

Meeting of the Strafford EDD Strategy Committee

Friday, January 30, 2026 12:00 – 2:00 PM

Hybrid Meeting (Conference Rm 1A, SRPC Office & via Zoom)

In accordance with RSA 91:A, the Strategy Committee requires an in-person quorum. So long as an in-person quorum, Committee members 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/88023027097>

Meeting ID: 880 2302 7097

Telephone-only Access: +1 646 931 3860

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

Agenda Item	Time	Notes
1) Introductions & Welcome	12:00-12:15	
2) EDD and Strategy Committee Orientation	12:15-12:30	Presentation by SRPC staff
3) Review 2021-2025 CEDS Themes and Structure	12:30-1:10	Discussion of continued relevance and new trends
4) Break	1:10-1:15	
5) Review SOAR, add Refinements and Additions	1:15-1:55	Discussion of regional Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results
6) Next Steps	1:55-2:00	Next meeting scheduled for: February 27, 2026 12pm-2pm
7) Adjourn	2:00	

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 info@straffordrpcnh.gov



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: January 30, 2026
TO: Strafford EDD Strategy Committee Members
FROM: Jen Czysz, Executive Director
Natalie Gemma, Senior Regional Planner
Mike Polizzotti, Senior Economic Development Planner
RE: January 30, 2026 Strategy Committee Meeting – Kickoff for the Development of the 2026-2030 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Greetings Strategy Committee Members,

On behalf of the staff at the Strafford Regional Planning Commission, and the core economic development team leading the work of the Strafford Economic Development District, thank you for devoting your time and expertise as a member of the newly formalized CEDS Strategy Committee. Within this meeting packet is the agenda and several attachments we hope you have time to review ahead of the January 30th Strategy Committee meeting.

The objectives for this first meeting are to:

- Become oriented with the work of the Economic Development District, the purpose of the CEDS, and the role of the Strategy Committee in the development of the CEDS.
- Review the thematic areas of the 2021-2025 CEDS and discuss the continued relevance of these areas for regional economic development.
- Discuss what we have learned thus far in our outreach and engagement efforts related to economic development.
- Gather additional feedback on the strengths, opportunities, and challenges facing the region, along with discussions on aspirations for economic development, through a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) activity.

The attachments in this meeting packed include the following:

- Strategy Committee membership.
- The enabling Bylaws for the Strategy Committee, with additional details on role, purpose, and more.
- A summary of the themes from the 2021-2025 CEDS, along with a link to view for full 2021-2025 CEDS.
- A summary of prior SOAR activities with regional stakeholders that we will discuss and refine during our meeting.
- Directions to locate the SRPC office.

We look forward to gathering with you. Your insights will play a critical role in identifying areas of focus for the 2026-2030 CEDS for the Strafford Region. Our subsequent

STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Rochester, New Hampshire 03867

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



meetings will provide opportunities to refine and finalize goals for the region and review draft CEDS documents. The timeline for completion of the CEDS is June 2026.

Our upcoming meeting schedule for the 2026-2030 CEDS update is:

- Friday, February 27 from 12pm-2pm
- Friday, March 27 from 12pm-2pm
- Friday, April 24 from 12pm-2pm
- Friday, May 29, 2025 [if needed]

A light lunch of sandwiches and beverages will be provided for the upcoming meeting on January 30th.

**Strafford Economic Development District
Strategy Committee Meeting – January 30, 2026
Member List**

Voting Members				
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Sector</u>
Betsey	Andrews Parker	CEO	CAP of Strafford County	Social Services
John	Burcke	President	Business Bank	Banking
James	Burdin	Business Development Coordinator	City of Dover	Municipal - City
Giff	Burnap	Owner Operator	Butternut Farm	Agriculture
Elizabeth	Chilton	President	UNH	Higher Education
Ernie	Creveling	Town Planner	Town of Barrington NH	Municipal - Town
Joe	Friedman	Commercial Real Estate Prof.	Durham/Skyline Realty LLC	Real Estate
Tory	Jennison	Director of Population Health	Strafford County	Public Health
Margaret	Joyce	President	Greater Dover Chamber	Business and Industry Group
Dennis	McCann	Executive Director	SEDC	Economic Development Corp.
Robert	McGann	Director of Workforce Development	Community College System of NH	Higher Education
Bonnie	McNair	Executive Director	Greater Somersworth Chambe	Business and Industry Group
Michelle	Mears	Dir. of Planning & Com. Dev.	City of Somersworth	Municipal - City
John/Maggie	Randolf	CEOs	GSD Communities	Business and Housing
Darin	Roark	President and CEO	Wentworth Douglas Hospital	Healthcare
Shannon	Rogers	Community & Ec. Dev. Team Lead	UNH Extension	Extension
Mike	Scala	Dir. of Economic Development	City of Rochester	Municipal - City
John	Shea	SAU Superintendent	Somersworth School District	SAU
Michele	Sheppard	President & CEO	Granite YMCA - Somersworth	Social Services and Child Care

