



MINUTES
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
03/19/08
APPROVED

Members Present: Raymond Blethen, Nashua Transit System
Roger Houston, City of Nashua
Steve Laurin, Town of Merrimack
Bill Parker, Town of Milford
Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham
Jean Marie Kennamer, City of Nashua
Nick Alexander, NH Department of Transportation
Becky Ohler, NH Department of Environmental Services
Steve Dookran, City of Nashua Division of Public Works
Jeanne Walker, City of Nashua Division of Public Works
Sean Sullivan, Town of Hudson
John Cashell, Town of Hudson

Others Present: Tim Roache, NRPC Principal Transportation Planner
Steve Wagner, NRPC Regional Planner
Karen M. Baker, Administrative Assistant

MEETING OPENED AND REVIEW OF MINUTES

Tim Roache opened the meeting at 12:08. He started with introductions and moved onto approval of the minutes from the November 28th TTAC meeting. Jeff Gowan moved to approve the minutes seconded by Jean Marie Kennamer. All were in favor and the minutes were approved as submitted.

REGIONAL PLAN TRANSPORTATION FORUM

Kerrie Diers presented a summary report of the results from the interactive presentation from the Regional Transportation Forums held in November of 2007. She informed the group of the three forums that were held; Transportation, Energy & Green Building, and Water Resources, as well as the Turning Point technology used to answer a series of forum topic based questions. Instant feedback was generated from the participants (using a handheld keypad), which led to more stimulated discussions from the participants. Some of the results based on these discussions are highlighted below:

Prioritizing of Projects

Highest priority projects where funding was not an issue:

- Implementation of passenger rail
- Another Merrimack River crossing
- NH 101 safety and capacity improvements

Highest priority projects where funding was an issue:

- Implementation of passenger rail
- NH 101 A capacity improvements
- NH 101 Safety and capacity improvement

Issue most important in shaping the future transportation system:

- Deferred maintenance and aging transportation system
- Changing cultural norms



Funding

How we should react to reductions in funding:

- Change our lifestyles to decrease transportation demand and cost

Top priorities for existing funding:

- Preserving and maintaining the existing system

Top priorities for any new funding:

- Improving alternative modes
- Preserving and maintaining the existing system

Not strong public support for gas tax increase

New revenue sources:

- Increased developer contributions
- Private investment

The declining quality of transportation system and increased congestion not likely to cause people to change behavior.

For more detailed information on the results of the Regional Transportation forums, please refer to the "Draft Focus on Transportation" summary report from NRPC (attachment 2 of the meeting agenda packet).

As an addition to the transportation summary Kerrie passed around a "2008 Regional Plan Transportation Strategies" sheet which outlined the two main categories (Funding and Behavior) to address that go hand in hand as the overall results of the forums. She asked the TTAC members for and question or comments.

Steve Laurin asked what they are saying about I-93 (pg 7) and if they want more or none. Kerrie said those were reactions and took it as no new construction. Jean Marie added that there was a big discussion on I-93.

Becky Ohler asked if the results could be used as a mandate, if the feedback was for narrowing down the focus, and was it what NRPC was expecting. Kerrie said no to mandating and that it was just input to the whole regional plan process, Yes to narrowing the focus and Yes to expectations, but there were some surprises in regards to what the communities thought was on land use.

The Energy and the Water forum had the same results regarding changing behavior. In addition there was also discussion on the need to change land use and transportation polices. Steve Dookran asked if we have partners out there to help in the funding strategies for transportation. Kerrie said that we did and Tim added that there is still the opportunity. Steve Dookran asked about pushing for legislation to enable this. Kerrie said it was going to be looked at this summer. Steve also asked if the stormwater utility bill was in trouble. Neither Tim nor Kerrie knew. Kerrie added that any further comments could be emailed to her.

STIP AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

Tim introduced Nick Alexander, former Transportation Planner at Central Regional Planning Commission for 10 years, now working with the NH DOT and is here today to go over the STIP Amendment Procedures. Nick proceeded to review Attachment 3A & B of the agenda packet. He pointed out that it was a three party approval and that FHWA signed off on the procedures the previous



day and that they were waiting for the FTA to sign off. Nick also pointed out the 3 main reasons to have these procedures in place; Transparency, Consistency, and Timeliness. MPO's, USEPA, DOT, the 5 RPC's and FTA would all be involved in this procedure. He referred to pages 2 & 3 in attachment 3B which outline the types of projects that would trigger a full amendment. Some examples of what would trigger a full amendment are:

- Anything that impacts air quality
- Change to the scope of a project
- Change in the cost of a project

Nick said the hope was that these new procedures would expedite the process. He used the TE project in Hudson as an example explaining that the benefit of the new procedures would result in a 1 month approval time as opposed to 3 months. Sean Sullivan said it makes a whole lot of sense and asked who implements this. Nick said it would be the MPO's decision on how they deal with projects. He added that in rural areas, it would be done at the state level. Becky felt this was good because there would be no way to sneak changes through with the interagency review committee monitoring. Tim asked the members for endorsement or support on the states new procedure. There was no negative feedback.

PROSPECTUS UPDATE

Tim presented a summary of the proposed changes to the Nashua MPO Transportation Planning Prospectus. He pointed out that there were only two significant changes to the document and one minor change:

1. The TIP Amendment Procedures: Primarily mirror the States STIP procedures with one exception outlined on pages 27 & 28, Appendix C - Administrative Modifications, which give the Executive Director the authority to sign off on an administrative amendment. By doing so, would save time.
2. TTAC Membership and Meeting Requirements: Appendix E, Page 35 define the roles and responsibilities of the TTAC and detail the current membership structure including meeting requirements, procedures, meeting date rules, notice requirements, definition of quorum, voting requirements, subcommittees, and order of business.
3. Public Participation per new SAFETEA-LU requirements: Section 4, page 12 outlines the public participation process which includes electronic distribution of public information using NRPC website and cooperation with other planning agencies, which would include a 45 day comment period.

Tim informed the members that he was updating the membership list and that Nick would now represent NH DOT as a voting member. Becky questioned whether someone from the rail authority should be a member and with the option as a voting or non-voting member. Tim suggested considering Northern Massachusetts, Southern RPC, and Rockingham RPC also. The members agreed that it was a good idea to include neighboring RPC's, MPO's, and the rail authority as non-voting members of the TTAC.

Becky questioned the consistency of reference of meetings for TTAC (RSA 91A vs 72 hours). Tim will check for consistency between prospectus and RSA91A. Tim said he would continue with the mailing list and quorum requirements. Steve Dookran asked if the MPO had a prospectus for non-transportation related business. Tim said that would be covered in NRPC's Bylaws. *(See Attachment 4-Transportation Planning Prospectus included in the agenda packet - for more detailed information)*

**STIP AMENDMENT #6**

Tim informed the group that this is a full amendment however no project in the NRPC region triggered the full amendment. He reviewed the proposed changes to specific projects brought on by the NHDOT's request that NRPC amend the 2007-2010 TIP. Tim informed the members that the full STIP Amendment #6 was available at NRPC and any questions could be directed to him (*See Attachment 5 of the meeting agenda packet for more detailed information*). The changes were mostly due to fiscal constraint or a funding change. Becky asked the wording in the Air Quality paragraph on the backside of the STIP Amendment #6 letter be reworded.

Steve Dookran said in response the change of the NH 130 project, that the 1st phase of engineering work was brought to the neighborhood, but rejected by them because they were against more roundabouts. Tim added that none of the changes affect the air quality and the previous could be relied on. Tim asked for a recommendation to approve to the Commission. Sean Sullivan motioned and Steve Laurin seconded the motion. All were in favor with none opposed. Tim added that it was published in the Telegraph and that a public hearing would be held on April 16th by the NRPC Executive Committee.

Steve Dookran asked if these changes would immediately free up money for other projects in the region. Tim answered "you would think so, but this just allowed the NH DOT to meet fiscal constraint requirements. Nick elaborated saying there is no money in the next year of the 10 year plan, never mind the other 9 years. He added it just made a negative situation less negative and that a hope would be that future STIP Amendments would help to free up monies on delayed projects to other projects. MPO's are pushing for regional allocation of funds to allow limited local programming of projects.

2009-2018 TEN YEAR PLAN UPDATE

Tim gave a brief summary saying that the draft 2009-2018 Ten Year Plan continues to move forward towards final approval and that it has since passed and moved out of the House and gone to the Senate with the hope of a June approval. Once this happens, NRPC will incorporate projects in the approved Ten Year Plan into the Regional Transportation Improvement Program and Long Range Transportation Plan where they will be brought to the Commission for adoption at the September 2008 meeting. Tim continued by reviewing the table on the back side of Attachment 7. Tim passed around a letter from Bill Cass of the DOT which gave an explanation of the Amherst, Bedford, Milford, Wilton project which was cut from 53 million to 10 million. The letter explained that there would be enough money for 3 or 4 intersection type improvements and that not just one town would not be getting whole 10 million for themselves alleviate the safety issues of the towns along this corridor.

TTAC BUSINESS FOR 2008

Tim reviewed Attachment 6 of the meeting agenda packet and informed the group of NRPC's next venture which was to go after some SPR funding to a Transportation Security Plan which would include scenario planning for disasters. He added that some ITS and Safety Plan aspects would be incorporated into this plan. Steve Wagner mentioned using some of the aspects from the Hazard Mitigation Plans as well. Jeff Gowan said some smaller towns (Fire Chiefs) were working on similar plans. Tim said the idea was to get the help of local fire officials and not to tell them what to do. Tim concluded saying that there were very few MPO's that have addressed this and that the SPR Application for funding would be submitted before the April 1st deadline.

Tim also informed the group of the next round of funding for Safe Routes to School was going on (100,000) and there was info available on the web regarding this. He added that he would have info on the LRP and Prospectus at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at **1:22pm**.