childcare Providers & Economic Stakeholders:

Get tools to run or support a childcare program from groups like [SELA](#), [SBDC](#) and [ApprenticeshipNH](#). Learn how to accept Child Care Scholarships and join the [Granite State Paid Family Leave Plan](#) for supporting employees.

Policy Advocates & Community Planners:

Support childcare access with advocacy groups like the [NH Child Care Advisory Council](#) and [Chamber of Mothers](#). Tap into research from the [NH Fiscal Policy Institute](#) and [Carsey School](#) to understand workforce needs and economic impacts.



For Families: Accessing Resources and Financial Assistance

How can I find quality, affordable child care?

Managed by Child Care Aware of NH, **NH Connections** provides consumer education on what makes a quality child care program, how to assess options, and virtual sessions on child care selection.

Need help with registering for or determining eligibility for the NH Child Care Scholarship?

The New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship is managed by the NH Department of Health and Human Services. A user friendly guide to the program and eligibility [can be found here.](#)

Income Eligibility Levels

To qualify for help paying for child care, your household income needs to fall within one of three steps based on family size:

Step 1: Very Low Income (<100% of Federal Poverty Guidelines)

Step 2: Low Income (100% to 138% of Federal Poverty Guidelines)

Step 3: Moderate Income (Above 138% of Federal Poverty Guidelines but Below 85% of the State Median Income)

How can I apply for child care financial assistance?

NH Child Care Scholarship Program:

Offers financial aid to eligible families for licensed or approved child care. To apply, visit NH Easy Gateway to Services, call 1-844-ASK-DHHS, or visit a local DHHS office.

New Hampshire Freedom Accounts:

Funding of up to \$3,700 for New Hampshire families with children from 5-20 years old and earning up to 350% of the poverty line. Money can be used for tuition, tutoring, online learning, educational supplies, and more.

Temporary Assistance for Needy

Families: TANF can be used for childcare assistance for dependents under the age of 6 through payments to providers. Eligible families are under 250% of the federal poverty line.



What support is available for families with children with disabilities?

Parent Information Center NH: Provides guidance and resources.

Waypoint: Offers community-based family services and resource centers.

For Child Care Providers and Businesses: Enhancing Operations and Cost Savings

How can I start my childcare business?

Small Business Development Center:

SBDC provides business services for small businesses in New Hampshire.

Find their website **here**.

Government Services: Cities and towns within the Strafford Region have a variety of economic development and business service departments within their governments. Two prominent agencies are within the Cities of Dover and Rochester, which provide business services for new or existing organizations. Contact Dover offices **here** and Rochester offices **here**.





How can I receive specialized training and assistance?

NH Preschool Technical Assistance

Network: Provides training in special education for early childhood educators.

NH Connections Provider Support: Offers professional development, technical assistance, licensing info, and best practice guidance.

Early Care and Education Association

(ECEA): A resource network for early childhood professionals in the Upper Valley region of Vermont and New Hampshire. ECEA provides professional development, networking opportunities, and business support for childcare providers.

How can I accept child care scholarships?

Enroll through **NH Connections Information System (NHCIS)** by submitting required forms and completing staff background checks.

How Can I Offer an Apprenticeship Program?

If you are a childcare provider interested in offering an apprenticeship, *ApprenticeshipNH* provides support in developing and implementing programs tailored to your workforce needs.

Connect with ApprenticeshipNH: Visit the ApprenticeshipNH website and contact a regional program specialist to discuss how an apprenticeship program can fit your organization's needs.

Develop a Training Plan: Work with ApprenticeshipNH to outline a structured training program that includes:

- On-the-job learning
- Classroom instruction (often provided through local colleges or training programs).
- Wage increases at key milestones

Apprenticeships can be funded through grants, employer contributions, or state programs. Employers may receive financial incentives or tax credits for participating.

Recruit & Register Apprentices

Employers can hire new employees as apprentices or enroll existing staff looking to upskill. ApprenticeshipNH will assist in recruiting, onboarding, and ensuring compliance with state and federal apprenticeship guidelines.

