

Meeting of the Strafford EDD Strategy Committee

Friday, March 27, 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) Review and Approve February Meeting Minutes	12:15-12:20	See February Meeting Minutes included in packet
3) Review Themes and Goals	12:20-12:30	See Themes and Goals in packet
4) Feedback on Draft Action Items	12:30-1:25	Interactive discussion and feedback gathering on drafted action items – see meeting packet for drafted actions
5) Break	1:25-1:30	
6) Priority Projects Status	1:30-1:35	
7) Feedback on Draft Vision Statements	1:35-1:55	See draft vision statements in packet
8) Next Steps	1:55-2:00	Next meeting scheduled for: March 27, 2026 12pm-2pm
9) 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: March 27, 2026
TO: Strafford EDD Strategy Committee Members
FROM: Jen Czysz, Executive Director
Natalie Gemma, Senior Regional Planner
Mike Polizzotti, Senior Economic Development Planner
RE: March 27, 2026 Strategy Committee Meeting – 2026-2030 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Greetings Strategy Committee Members,

Thank you all for a productive February meeting – and special thanks and congratulations to Bonnie McNair and James Burdin for their new roles as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. For our upcoming March 27th Strategy Committee meeting, we are looking forward to working with you all on hearing your feedback on drafted Action Items for the upcoming CEDS, discussing submitted Priority Projects, and hearing feedback on draft vision statements.

The attachments in this meeting packet include the following:

- The draft meeting minutes for the February Strategy Committee meeting
- Themes and Goals for the 2026-2030 CEDS
- Draft action items for the 2026-2030 CEDS

Please be prepared to share any feedback you may have on the drafted action items included in the packet. These draft actions were created to support the final themes and goals and align with the service offerings, capabilities, and expertise of what SRPC can provide. The language of these actions is vague, and during this meeting we hope to work with you all to make them more targeted, actionable, and measurable.

After this discussion, we will provide an update on the status of Priority Project Solicitation.

Lastly, we will collect feedback on three drafted vision statements for the 2026-2030 CEDS that were developed based on the final Themes and Goals.

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

- Friday, April 24 from 12pm-2pm
- Friday, May 29 from 12pm-2pm

A light lunch of sandwiches and beverages will be provided for the upcoming meeting on March 27th.

Thank you for your commitment to the development of the next Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Strafford region.

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



Meeting of the Strafford EDD Strategy Committee

Friday, February 27, 2026 12:00 – 2:00 PM

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

1. Introduction:

In person: Steve Brown, Dover; James Burdin, City of Dover; Bonnie McNair, Somersworth Community Chamber of Commerce; Rad Nichols, COAST; Lee Nentwig, Rochester Economic Development; Jen Kimball, REDC; Tory Jennisen, NHPHA; Robert McGann, GBCC; Margeret Joyce, Dover Chamber of Commerce; Dennis McCann, SEDC

Zoom: James Rather, SMPDC; Ernest Creveling, Barrington; Darin Roarke, WDH; Jada Lindbloom, UNH; John Randolph, GSD; Michele Shepard, Granite YMCA,

Staff: Michael Polizzotti, SRPC

2. Action Items

a. Review and approve January 30, 2026 Meeting Minutes

J. Burdin Motion to approve the January 30 meeting minutes, second by M. Joyce. A roll call vote was taken with all members voting in favor. The motion passed

b. Appoint Chair and Vice Chair

M. Joyce motioned to appoint B. McNair to chair and J. Burdin Co-Chair. T. Jennisen seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with all members voting unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

3. Finalize Themes and Goals

M. Polizzotti stated that the draft Themes and Goals have been updated to incorporate feedback individually received via email from Strategy Committee members and SRPC Commissioners since the last meeting. At this meeting, we will devote some of our time to walking through these updated draft themes, incorporating any final feedback from the committee, and formally approving them.

M. Polizzotti stated that there were comments from folks about adding additional emphasis on the connections needed between businesses and educational institutions for that work or pipeline and skills alignment piece.

He continued by saying that civic engagement was incorporated, specifically around some of the goals and the thematic areas that have to do with preserving the region's central community. There were also a few discussions about employer supported housing underneath one of the goals as well too that we incorporated.

In discussion, members requested clearer definition of the "quality of life" lens and how it guides actionable steps. Lenses were acknowledged as helpful perspectives for evaluating topics such as housing.



