



MINUTES

NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING 07/18/07

Members Present: Steve Dubois, NH Department of Transportation
Becky Ohler, NH Department of Environmental Services
Leigh Levine, FHWA
Roger Houston, City of Nashua
Steve Laurin, Town of Merrimack
Sean Sullivan, Town of Hudson
Steve Dookran, City of Nashua
Trevor Doolan, City of Nashua
Bruce Berry, Town of Amherst
Jean Marie Kennamer, City of Nashua

Others Present: Tim Roache, NRPC Principal Transportation Planner
Ryan Friedman, GIS Planner
Matt Waitkins, NRPC Transportation Planner
Karen M. Baker, Administrative Assistant
Stephen Williams, NRPC Executive Director

Meeting Opened and Review of Minutes: Tim Roache opened the meeting at 12:09. He started with introductions and moved onto approval of the minutes from the May 16th TTAC meeting. Steve Laurin moved to approve the minutes and they were approved unanimously as submitted.

RAIL UPDATE

Steve Williams gave an update on commuter rail. He pointed out that there was more progress on commuter rail in the past year than ever. Steve informed the group that since June there has been tremendous progress on Commuter Rail. He explained that Governor Lynch formed a working group consisting of the City's of Nashua & Manchester, Nashua & Manchester Chamber of Commerce, PanAm Railway, Congressman Bass, and the Nashua & Southern NH Regional Planning Commissions. The Working group was charged with developing a plan. Upon reviewing this plan, Governor Lynch said that rail was needed in Southern NH and was fully on board. He added that there were 3 things that moved forward in getting rail into the State:

1. Liability Cost Issues

Betty Lasky started a legislative study committee to work on liability cost issues which are the biggest cost involved with rail. The study committee was formed along with concerned parties who recommended a plan to the legislature where it passed in both the House and the Senate.

2. Rail Authority

Once rail gets going, there will need to be an operating entity or a rail authority which would have the power of negotiation with other governments. This became a statewide grueling legislative effort. This was approved by the Senate and House with changes from the House. Next, there will be an organizational meeting where all communities will be invited sometime in mid-August. A 25 member board would be formed with representatives from NHDOT, 3 Governor appointed representatives, 4 transportation representatives from the House and Senate, representatives from the communities, 7 of the 9 RPC's in the State, Manchester Airport, and representatives from Bedford, Nashua, Merrimack, Concord, Franklin, Dover, Exeter, Durham, Berlin, and Claremont.

3. Capital Budget

Steve explained that 1 million was proposed for the Capital Budget to be used by Manchester and Nashua to help pay match to acquire rail stations. This made it through the legislative process and was signed by the Governor. He added that he was heavily involved in the organization of rail work with



the City to come up with a municipal management agreement for the station sites. This would help build a basis for an operating agreement with PanAm and the MBTA.

Roger Houston asked if there was an estimate on when something may happen. Steve said once everyone agrees, he said it should not be more than a 2 year development cycle, so mid-2010.

Steve Laurin asked if any board members had been appointed. Steve Williams responded that the enabling legislature needed to be signed first, with letters to be sent to the boards to invite appointments.

Steve Williams emphasized the rail project as a first priority with the legislature and that it forces NH to think about other areas who want rail. He added that the money in the capital budget would be used as part of the matching funds for the station site.

Steve Laurin asked about the liability involved. Steve Williams explained that there were 3 levels of liability limitations:

- Level 1 - 75 million - (all NE states have adopted except NH) with an estimated cost of \$375,000 a year
- Level 2 - 200 million - Federal statute passed to PanAm as well as one to all other governing rail areas, with a cost of 1 million per year
- Level 3 - 500 million with a cost of 1.475 million a year

Steve added that these were the low estimates from an insurance company and that there would not be more than 8 to 10 operations a day on the tracks.

Leigh Levine asked if the planning work would be done by NRPC or would the authority eventually have a board to handle this. Steve responded that NRPC would continue to handle the Manchester and Nashua aspect. He also said that rail currently has no funding of their own but once in the construction phase, rail would draw funding from the State.

REGIONAL SAFETY PLAN

Tim Roache gave a brief overview of what Ryan Friedman had been working on regarding the Regional Safety Plan. The process involved in doing this was to identify key areas where high crash rates occur. Ryan has been collecting the data from these areas and analyzing it to help identify these locations. A draft plan should be available by September and approval of the plan by December.

Ryan presented a Powerpoint presentation showing crash incident locations for the entire region. He pointed out that Hillsborough County was the best in terms of safety.