**Strafford Economic Development District
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Member List**

Non-Voting Members				
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Sector</u>
Karen	Immel	Regional Liaison	NH BEA	State Economic Development
Rad	Nichols	Executive Director	COAST	Public Transportation
James	Rather	Director of Strategic Initiatives	SMPDC	Partner EDD
David	Walker	Executive Director	RPC	Partner RPC
Amy	Basset	Regional Director - NH	SBA	Federal Business Support
Jen	Kimball	CEDS Planner	REDC	Partner EDD

**Strafford Economic Development District
Strategy Committee Meeting – January 30, 2026
Strategy Committee Bylaws (excerpt of SRPC Bylaws)**

Below is an excerpt of the SRPC bylaws that govern the structure and makeup of the Strafford Economic Development District CEDS Strategy Committee. Information including purpose and background of the committee, membership makeup, and more are included within this excerpt. The full SRPC bylaws are available here:

<https://straffordrpcnh.gov/uploads/documents/governance/Commission%20By%20Laws%20Adopted%2020251017.pdf>

ARTICLE X: EDD STRATEGY COMMITTEE

AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the Strategy Committee is to provide advice and guidance to Strafford EDD, the CEDS, and its priority project list. It represents the private sector, public officials, community leaders, and representatives of workforce development, higher education, and labor groups. It unites the region and provides an opportunity for collaboration, leadership, and program development. The Strategy Committee will forge strategic alliances and communicate the region's needs and opportunities in the future. Federal regulation that reference the responsibility and required makeup of Strategy Committee members are covered in [13 CFR 303.6](#). The Strategy Committee is hereby established as a standing committee of the Strafford EDD.

The Strafford EDD Strategy Committee shall hereafter be referred to as the "Strategy Committee".

RESPONSIBILITY

The Strategy Committee will review and make recommendations to the Strafford EDD Board of Directors on economic development planning efforts, forge strategic alliances, and communicate the region's needs and opportunities in the future to support the development of the CEDS.

MEMBERSHIP

The Strategy Committee shall include representatives from Strafford EDD communities, federal, state and other interested agencies and organizations.

VOTING MEMBERS

There shall be voting members or designees as described below.

No more than 3 voting members or designees from technical assistance and education providers such as:

- University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension
- Higher Education (UNH and/or Community College System of New Hampshire)
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Seacoast Region Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- SCORE Seacoast

**Strafford Economic Development District
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Strategy Committee Bylaws (excerpt of SRPC Bylaws)**

No more than 3 voting members or designees from social services providers such as:

- Strafford County Public Health Network
- Community Action Partnership of Strafford County
- Community Partners

No more than 2 voting members or designees from the housing development, management, or research, either public or private, sector.

No more than 1 voting member from Strafford Economic Development Corporation (SEDC).

No more than 2 voting members or designees representing Chambers of Commerce or business and industry groups that do business within the Strafford EDD.

No more than 4 voting members or designees representing municipal economic development or business development offices.

No more than 6 voting members or designees that represent the following businesses, industries, and employers:

- Real estate
- Property development
- Banking/Finance
- Healthcare
- Energy
- Transportation/Freight
- Childcare
- School Administrative Units (SAUs)
- Manufacturing
- Businesses with over 50 employees
- Businesses with between 11 and 50 employees
- Businesses with under 10 employees
- Pease Development Authority

The appointing authority is permitted and encouraged to designate one (1) alternate for each appointed representative. An alternate shall have voting privileges in the absence of the voting representative.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

Each of the following may appoint a non-voting member or designee: (The appointing authority is permitted and encouraged to designate one (1) alternate for each appointed representative).

- New Hampshire Division of Economic Development (NHBEA)
- New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT)
- Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST)
- Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC)
- Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC)
- Regional Economic Development Center (REDC)

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Strategy Committee Bylaws (excerpt of SRPC Bylaws)**

- Others designees from organizations, groups, and offices described in the list of Voting Members once voting capacity has been reached.