Regarding housing, comments focused on broadening the concept of infrastructure beyond water and sewer, clarifying expectations for the final planning document, and incorporating age-friendliness and aging-in-place considerations. Members suggested integrating issues related to disabilities, adaptive housing, youth retention, and community identity.

People are concerned about preserving the identities of their communities, bringing high rise somewhere that doesn't fit with the historic exaggeration, but on those lines.

Discussion included high property taxes and their impact on housing and economic development. Members recommend including relevant data and considering how nonprofit organizations fit within business support.

Suggestions included strengthening the connection between childcare, education, and workforce needs, engaging nonprofits, and exploring partnerships to address rising labor and cost challenges. Members emphasized including support for the "sandwich generation," elder care, and workforce training.

The committee recommended aligning with other regional planning initiatives and incorporating topics such as health care and healthy lifestyles.

4. Break

At 1:00, the group took a 15-minute break.

5. Brainstorm and Discuss Action Items

The committee agreed to review action items drafted by staff at the next meeting.

6. Priority Projects Discussion

The committee discussed the process of soliciting Priority Projects and discussed whether it is worthwhile to rank projects based on their projected impact on regional economic development.

Submissions may come from municipalities, nonprofits, and public-private partnerships. Projects should align with CEDS themes and may be used to support EDA or other funding applications. The group discussed how best to categorize or prioritize projects, suggesting options such as maintaining a long list of all submitted projects and a short list of funding-ready projects, or ranking projects based on their stage of development.

Including projects in the CEDS can benefit a wide range of grant applications, including EDA programs and congressional spending requests and also provides a useful snapshot of regional economic development activity for marketing and planning purposes.

The group acknowledged challenges related to the highly competitive EDA district (spanning from Maine to Philadelphia and including Puerto Rico).

7. Next Steps

Next meeting March 27.

8. Adjourn

Following a motion, a second, and a unanimous vote in favor to adjourn, the meeting adjourned at 2:00PM

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Taylor-Fetter

Strafford Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2026 - 2030

Overview

The **Vision**, **Lenses**, **Themes**, **Goals**, and **Action Items** below have been developed based on extensive feedback received from following:

- SRPC's Comprehensive Plan Update workshop held in April 2025.
- Comprehensive Plan Survey and public engagement events held from the Spring of 2025 through Winter 2026.
- Strafford EDD Board of Directors meeting held in November 2025.
- Strafford EDD Strategy Committee Meetings held in January 2026 and February 2026.

Draft Vision Statements

Proposal 1: A resilient and innovative Strafford Region where strong partnerships, diverse housing options, thriving businesses, and a skilled workforce support a quality of life for all. By leveraging natural assets, vibrant communities, and collaborative spirit, the region will foster sustainable economic growth and opportunity now and into the future.

Proposal 2: The Strafford Region will be an adaptive and resilient economic anchor in New Hampshire, where innovation, entrepreneurship, and strong partnerships are cornerstones. With diverse housing, a skilled workforce, and vibrant communities connected by sustainable infrastructure, the region will attract and retain businesses, talent, and investments while preserving the qualities that make it a unique place to live, work, and visit.

Proposal 3: The Strafford Region will be a thriving, inclusive, and resilient place where vibrant communities, diverse housing choices, strong local businesses, and a robust workforce support opportunity and well-being for all residents. Through spirited collaboration, innovation, and stewardship of our natural and cultural resources, the region will build a prosperous and adaptable economy for generations to come.

Lenses

These lenses are **overarching principles** that will impact many, if not all, of the themes that follow.

- **Regional Partnerships and Collaboration:** Strengthening public and private partnerships, expanding civic engagement and community involvement, and building economic development and volunteer capacity.
- **Resiliency and Future Readiness:** Increasing the region's ability to anticipate, withstand, adapt to, and recover from disruptions such as economic shocks, environmental factors, and demographic shifts.
- **Quality of Life and Community Identity:** Preserving, leveraging, and enhancing the natural, cultural, and community attributes and quality of life factors that define our region and attract and retain families, workers, and businesses.
- **Age Friendliness:** Plan for changing demographics- including an aging population and fewer children- that will impact workforce, housing, childcare, healthcare, and business operations.

Themes and Goals

Housing

Goal Statement: Diverse and affordable housing options that support workforce needs and economic growth while leveraging the region's capacity for development and investments, and existing built assets.

Sub-Goals:

- Address housing supply constraints across all housing types.
- Address affordability challenges (including property tax burdens) to better attract and retain the workforce.
- Promote adaptive reuse and redevelopment opportunities.
- Ensure development balances needs for housing and protection of the environment and natural assets.
- Plan for development in coordination with water and sewer capacity and investments.

