



MINUTES

NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING 01/24/07

Members Present:

Bill Parker, Milford Community Development Director
Sheila O'Riordan, City of Nashua
Bill Watson, NH Department of Transportation
Anne Bogart, NH Department of Transportation
Steve Laurin, Town of Merrimack
Steve Dookran, City of Nashua
Bob Jeniski, Nashua Transit System, General Manager
Roger Houston, City of Nashua Community Development
Jeff Gowan, Pelham Planning Department
Jean Marie Kennamer, City of Nashua
Joe Mendola, City of Nashua

Others Present:

Tim Roache, NRPC Principal Transportation Planner
Ryan Friedman, GIS Planner
Matt Waitkins, NRPC Transportation Planner
Steve Wagner, NRPC Litchfield/Wilton Circuit Rider
Karen M. Baker, Administrative Assistant
Stephen Williams, NRPC Executive Director

Meeting Opened and Review of Minutes: Tim opened the meeting at 12:11. He started off by reminding the group of the need for a steering committee for Regional Safety Plan. He moved onto introductions and approval of the minutes from the November 15th TTAC meeting. Bob Jeniski moved to approve the minutes and Steve Laurin seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed and the motion was passed.

Tim passed around a 2007-2010 TIP/2011-2016 Investment Planner handout showing a snapshot of how things stand today in the Nashua Region. He pointed out that each year was broken into three tiers and explained how each project ended up in a certain tier and his reason for the design of the spreadsheet (1 line per project). He explained the reason for the breakdown and it could benefit in the future. He provided a visual presentation and proceeded to review the numbers in each tier.

Steve Laurin questioned who was programming this and Tim responded that it was the State. Bill Watson said that it was based on the legislatively approved TIP and the construction processes could be carried over 2 to 3 years and that it was also based on the award of the actual contract, not the end date, due to the fact that some of the projects may not necessarily be finished.

Steve Dookran questioned why there was no engineering shown over the years and felt it was not complete. Tim said he would check on this. Steve Williams said it was an indication of when the project starts. He also pointed out what really jumped out was the fact that 376 million over 10 years of which 157 million would be earmarked for Circumferential Hwy. He added that it seemed unlikely that this would occur in the form of the 10 year plan. He continued on saying that only a minor amount of the funding is shown in the first 4 years and that once beyond projects are relatively smaller.

Tim spoke saying that the TIP's first 4 years programmed are likely to be constructed and that projects from 2011 on are not guaranteed. With this in mind he wanted the group to work with him on changing the mindset. Thinking of priority's and needs and how to address them would be the first step. He gave some examples of this though process based on what would happen if only the first 4 years of the plan was addressed.



Ryan Friedman provided handouts and a slide show with scenarios on Volume to Capacity Ratio and 24 Hour Travel Times using a 2028 population and employment model. He explained how transportation in the region would be affected if only the first 4 years of projects in the 10 year plan were implemented (see handouts for more detailed information). Roger Houston pointed out that the model did not go over the Broad Street Parkway 20 year capacity.

Ryan explained his handouts in a little more detail saying that one of the ways to quantify his numbers to people was to use travel times. Steve Williams added that travel speed accounts for time sitting at lights and this explains the low speeds. He added that most people have a different perception of time when in a car (they think time is actually longer), then what was shown on the presentation and handouts. These times were also not during peak hours. Jeff Gowan asked if the projections in the future were weighted out. Ryan said his examples were based on assumption. Steve Laurin questioned if the speeds were the same throughout. Ryan confirmed they were and based on the posted speeds. Steve Dookran asked if both maps were in correlation with each other. Ryan replied they were and using the shortest possible route. Roger Houston asked if it was possible to do something regarding delays in peak hours. Ryan informed him that he was working towards this and was currently entering every count into a model to determine peak hours. Roger felt this would be valuable for emergency response. Ryan added that the 24 Hour Travel Time map was based on the next 4 years of the TIP.

Roger asked where we are buildout wise in 2028. Steve Williams answered that there are a lot of communities that are there now or nearly there and that once approached, people generally start redeveloping and that is when policy changes happen.

Steve Dookran questioned the reliability of the information provided on the presentation. Ryan explained that he used buildout numbers in some of the models, but mostly straight line growth numbers from past trends. Steve Williams added that looking at the presentation from Ryan, if present trends continue into the next 20 years; this is where we would be.

When asked by Roger if the numbers from the I93 widening effect on Everett Turnpike were in the model, Ryan answered that only the region was in the model.

Steve Dookran asked if it was reasonable to expect more CMAQ funding based on this growth over the next 10 years. In response to this, Steve Williams passed around 3 handouts; Ten Year Plan Projects by RPC FY07-16, Population & Housing Distribution by RPC, and Housing Unit Based Budget and began to go over the sheets. He explained that this was done with the Rockingham and Southern NH RPC's to try and push the process in the technical direction. He referred to the Long Range Plan, TIP, and Air Quality and the frustration over the rubber stamping approval process. He went on to explain the board's frustration and the goal of trying to play a bigger role in changing the current process. He questioned whether there were ways to deal with this using a technical perspective. He proceeded to review the numbers on all three sheets and that he questioned DOT on the numbers on first handout due to the even distribution based on population. He explained the numbers on the 2nd handout and moved onto the 3rd handout. Due to the State's lack of policy when it comes to distribution of funds, Steve provided this page as an example exercise on how things could be done. He explained that the numbers were based on road mileage as opposed to population. He went on to say that the overall goal of this was to start a statewide debate to see if the State had a transportation policy, what it would look like to eventually get to the point of having one and using it.

Steve gave another example: Take allocation for Nashua Region as a start point along with the first 4 years of the STIP, then look at the 20 year horizon and prioritize the projects and how it would look. This addresses needs based on policies and present.



Roger asked if employment was looked at based on road use when coming up with the numbers. Steve replied that employment was a factor, but it skewed the numbers in the direction of Nashua. Steve Dookran asked if unemployment along with daytime population was a factor. Steve replied that it was hard to get data on unemployment and daytime population.

In the next cycle of the 10 year plan, Tim asked the group to think about needs, concepts to address, and focus on 2011 - 2012 and how to distribute 9.8 million across the region thinking about the overall needs and using resources available.

Sheila O'Riordan pointed out that page 3 did not include maintenance and preservation. Steve Williams said that would be corrected.

Tim added that the needs are far greater than the amount of money available and therefore, we need to be creative. We can't expect that everybody is going to get their project. In addition, the region should be able to determine what we need. Steve Williams added that it would be good experiment of changing the way we approach transportation in the State as well as developing a process that will result in identifying highest priority needs with a budget.

Bill Watson spoke of the 4 very different points of view he had heard at other RPC's that he visited. Not everyone was on board with the process due to the lack of technical resources to deal with a budget. Steve Williams added that we were trying to start the debate and that it was not that hard. Everyone has different priorities.

Steve Williams let the group know that Tim would be in contact with them regarding the next meeting.

Motion to adjourn came from Roger Houston, seconded by Sheila O'Riordan. The meeting adjourned at 1:30pm.

Next meeting (TBD) will be held in the NRPC Conference Room.