The Strategy Committee may authorize additional non-voting members.

VACANCY

In the event that a Strategy Committee member resigns, notification of their resignation shall be filed with SRPC and the appointing body. The municipality or voting agency shall receive a notice from SRPC so that a new appointment can be made.

TERMS AND RE-APPOINTMENTS

The appointment of each representative shall be for a period of two years. Appointments shall be certified in writing by the appointment authority prior to the start of the fiscal year (July 1st).

QUORUM

A quorum of the Strategy Committee shall be deemed as representing no less than one-third (1/3) rounded plus one of the appointed members. Current state law [91:A] requires a quorum to be physically present at meetings of public bodies under nonemergency situations.

Motions shall be carried by a simple majority of the voting power present after having established a quorum. In the case of hybrid¹ meetings, an in-person quorum is required, however additional Commissioners may attend, participate, and vote remotely. For the duration of each hybrid meeting motions must take place via roll call voting.

OFFICERS

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At the first Committee meeting after the start of the fiscal year, the election of officers will take place. The Strategy Committee Officers shall consist of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. Nominations for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be made from the floor and can include only voting members. The Chairperson will serve a one (1) year term. Vice-Chairperson will take over the role of Chairperson after the one (1) year term. Vacancies in office shall be filled immediately by the regular election procedure.

POSITIONS

As a qualification for office, the Chairperson shall have served at least one (1) year as a representative on the Strafford EDD. The Chairperson shall preside over all meetings and shall have the power to call special meetings, establish agendas, establish, and appoint committees and their members.

The Vice-Chairperson, if the Chairperson is unable to attend the meeting, shall be acting Chairperson and shall have the same powers granted to the Chairperson.

¹ For the purpose of the SRPC Bylaws a hybrid meeting is defined as a meeting having an option to attend both in-person and virtually.

**Strafford Economic Development District
Strategy Committee Meeting – January 30, 2026
Strategy Committee Bylaws (excerpt of SRPC Bylaws)**

MEETINGS

The EDD Strategy Committee meetings are held at least four (4) times per year at times agreeable to a majority of the members. Meetings are generally held at the SRPC office, but may be held in other publicly accessible locations.

PROCEDURES

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern.

**Strafford Economic Development District
Strategy Committee Meeting – January 30, 2026
Past CEDS Themes & Lenses**

The 2021-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Strafford Region was a comprehensive plan, that identified the following themes as critical to the region’s collective economic development vision of the future. The full 2021-2025 CEDS is available to view here: https://straffordrpcnh.gov/uploads/documents/plans/edd/ceds_2021.pdf

2021-2025 CEDS Themes

Economic Growth - Promote the economic success of our region, including overall employment, business growth, and business expansion.

Business Operations – Understand how changing workplace dynamics like telework, flexible scheduling, supply chains, and industry clusters will impact our region.

Housing – Assure that our region has available, affordable, and quality housing to attract and retain a qualified workforce and for attracting new businesses.

Infrastructure – Plan and advocate for physical improvements such as water, sewer, utilities, and broadband that are resilient and responsive to our region’s needs.

Mobility and Accessibility – Encourage community development that creates a high-quality experience of being in and moving around our communities for people of all ages and abilities, and for all modes of transportation.

Age Friendliness – Promote community development that is responsive to residents of all ages and abilities to allow the growing population of older residents to remain in our region as they age while also attracting and supporting younger families with school-aged children.

Workforce and Education – Understand the strengths of our region’s workforce and encourage opportunities for all residents to access the education, training, or re-training that they need to pursue their careers in a dynamic job market. Promote educational environments that are sources of entrepreneurs, start-up businesses, and new intellectual property.

**Strafford Economic Development District
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Past CEDS Themes & Lenses**

Community Vibrancy – Consider the strengths of our region and communities that make them attractive to businesses, residents, and visitors, including downtowns and the built environment; natural resources; tourism attractors; and local recreation and entertainment.

Childcare – Assure that our region has an adequate supply of affordable and quality childcare to support our workforce and prepare our children for the future.

2021-2025 CEDS Lenses

Overarching principles that will impact many, if not all of the themes above.