Business, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship

Goal Statement: A resilient and innovative regional economy which supports businesses, non-profits, and entrepreneurs, where these groups and industries can quickly adapt and be prepared for emerging social, environmental, and technological trends, and can engage in data-driven decision making.

Sub-Goals:

- Monitor and help businesses and economic development stakeholders respond to emerging trends and challenges (e.g. tariffs, technological advancement, energy production and storage, shifting market conditions).
- Support businesses and entrepreneurship through resource navigation, connecting businesses/entrepreneurs to tools, technical assistance, and funding opportunities.
- Cultivate a strong business community through networking/public-private partnership opportunities.
- Continue to maintain robust data metrics to guide decision making, track economic performance, and identify opportunities for growth.
- Promote the region's specialty industries and innovation (aerospace, advanced manufacturing, etc.).
- Support business attraction and retention strategies that diversify the tax based and reduce reliance on property taxes, while improving understanding of how state business taxes influence local tax pressures.
- Analyze research on the diversification of energy types to power cost effective, sustainable business operations and economic activity.
- Capitalize on the region's strong broadband infrastructure as a competitive advantage and strengthen digital literacy initiatives.

Workforce, Education, and Childcare

Goal Statement: A strong and supported workforce with access to affordable childcare; alongside a sustainable and robust talent pipeline that addresses existing workforce challenges through proactive planning and partnerships to identify emerging trends, skills gaps, and the region's education systems.

Sub-Goals:

- Understand and identify opportunities to address workforce challenges, including attraction and retention.
- Identify and align current and emerging business needs with workforce training and education (addressing skills gaps).
- Promote, leverage, and enhance the region's high-quality education systems (K-12, technical training, and Higher Ed) to strengthen long-term talent development.

- Support the expansion of childcare affordability and availability to enhance workforce participation.

Healthy and Vibrant Communities

Goal Statement: A region that continues to prioritize leveraging, enhancing, and protecting its built infrastructure and local and regional assets that make it a desirable place where people want to live, visit, and do business now and in the future.

Sub-Goals:

- Preserve and market the region's unique natural, cultural, and recreational assets as a means to attract and retain families, workers, and businesses.
- Identify opportunities to boost community vibrancy and promote community pride and respect.
- Strengthen and promote strong community feel and sense of place to drive the local economy.
- Support healthy lifestyles and promote that communities are accessible via all forms of transportation.
- Promote healthcare access and affordability.
- Improve connections between recreation, natural assets, and town centers.
- Improve connectivity and transportation access for all, including walkers, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers, within and between communities.
- Promote thoughtful land use planning for emerging uses, such as data centers, to protect community health, character, and quality of life.

DRAFT Action Items

Action Item	Primary Theme	Relevant Lens(es)	Crossover Theme(s)
Continue to convene the Tri-Region Economic Development Stakeholder (TREDS) group to encourage and facilitate information and ideas sharing.	All	All	-
Maintain open communication with businesses and municipalities regarding economic development issues, best practices, or funding opportunities.	All	All	-
Provide technical assistance to municipalities and collaborate with partners in our region to promote proactive economic development strategies and best practices.	All	All	-
Cultivate strong relationships with a wide variety of partner organizations to promote regional approaches to economic development and to advocate on behalf of our region.	All	All	-
Maintain an up-to-date Priority Project List for the purpose of supporting local infrastructure projects and advocating on behalf of priority projects to potential funders.	All	All	-
Maintain an up-to-date Regional Master Plan for the purpose of providing local and regional planning assistance to identify regional needs and potential solutions.	All	All	-
Regularly update the CEDS and Data Snapshot to provide relevant economic, demographic, and housing data to communities and stakeholders, and key indicators, trends, and analyses.	All	All	-