Jean Marie Kenamer referred to accidents that have happen on the highway involving military persons coming back from Iraq saying that it had to do with the mindset to speed in order to get out of harms way.

Sean Sullivan brought up the news of an accident that had just happen in Newington and the death resulting from it.

Ryan proceeded through the presentation and asked for comments based on the data collected in each town. Some of the comments were as follows:

Steve Dookran - Somerset Parkway/ Amherst Street was the highest in the last 3 to 4 years for accident rates.

Roger Houston - Questioned whether intersections were 3 or 4 way. Ryan answered "both".

Steve Dookran was surprised at the accidents showing at Amherst Street and Cellu Drive. He added that improvements had been made since the data was collected.



Jean Marie Kenamer commented on Amherst Street and Charron Ave and how the traffic pattern has changed from years past and the banning of left turns onto Amherst. She added that a traffic study was done at this intersection and it showed that it was safer and did not compromise progression even though the new pattern with the jug handle was a pain.

Steve Dookran commented that the NH West Hollis and 111A eastbound lane does not merge well due to the lack of room.

Sean Sullivan commented on Elm Ave and Route 102 saying that part of the problem was due to the fact that it was an outdated intersection, not enough left time onto 102 and the non-existent gap with right on red. He felt that a traffic signal upgrade would be needed to improve this adding that it was not a priority in Hudson, but it was on the radar screen.

Bruce Berry commented on the high traffic accident rate in Amherst at Route 101A and Route 122, saying that the rapid succession of the 3 lights was a problem. He added that there were improvements done earlier on 101A, but they did not seem to help.

Steve Williams said that more years of data would be needed to get a more accurate idea of issues and to alleviate the "no codes" (nothing entered by police station of did not know code for it) in Ryan's presentation.

Steve Williams added that a pedestrian overpass in the area of 101A, Thornton and Deerwood was looked at because of the issues with pedestrian accidents in that area.

Ryan said the 30 to 40% of incidents are passed onto the DOT, but he went directly to the local police departments and got his data by street. He added that almost everyone of the lower number vehicle accidents per day occurred on streets where schools were. Part of his analysis of the data would include looking at the best streets and intersections and comparing them with the bad. Ryan said that the DOT 05/06 data should be available this summer.

Steve Dookran felt that roundabouts vs. signalized vs. un-signalized and the severity of accidents should be compared. He felt that they could be reduced by the roundabouts. Ryan said he could not check for improvement until the new data was available.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL UPDATE

Matt Waitkins explained what the movement by DOT for the Safe Routes to School initiative. Matt expressed that he thought there would be an RFP coming soon if everything goes through with the funding guidelines discussions. He passed around the "Getting Started" DOT guide to the Safe Routes Program. Matt pointed out that this was an international program that has been around for decades to encourage kids in grades K-8 who live less than 2 miles, to walk or bike to school more often. This was administered by the DOT under the SAFETEA-LU funding program. Matt listed some of the requirements and components of the program:

- Letters of recommendation from organizations in town
- 10 to 30% funding towards non-infrastructure programs enforcement
- NH eligible for 5 million over 5 years
- 70% funding for sidewalks (non infrastructure)
- Applications have to address all issues
- Must have a travel plan (Ledge Street Safe Routes is an example)
- 8 weeks to get RFP done (September 17th close)
- Reviewed by RPC's
- If approval from GASIT, 100% reimbursable by federal government (have to be able to pay up front)



Steve Dookran asked if schools were eligible for this. Matt said some had shown interest, but he was a little unclear on the criteria.

Tim thought it would be similar to the TE process. Steve Dookran felt the schools should be involved in the process. Matt said RPC's could apply for funding for individual schools and that traffic calming qualifies. Matt added that start up funding is capped at 5,000 and there was a 100,000 cap on any application. Money could be spent as soon as letter from DOT is received. Tim added that more would be known after the GASSET meeting being held later today.

Tim informed the group that the LCTP Update would be saved for the next meeting.

Leigh Levine informed the group about the MPO Planning Review that would be done on July 24th at NRPC. He added that this was a new process and there would be 1 every year starting with Nashua and that is would be a very comprehensive review. There would also be informal discussions and input could be provided through email and the outcome would be a report with commendations and recommendations. The process should be done by September.

Motion to adjourn came from Roger Houston. The meeting adjourned at 1:47pm.

The next TTAC Meeting TBD in the NRPC Conference Room.