How can I join a Childcare apprenticeship?

Visit the [ApprenticeshipNH website](#) to see current apprenticeship openings and contact a regional specialist to learn about upcoming opportunities.

Apply for an Apprenticeship: Interested individuals can apply directly through participating childcare centers, preschools, or organizations offering ECE apprenticeships.

Begin Paid On-the-Job Training:

Apprentices work full-time or part-time while receiving structured training from experienced childcare professionals. Wages increase as apprentices complete key milestones in their training.

Complete the Apprenticeship & Earn

Credentials: Upon completion, apprentices receive a nationally recognized credential and may qualify for lead teacher or director positions in early childhood education. Some apprenticeship programs count toward state licensing requirements, making it easier to advance in the field.



How do I participate in the Granite State Paid Family Leave Plan to support my employees?

Decide to Opt-In: Employers choose whether to enroll in the program and offer paid family leave insurance.

Benefits: Employees can take up to 6 weeks of paid leave at 60% of their wages for:

- Birth, adoption, or fostering of a child
- Caring for a seriously ill family member
- Military caregiving responsibilities
- Personal serious health condition

Enroll Through MetLife: New Hampshire has contracted MetLife to administer the plan. Employers can sign up through MetLife to select coverage options.

Employers can:

- Fully cover the insurance premiums for employees
- Split the cost with employees
- Offer the insurance as an employee-paid option

Claim the Tax Credit: Employers who contribute to employee premiums receive a 50% tax credit on their Business Profits Tax (BPT) or Business Enterprise Tax (BET).

Communicate the Benefit to Employees: Employers must inform employees about the program, eligibility, and how to access paid leave when needed.

Are there any shared cost-saving networks I can join?

State Early Learning Alliance of NH

(SELA): A shared services network offering significant cost and time savings. Benefits include discounts for pooled purchasing, partnerships with local businesses, and business management and licensing support.

***For Policy Advocates and
Community Planners: Tools for
Advocacy and Planning***

How can I influence child care policies?

NH Child Care Advisory Council

(NHCCAC): Advises the DHHS commissioner on child care policies and laws.

Want to attend meetings? Meetings happen bi-monthly in Concord, NH. Contact Early Learning NH at (603) 226-7900 for details or to share concerns.

What is the Chamber of Mothers?

The Chamber of Mothers is a national advocacy organization dedicated to improving policies that support mothers and families. Their work includes advocating for paid family leave, affordable childcare, maternal healthcare, and workplace protections.

They mobilize parents, collaborate with lawmakers, and run public awareness campaigns to push for meaningful policy changes.

Is there a local chapter in New Hampshire?

Yes! The Chamber of Mothers has a New Hampshire chapter based in Portsmouth.

This chapter focuses on advocacy efforts at the state and national levels, providing a space for local parents to connect, organize, and take action on issues affecting families in the region.

How can I get involved?

There are several ways to get involved with the Chamber of Mothers:

- Join the Portsmouth chapter to connect with other local advocates.
- Participate in advocacy campaigns by signing petitions, writing to lawmakers, or attending events.
- Support fundraising efforts to help sustain their work.
- Spread awareness by sharing their initiatives on social media and within your community.

To learn more, visit [the Chamber of Mothers website](#), where you can find details on membership, upcoming events, and current advocacy priorities.





Where can I find data and advocacy resources?

- **New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute:** NHFPI has a wide array of resources on childcare. Read about the economic impact of the childcare shortage, the fragile economics of this sector, the state of childcare in the state, and more.
- **Carsey School of Public Policy:** UNH's policy school published the Granite Guide to Early Childhood series. Read about families' needs, a childcare landscape analysis, the childcare workforce, and more.
- **Zoning Atlas:** Saint Anselm College produced a comprehensive zoning atlas, which includes a section on the zoning of home-based childcare. This is a good representation of where home-based businesses are allowed to operate, relevant after the passage of HB1567.