Support business resiliency planning through collaborations with municipalities and partners to help business withstand economic shocks.	Business, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship	Regional Partnerships and Collaboration Resilience	Workforce, Education, and Childcare
Support regional conversations and planning related to energy diversification and energy resilience for businesses and economic infrastructure.	Business, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship	Resilience	Healthy Communities
Research and promote tools for economic development, such as Central Business Service Districts and Opportunity Zones 2.0.	Business, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship	Resilience	Healthy and Vibrant Communities
Assist municipalities with updating their Economic Development Master Plan chapters.	Business, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship	Resilience Quality of Life and Community Identity	Workforce, Education, and Childcare Healthy and Vibrant Communities
Finalize and promote an “Economic Development Ecosystem” to serve as a central resource that highlights all economic development partners and organizations and what assistance they provide.	Business, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship	Regional Collaboration and Partnerships Resilience	-
Continue to work with municipalities to ensure that local hazard mitigation plans are updated regularly to improve the resilience of municipal infrastructure and encourage more resilient development patterns and techniques.	Healthy and Vibrant Communities	Resilience Regional Partnerships and Collaboration	Business, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship
Continue to work with SRPC’s municipalities to plan for the impacts of extreme weather and/or sea-level rise on their communities.	Healthy and Vibrant Communities	Resilience Regional Partnerships and Collaboration	-
Leverage SRPC’s Brownfields Program to increase opportunities for facility rehabilitation, development and land acquisition and maintenance to strengthen and promote vibrant communities.	Healthy and Vibrant Communities	Resilience	-

		Regional Partnerships and Collaboration	
Consider people of all ages across all planning functions and promote opportunities for further information and resources.	Healthy and Vibrant Communities	Regional Partnerships and Collaboration Age Friendliness Quality of Life and Community Identity	Workforce, Education, and Childcare
Promote the findings of the Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress study and provide technical assistance to municipalities seeking to improve walkability and community vibrancy.	Healthy and Vibrant Communities	Regional Partnership and Collaboration Resilience	-
Use Communities for Healthy Aging Transition (CHAT) action plans to provide technical assistance to communities.	Healthy and Vibrant Communities	Resilience Age Friendliness	Housing Healthy and Vibrant Communities
Continue updating and promoting the Arts and Culture mapping tool.	Healthy and Vibrant Communities	Regional Partnerships and Collaboration Quality of Life and Community Identity	
Continue conducting sidewalk and accessibility audits in communities in partnership with local municipalities to identify areas for infrastructure improvements for accessible, multimodal transportation in communities.	Healthy and Vibrant Communities	Age Friendliness Regional Partnership and Collaboration Quality of Life and Community Identity	-
Support regional initiatives and partnerships that promote recreation, tourism, and cultural assets as drivers of economic vitality and quality of life.	Healthy and Vibrant Communities	Regional Partnerships and Collaboration	-

		Quality of Life and Community Identity Resilience	
Provide technical assistance to municipalities updating zoning ordinances, land use regulations, and Master Plans to support diverse housing types, including ADUs, mixed-use development, and adaptive reuse.	Housing	Quality of Life and Community Identity Age Friendliness	Healthy and Vibrant Communities
Map potential priority areas for development based on access to infrastructure and other factors to support housing, economic development, and community revitalization.	Housing	Resilience Quality of Life and Community Identity Age Friendliness	Healthy and Vibrant Communities
Track building permit data to identify trends in development.	Housing	Quality of Life and Community Identity	Healthy and Vibrant Communities
Support and assist communities exploring regional partnerships for infrastructure upgrades of expansions (e.g. water and sewer infrastructure).	Housing	Regional Collaboration and Partnerships Resilience	Healthy and Vibrant Communities
Complete the RHNA Implementation project and promote it as a tool for municipalities looking for guidance on balancing housing production needs with environmental protection.	Housing	Regional Collaboration and Partnerships Resilience Quality of Life and Community Identity Age Friendliness	Healthy and Vibrant Communities
Continue collecting data and conducting research regarding the childcare system, including partnership that explore employer-sponsored childcare.	Workforce, Education, and Childcare	Age Friendliness Regional Partnership and Collaboration	Healthy and Vibrant Communities

Assist municipalities with updating their zoning ordinances and regulations to remove barriers and support expanded childcare availability.	Workforce, Education, and Childcare	Resilience Age Friendliness	Workforce, Education, and Childcare Healthy and Vibrant Communities
Complete Phase 2 of the NYU Regional Childcare Project and promote the deliverables amongst municipal staff, land use boards, and current and prospective childcare providers.	Workforce, Education, and Childcare	Resilience Age Friendliness	Business, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship Healthy and Vibrant Communities
Review and update the Employer Toolkit developed by SoHo Creative Studios to help businesses in the region address workforce challenges.	Workforce, Education, and Childcare	Regional Partnerships and Collaboration	Business, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship
Convene workforce development partners, employers, and educational institutions to strengthen alignment between training programs and industry workforce needs.	Workforce, Education, and Childcare	Regional Partnerships and Collaboration Resilience	Business, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship