



Transportation Program Update December 2009

BROAD STREET PARKWAY

NRPC has continued efforts in support of the supplemental study of Broad Street Parkway Project. The 2007 Supplemental Analysis estimated the cost for the BSP at \$69.4 M in 2007 dollars given recent escalation trends for construction costs, the Supplemental Analysis report also estimated the 2011 construction cost of the Broad Street Parkway to range between \$78.1M to \$91.0M based upon annual adjustment for inflation.

Citing the need for affordability, the City amended its contract with the NRPC in February 2008 to “investigate methods to reduce costs for the proposed 2007 Broad Street Parkway Concept.” NRPC lead an intensive 90 day project development process and worked with City staff and VHB to develop two cost savings options for the project. This effort resulted in construction related cost savings between 36% and 45%. In April 2008 NRPC and VHB presented the cost estimate to the Nashua Aldermanic Infrastructure Committee for their consideration.

In cooperation with the City, NHDOT and FHWA, NRPC developed a scope of work to complete an environmental re-evaluation required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NRPC is working with the consulting firm, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., to complete the Environmental Re-Evaluation process. A decision on the re-evaluation from the Federal Highway Administration is expected in the early spring of 2010. Based on that decision the City will move forward with the final design of the project.

INTEGRATED PLANNING STUDY

NRPC completed the Integrated Planning Study under a State Planning and Research grant. The purpose of this study was to develop a New Hampshire model for integrating transportation, land use, and environmental planning based on *Eco-Logical: An Ecosystem Approach to Infrastructure Projects*, a framework created by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and its partners. The *Eco-Logical* planning framework is a collaborative planning process that agencies and partners undertake to define ecological resources of highest concern, understand where their work interacts, and recommend a framework outlining locally appropriate strategies for mitigating the impacts of infrastructure improvements. For the development of this model, NRPC focused on the Souhegan River Watershed. This ecosystem is located in a rapidly growing area of our region and is therefore facing numerous threats to both water quality and quantity from future highway improvement projects, storm water runoff concerns, scattered residential development and numerous wetlands crossings. The State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) alone identifies 15 specific projects in the watershed.

NRPC staff identified projects and potential environmental resources in the Souhegan River watershed and estimated the potential impacts of the transportation projects on the watershed using GIS techniques. This data was analyzed and used in the development of a model framework for integrating environmental and transportation planning. NRPC is pleased to have developed a product and process that will protect and enhance the Souhegan River watershed while at the same time allow important transportation projects to move forward.

LOCALLY COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Consistent with the provisions of the Safe, Affordable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) NRPC has completed a coordinated human services transportation planning process resulting in a Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan (LCTP). The purpose of this process is to develop a coordinated vision for human service oriented transportation services and to develop a



LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS REPORT

December 2009

iTRAC: INTEGRATING TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

Staff has developed the Merrimack Town Center Pedestrian and Trail Master Plan. The Merrimack EDCAC Committee endorsed the plan in November and final presentations are scheduled for the Town Council and School Board. This action plan focuses on sidewalk and trail connections to town center amenities, the new courthouse, Merrill's Marauders Bridge and Wildcat Falls. The action plan and project map can be reviewed here: <http://www.nashuarpc.org/itrac/merrimack.htm>

Fact sheets have been developed for the 2009 RSA update, Green Buildings and Edible Landscapes. The iTRaC program is currently accepting research and marketing requests on an on-going basis. Does your board have a list of topics such as this? Let NRPC help by providing you with the necessary research materials and information to make an informed decision. NRPC staff can also conduct community education and provide marketing materials, brochures, mailings and posters on your topic of choice.

If your community has a special project, needs assistance in implementing master plan recommendations, or would like to schedule a training, call Camille Pattison, Integrated Planning Program Manager, at 424-2240 x14.

CIRCUIT RIDING PROGRAM:

NRPC Staff provides circuit rider planning services to **Litchfield, Mason** and **Wilton**. Planning services include review of development applications as well as general planning activities. **Litchfield, Mason and Wilton** recently amended their Floodplain Management ordinances to reference the new FIS and FIRM effective September 25th. **Litchfield** completed and adopted a new Vehicular Circulation section to site plan regulations and a new Residential Driveway Regulation/Permit. **Litchfield** is allowing it's Growth Management to sunset in 2010. Currently the Board is finalizing drafts of Conservation Open Space Development and Inclusionary Housing ordinances, with funding assistance from CTAP grant money. **Mason** is finalizing drafts of an Open Space Design, Accessory Dwelling Unit and Multi-family ordinances. Additional regulatory updates will be scheduled in the coming months to complete the transition from SWRPC to NRPC. **Wilton** currently believes they are compliant with Workforce Housing and have deferred zoning amendments at this time. Amendments to a number of zoning district descriptions are being made in conjunction with updating their zoning map. Numerous regulation amendments and application forms are pending hearings to bring regulations up to date.

NRPC circuit riders continue to help town boards keep up with regulatory changes, training opportunities and potential funding opportunities throughout the year.

COMMUNITY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CTAP) FOR HUDSON, LITCHFIELD AND PELHAM

This project covers the 26 towns in the I-93 corridor that will be directly impacted by the improvement project. In the Nashua Region, the communities affected are **Hudson, Litchfield** and **Pelham**. In order to coordinate the many projects within the CTAP program, the communities have created subcommittees in each of the communities that fall within the CTAP region. Each subcommittee is working on special projects that will assist the towns with dealing with the impacts of growth.

NRPC has assisted **Pelham** and **Litchfield** with economic development planning and produced a draft **Hudson** Connector Road Plan. **Litchfield** has completed their Phase I grant with completion of an update to economic development strategies, completion of a business survey, and the startup of a new economic development site located on the Town website. Pelham has just concluded their projects. **Litchfield** is participating in a Phase II Collaborative grant with Londonderry, Manchester, and Bedford to assess transportation and land use issues associated with a large commercial development proposal off the

Airport Access Road. A Phase II discretionary grant was also approved for the development of up to two innovative land use ordinances. Litchfield chose to develop a Conservation Open Space and Inclusionary Housing ordinances. For more information, contact Camille Pattison, Principal Planner, at 424-2240 x 14.

OFFICE OF ENERGY AND PLANNING

NRPC has been providing assistance to **Brookline, Wilton**, and support to **Mason** on innovative land use initiatives. **Brookline** is in the research stage of developing a possible town center mixed-use development ordinance. **Wilton** was investigating, and had a subcommittee on transfer of development rights, which is now tabled as a long range goal. **Mason** has received assistance with review of its draft ordinances for conservation open space, accessory dwelling units and multi-family. **Hudson** also had their zoning reviewed and NRPC made recommendations on addressing workforce housing by amending or drafting a new ordinance to insure compliance.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM

Residents of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua, Pelham and Windham may participate in the HHW collections. The program has been very successful and has started to hold satellite collections around the region. Volunteers are always needed to assist in the collections. Please contact Minda Shaheen at 424-2240 x 29 (mindas@nashuarpc.org) if you are interested in volunteering for this important program.

Veolia Environmental Services has been hired as the new vendor providing services to the Solid Waste District for solid waste handling, transport, and disposal. In the 2009 collection season, over 70,000 pounds of household hazardous waste was collected and disposed of safely as a result of the program.

OUTREACH FOR THE SOUHEGAN RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Five communities within the Souhegan River Watershed and NRPC region will soon be receiving information related to incorporating the Souhegan River Watershed Management Plan into their community master plans and permitting processes. The management plan was completed in 2006 by NRPC and the Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee. NRPC will be planning public meetings within each of the watershed communities; please contact Minda Shaheen at 424-2240 x 29 (mindas@nashuarpc.org) if you are interested in scheduling a presentation.

BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Staff and the Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) are in the process of reviewing the current inventory and adding new potential sites to our list of potential brownfields in the region. NRPC is currently working with a project consultant for assistance with Phase I and Phase II reporting for the all-hazards EPA assessment grant. If you are interested in getting involved with development of this inventory or have a potential site in need of assessment funding, please contact Minda Shaheen at 424-2240 x 29 or mindas@nashuarpc.org.

ENERGY PLANNING

Communities across NH recognize the importance of improving their energy efficiency and conservation efforts, not only to address climate change but also to save money. To tackle these issues, communities are forming Local Energy Committees (LECs). While several communities have made real progress through their LECs, many more are interested in forming such groups but do not know how to begin.

In the fall of 2008, the NH Charitable Foundation and the US EPA awarded NRPC grant funding to create the Nashua Regional Energy Program. NRPC is using this funding to help communities in the Nashua Region form LECs. Once an LEC has been created, the Nashua Regional Energy Program works to help the community conduct an energy inventory of its municipal buildings using the EPA's Portfolio Manager and Clean Air-Cool Planet's Small Town Carbon Calculator. Energy inventories help communities to assess their

current energy use and track their energy reduction progress. By examining each building and comparing energy use across buildings, towns can see how well each building is performing and where improvements can be made. The results are also beneficial in helping communities to prioritize potential energy reduction projects.

To date, NRPC has completed energy inventories and action plans for Milford, Hollis, and SAU 41, the Hollis-Brookline school district. NRPC also collaborated with Clean Air-Cool Planet to facilitate an energy inventory for the town of Amherst with the assistance of a UNH student. NRPC is currently in the process of completing inventories and action plans for Mason and Lyndeborough. We have space available to work with one more community; if your community is interested in participating please contact Jill Longval, 603-424-2240 x27 or jilll@nashuarpc.org.

Another component of NRPC's work involves collaboration with other organizations involved in energy planning across the state. As a member of the NH Carbon Coalition, NRPC works closely with the US EPA, NH Carbon Challenge, Clean Air-Cool Planet, and other NH Planning Commissions. This collaboration helps NRPC to leverage its resources and provide the most comprehensive services possible to its communities. NRPC recently submitted a collaborative application to the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program to provide technical assistance to municipalities for energy inventories and energy planning.

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT GUIDEBOOK

NRPC is drafting a guidebook to help communities understand and implement techniques related to low impact development (LID). LID is commonly used to help meet stormwater management goals and improve water quality parameters in sensitive locations, watersheds, or environments. If you would like to contribute to the guidebook, or have suggestions for topics to be discussed, contact Minda Shaheen (mindas@nashuarpc.org; 424-2240 x. 29).

INNOVATIVE LAND USE GUIDE OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

NRPC staff has been working on a cooperative effort with NHDES and the other regional planning commissions on the Innovative Land Use Guidebook, now available through the NRPC website. This guide explores the many tools available to communities through RSA 674:21 – Innovative Land Uses. The guide contains model ordinances and other helpful resources to assist communities in addressing growth in new ways. Please contact Minda Shaheen (mindas@nashuarpc.org, 424-2240 x 29) if your community is interested in adopting one of the model ordinances; we can assist you in ordinance preparation and specifications as well as provide more information or a public presentation on the available ordinances.

HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

NRPC has begun the process of assisting the communities who have Hazard Mitigation plans that are more than 5 years old to complete the required updates. The first two communities selected by the State slated for updates are **Wilton** and **Merrimack**. NRPC staff is also assisting the Town of **Mason** to produce the town's first Hazard Mitigation Plan. **Merrimack's** plan update has been completed and is awaiting comment from FEMA for final approval. **Wilton's** plan is in the process of being updated, and staff has begun working with **Mason** to develop a draft plan.

OUTREACH

More and more businesses, agencies, and individuals are moving away from paper formats and are opting instead for digital media. NRPC is no exception. Starting in September, NRPC began publishing its newsletter in an online format at <http://nashuarpc.blogspot.com>. Articles are posted as they occur so be sure to check in frequently. Each month, an email will also be sent out summarizing the new articles that have been posted to the site. If you wish to receive these monthly email notices, please provide your email address to Karen Baker, karenb@nashuarpc.org.

You may also subscribe to the newsletter to receive instant notification as it is updated. In the right hand column of the newsletter you will see a box labeled "Subscribe to this Newsletter." Use the pull-down menu labeled "Posts" and select a feed reader (select the last orange button on the list if you don't have a preference—this is the default). Then click "Subscribe to this Feed." Once you have subscribed, each time you go online you will be notified if the newsletter has been updated. For more information on feeds, visit http://www.nashuarpc.org/aboutnrpc/newsletters/2009/subscribe_feed.pdf.

There are several advantages to switching from our print newsletter to an online format. First, information and articles can be added as they happen, keeping the newsletter timely and relevant. Second, eliminating printing and postage costs frees up money to write articles more frequently. Third, an electronic newsletter does not require paper, ink, or energy used for printing and transportation, making it more environmentally friendly than its hard copy version.

If you have questions about NRPC's online newsletter or would like to suggest a story idea, please contact Jill Longval at jilll@nashuarpc.org.

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prioritized list of goals for the region. Projects consistent with the goals of the LCTP will be eligible for Job Access Reverse Commute funding, New Freedoms funding and Elderly and Disabled funding.

NRPC continues to lead the state in preparation for a larger statewide human services transportation coordination effort. NRPC staff has worked with regional human service partners and stake holders to develop the framework for a Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) as described in the Statewide Coordinated Transportation Plan. The NRPC recently met all of the requirements outlined by the Statewide Coordinating Council (SCC) to become the first Regional Coordinating Council in the State. This action keeps NRPC at the forefront of this planning and will allow NRPC and its partners to begin taking steps towards developing a regional human service oriented transit service.

Currently NRPC is working to formalize the relationship between the RCC and the NRPC so that the RCC can continue to develop its role in addressing human service oriented transportation needs for the regions. NRPC is also working with NHDOT and DHHS as well as the SCC to ensure coordination at the state level.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE SOUHEGAN VALLEY TRANSPORTATION COLLABORATIVE, SVTC

A direct by-product of NRPC's work towards coordinating regional human service transportation is the development of the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC). Through community support and grant funds SVTC has contracted with the Nashua Transit System to begin a pilot service that provides door-to-door, wheel chair accessible, shared ride service. This pilot program carries passengers to appointments within the towns of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis and Milford, as well as to and from appointments in Nashua, for a \$2.00 fare each way. The SVTC pilot service has always been envisioned as an initial step towards meeting an immediate need, and that the service would eventually expand to include 8 communities in the Souhegan Valley, as well as rides to other essential destinations, such as congregate meal sites, grocery stores, and other services. NRPC believes that the next step in the evolution of this service is to transition from a pilot program to a more permanent and sustainable service. In order to continue into the future, a strategic implementation plan must be developed that will summarize all key issues and concerns, develop recommendations for expanding the service, and identify a method for sustainable funding the service in the future.

NRPC has been awarded funding through the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and the Federal Transit Administration New Freedoms program to develop a strategic plan and support this initiative. NRPC continues to work closely with the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC) to grow non-emergency medical transportation services in the region.

TEN YEAR PLAN PROCESS

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) completed a comprehensive and cooperative planning approach to develop programming recommendations for the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program, the 2011-2020 Ten Year Program and the outer years of the NRPC's Long Range Transportation Plan. As was the case in the last update cycle NRPC considered a longer timeframe when developing project recommendations to allow programming flexibility and implementation in a fiscally responsible manner. Recognizing the fiscal limitations faced by NHDOT, NRPC did not recommend adding new projects to the Ten Year Plan. Working through the existing TTAC meeting structure NRPC staff developed project programming recommendations for consideration by NHDOT as they work with GACIT to develop the Ten Year Plan. The following outlines the approach implemented by the NRPC Staff and TTAC.

- The February meeting focused on review of the current Ten Year Plan and TIP projects with the goal of verifying the status of the existing projects and reviewing financial constraint of the document.
- The March meeting focused on regional needs and priorities and how the economic stimulus may impact funding of project over the next several years.