Resiliency - Prepare for economic disruptions by 1) lessening the likelihood of their occurring, 2) mitigating the negative impacts if a disruption does occur, and 3) improving the region’s ability to recover quickly and fully from disruptions. This lens includes significant discussion of our region’s response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Partnership and Collaboration – The 15 municipalities within the Strafford EDD are economically interdependent with each other and neighboring communities in NH, ME, and MA.

**Strafford Economic Development District
Strategy Committee Meeting – January 30, 2026
Review of Ongoing SOAR and Outreach Preliminary Findings to Date**

Outreach and engagement to support the development of the 2026-2030 CEDS has been ongoing since early 2025. Below is a summary of a **Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR)** activity, conducted with local stakeholders and partners, related to economic development and economic well-being in the region.

The objective of this activity was/is to help identify the most pressing items in the region, and aid in the development of themes for the upcoming CEDS.



During the January 30th Strategy Committee, time will be devoted for members to react to these points **and add additional perspectives into this SOAR as well.**

The summary of the soar is below:

Strengths

- Participants talked at length about attributes that the region has, the expertise that individuals and groups in the region have in terms of collective knowledge, physical assets, and more.
 - Collaboration opportunities, like those hosted by SRPC ([the TRENDS group](#))
 - The population growth and demand that the whole region is experiencing, as something that can be leveraged
 - Quality of life in the region, access to natural resources, industry, the ocean, cities, etc.

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Review of Ongoing SOAR and Outreach Preliminary Findings to Date**

- Great Bay as a natural, cultural, and recreational asset
- Key transportation corridors which include access to highways, rail, and bus service
- Strong sense of community and safety in many places throughout the region
- Large employers within the region or nearby
- UNH and Great Bay Community College
- Strong and accountable governance in communities throughout the region
- Small businesses in the region
- Downtowns and culture

Opportunities

- Many of the opportunities that participants described included the need to better leverage the limited space our region has, while ensuring that our existing infrastructure is put to best use and people throughout the region are supported
 - Need to make land more available for a variety of housing types beyond single family – there are significant workforce and economic development impacts to the housing supply constraint
 - Redevelop or adapt the use of existing underutilized structures and properties in the region to support housing AND small businesses
 - Small businesses generally could use more support in the region, many of great organizations and resources exist, but what are the better ways to connect them to small businesses?
 - Areas with redevelopment potential/additional development potential – GBCC at Pease, Lilac Mall, Liberty in Dover, GE/Alcara in Somersworth
 - Opportunities for more networking and connection with the Small Business Development Center
 - The trend towards the consolidation in healthcare services is something that is viewed as a negative by some participants, and perhaps opportunities exist to mitigate this

Aspirations

- Participants discussed their high-level aspirations for the region, both directly and indirectly connected to Economic Development
 - Stronger levels of civic engagement in communities, especially in smaller communities – more community involvement
 - Housing needs are met in the region
 - Accessible healthcare, especially in the northern and more rural parts of the region
 - Better and stronger connections between recreational areas and community centers as a way to promote stewardship, recreation, and economic development and vibrancy in community centers

**Strafford Economic Development District
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Review of Ongoing SOAR and Outreach Preliminary Findings to Date**

- More economic development capacity in smaller communities to advocate for and facilitate initiatives in towns, across municipal borders, and throughout the region as a whole
- Revived local journalism – community engagement and accountability
- Childcare needs are met
- Communication channels between towns throughout the region and better communication channels for residents, business owners, etc.

Results

- Participants discussed a range of results for the region, building off of the conversations throughout this activity
 - A region where recreational and natural areas are well connected, preserved, stewarded, and respected – drawing visitors and residents. Connections to town centers for commerce.
 - Economic Development Circuit Rider, more capacity for regional economic development coordination among municipalities
 - Public Information Officers in communities
 - Affordable housing that meets needs and preferences
 - Infrastructure improvements
 - Greater participation at public meetings and within municipal and regional governance
 - Enough affordable childcare

**Strafford Economic Development District
Strategy Committee Meeting – January 30, 2026
Directions to Conference Room 1A**

Strategy Committee meetings are held in-person at the Strafford Regional Planning Commission office. The physical address is: **150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Rochester, NH 03867**

Ample parking is available. We advise that you enter the building via the entrance depicted in the map below (not the main building entrances, which lead to other City of Rochester department offices). There is large SRPC sign next to the entrance door. ***If you need any assistance navigating the building or finding the entrance, please call the SRPC office at 603-994-3500.***