- The April meeting focused on how to prioritize existing and proposed projects. The TTAC reviewed a list of projects that are likely to have a high priority in the region.
- In May NRPC staff worked with the TTAC and member communities to develop a prioritized list of projects to be submitted for consideration by NHDOT.
- The June meeting centered on the review and approval of *staff level recommendation* for Ten Year Plan Priorities.

In September and October the NRPC participated in the GACIT Hearings around the region and continued to work with NHDOT to address the needs of region through the Ten Year Plan process.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS PROGRAM


NRPC partnered with the Nashua City-Wide Safe Routes to School Task Force to develop applications for the first round of reimbursement funding under the NH DOT Safe Routes to School program. The Safe Routes program encourages children to bike or walk to school through education and incentives that remind children how much fun biking and walking can be. The program also addresses the safety concerns of parents by encouraging greater enforcement of traffic laws, exploring ways to create safer streets and educating the public about safe biking, walking and driving practices.

NRPC completed Safe Routes to Schools travel plans for Birch Street, Bicentennial, New Searles and Ledge Street Elementary Schools. This effort allows these schools to apply for up to 250,000 in 100% federal money for infrastructure improvements around the schools.

In addition the town of Brookline was awarded to complete a sidewalk project approaching the elementary school. The Town of Hollis is current at the beginning stages of working with NRPC to develop a SRTS Travel Plan for the town.

NTS TRANSIT PLANNING INITIATIVES

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission has resumed work with Nashua Transit Service to complete three transit planning tasks. The first project under this Scope of Work is the development of a Marketing Plan to promote NTS and increase ridership on the service. The second project involves reviewing the 2002 Financial Plan and identifying strategies to address the potential funding shortfalls that will accompany the likely re-designation to a large Urbanized Area with the 2010 Census. Finally NRPC will develop a ridership prediction model that will help NTS assess future demand and likely ridership both in the City and throughout the region. In addition, NRPC has lead a facilitated, iterative process whereby the Mayor's Transportation Task Force will develop a consensus vision for the priority transit system improvements in the City of Nashua from 2010 to 2020.



NRPC GIS REPORT
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MERRIMACK VILLAGE DISTRICT (MVD) GIS IMPLEMENTATION

NRPC is continuing work on the second phase of GIS Implementation for the Merrimack Village District Water Utility. GIS Staff have been gathering GPS location points for residential service or shut-off valves in the network. Staff members have collected over **1,600** service valves and attributes to date. We have located these valves to sub-meter accuracy and collected various attributes including, type, material and diameter. The field work involves coordinating with MVD staff who locate and flag the valves and NRPC staff take a GPS point and remove the flags. NRPC has also assisted MVD in the purchase of a Trimble GPS receiver and are in the process of training MVD field personnel in its use. NRPC purchased two desktop licenses of GIS software and installed them on MVD computers. Data, to the extent it has been completed, was also installed on an MVD server and preliminary training has been provided. Over the winter months when fieldwork is not possible, NRPC staff members will continue cleaning data based on suggestions from MVD.

CTAP OPEN SPACE PLANS

NRPC created Open Space Plans for the Towns of Litchfield and Pelham as a part of the CTAP planning process. The goals of the plans are to create a Green Infrastructure overlay of important lands for protection and to identify priority areas or parcels. The process for identifying open space and priority parcels was Geographic Information System (GIS) and mapping intensive. A co-occurrence analysis was conducted for both Towns using important environmental layers identified by an Open Space committee. Typical layers include: aquifers, floodplain, wetlands, important habitat, developable areas and others. A co-occurrence analysis consists of overlaying multiple datasets, or map layers, to identify the amount of coincidence or overlap on any given location. The co-occurrence analysis was used to assist the committee in drawing a Green Infrastructure. Products for this process include a final report, a map identifying a Green Infrastructure overlay and a map identifying priority areas or parcels.

NEW STANDARD MAP SETS

GIS staff members have finalized our update of standard map sets for each community in the region. Two new maps are now available. A Street Index Map will have the most up-to-date street information as well as a street name index, community features, historic sites, bridges, transmission towers and other typical street map data. An Environmental Overlays map for each municipality contain state-wide available environmental features including floodplain, wetlands, conservation lands, aquifer, soils, habitat and other overlays. These standard maps often serve as a base for zoning maps, trail maps and other community requested mapping products. NRPC has delivered a copy of the new maps to most communities in the region. PDF versions of the maps will soon be available for viewing or download on NRPC's website.

MAPPING & DATA CREATION

The GIS Department has been busy creating a wide variety of GIS data and maps for various projects in the region. GIS Staff updated Nashua Transit System (NTS) RideGuide Maps as well as the display route maps posted at the main Transit Center in Downtown Nashua. Other mapping includes, updated base map production for Litchfield and Mont Vernon and new Zoning mapping for Pelham, Hudson and Lyndeborough. NRPC GIS is currently involved in editing the Wilton zoning layer to conform with the zoning code and parcel edges. Recently, NRPC has moved into online interactive mapping with Google Maps & Google Earth. NRPC's traffic count data can now be viewed in a map and queried for free online using a link on the NRPC website. Also, a Google Maps application for Litchfield Economic Development maps parcels available for new businesses. NRPC GIS also created a high quality, detailed map of the Merrimack Town Center area for the Merrimack iTRaC Project.



REGION 7 REGIONAL COORDINATION COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION REPORT

December 2009

The Region 7 Regional Coordination Council (RCC) for Community Transportation is a working group of the NRPC. The RCC's mission is to help develop, implement, and provide guidance to the coordination of shared ride transportation options within Region 7 so that as resources allow:

- Seniors, persons with disabilities and human service agency consumers can safely access local and regional transportation services to get to locations within the region and between regions
- Municipalities, human service agencies and other organizations can purchase such shared ride coordinated transportation services for their citizens, clients, and customers
- Qualifying individuals, not working through an agency, would have the option to purchase/order transportation services.

Recent Activities:

The Region 7 RCC met on Tuesday, December 15th at noon at the NRPC office in Merrimack to discuss the following:

Statewide Coordinating Council Update:

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services recently announced that as a result of budget constraints, it will not be providing Medicaid funding at this time towards the development of the statewide transportation brokerage system. DHHS will, however, continue to participate in the planning process for the brokerage system.

As a result of the DHHS decision, the Statewide Coordinating Council has formed an "Alternate Coordination Strategies Work Group." Members of this group include representatives from individual RCC's, NHDHHS and NHDOT. The group will work to promote development of coordinated transportation at the regional level in the near term, while keeping in mind the long term goal of a statewide coordinated system. NRPC is represented on this committee.

Another concern is legal issues regarding the RCC's and their relationship with the Regional Planning Commissions. The notion of the Region 7 RCC becoming a committee of NRPC has been discussed by staff and the Executive Committee at NRPC. The Region 7 RCC will continue as a working group at NRPC for the near term with the possibility of becoming a stand alone NRPC committee in the future.

Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative Update:

NRPC staff has been working on the development of a strategic plan for the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC). SVTC is a demand response service that provides non-emergency medical transportation for residents of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, and Milford. It has been in operation for 1 year. The service operates between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Rides cost two dollars each way and may be taken to social service agencies, pharmacies, health care appointments, doctor visits, dialysis, physical therapy, hospital and counseling services. Rides can also be taken on Thursdays to several shopping destinations including Market Basket in Milford, Wal-Mart in Amherst, Shaws/Lorden Plaza in Milford and Stop& Shop/Richmond Plaza in Milford. Riders are picked up at their homes by a lift equipped vehicle. The SVTC is a potential component of a region-wide brokerage system.

Regional Community Transportation Brokerage Pilot Program

There is an opportunity through NH DOT to apply for funding a pilot program in the region. The RCC expressed interest in pursuing this opportunity, and discussed the next steps in working toward putting together an application.