



NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
02/18/09
APPROVED

Members Present:

- Mark Sousa, Nashua Transit System
- Louise Woodworth, Nashua Transit System
- Steve Laurin, Town of Merrimack
- Bill Parker, Town of Milford
- Joe Mendola, City of Nashua
- Bill Toomey, City of Nashua
- Jeff Babel, Hollis DPW
- Jean Marie Kennamer, City of Nashua
- Roger Houston, City of Nashua
- John Cashell, Town of Hudson
- Bruce Berry, Amherst DPW
- Chris Skoglund, NH DES
- Nick Alexander, NH DOT

Others Present:

- Steve Williams, Executive Director
- Matt Waitkins, NRPC Transportation Planner
- Steve Wagner, NRPC Regional Planner
- Karen M. Baker, NRPC Administrative Assistant

MEETING OPENED AND REVIEW OF MINUTES

Matt Waitkins opened the meeting at 12:09. He started with introductions and moved onto approval of the minutes from the January 21st TTAC meeting. There were some minor grammatical errors and Roger Houston moved to approve the minutes seconded by Bruce Berry. There was 1 abstention. All were in favor and the minutes passed with amendments.

STIP AMENDMENT #1 UPDATE

Waitkins informed the group of STIP Amendment #1 of the adopted 2009-2012 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program included in the agenda packet. The STIP is being amended partly due to the possibility that NH will receive economic stimulus funding from the Federal Government. He noted that Amherst's Town Hall Beautification project is included in the proposed amendment, as well as bus equipment for Nashua Transit system, and a change in scope for the Commuter Rail project. He explained that the Commuter Rail component of STIP Amendment 1 triggered an air quality conformity determination. An updated Air Quality Analysis for the NRPC and SNHRPC portion of the SE NH 8 Hour Ozone Area non-attainment area was developed demonstrating that the proposed changes conform. He asked if there were any questions. Mark Sousa asked if there was any timelines as to when the clock will start for funding and where they would go to apply. Nick Alexander said the clock started yesterday and that there were some requirements per FTA. **Effective 120 days from yesterday it would be 50% funding and the apportionment has to be in the project.** In addition, applications should be done in the same manner as the grant projects which should be submitted jointly to DOT and FTA.

There was some question on the rail work and the 300 million needed. Steve Williams updated the group on some information regarding this. Firstly he pointed out that the wetlands and bridges in the corridor area in the railroad right of way which will minimize the environmental permitting process. In addition, there would be no takings or public requirements for right-of-way. Negotiation would be with the railroad and a letter regarding the categorical exclusion would round out the process. Williams felt the process would move faster than a highway project. Alexander elaborated a bit more on the process. Williams added that they could not count on a straight allocation for the state and that they are asking for it all in regards to rail. He concluded that there would be 3 stations (Nashua/Airport/Downtown

Manchester). He also anticipated at least 6 months worth of negotiations between municipalities and the rail authority if they get the money.

Waitkins informed the group that NRPC placed a legal notice in the Nashua Telegraph for public comments through March 16th. All comments will be submitted to DOT and a recommendation for approval to the Commission would be necessary on March 18th to make this all happen.

2011-2014 TIP AND TEN YEAR PLAN UPDATE

Waitkins reminded the committee of the 2 -year cycle for updating the TIP and Ten Year Plan. The 2009-2012 TIP; 2009-2018 Ten Year Plan and the 2009-2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) are the currently adopted transportation planning documents for the NRPC region.

He continued to review the process saying that once the TIP, Ten Year Plan and LRTP are adopted, the next 2-year update cycle begins almost immediately. This means that the update cycle which will yield the 2011-2014 TIP, 2011-2020 Ten Year Plan and 2011-2036 LRTP has begun.

The next three TTAC meetings will be used to review existing projects, identify regional needs and determine if proposed projects in the existing planning documents will meet those needs. Waitkins reviewed the current project table included in the agenda packet. He then asked those in attendance for any project updates they are aware of.

Joe Mendola updated the group on the NH 101A Widening project from Somerset Plaza to Celina Ave., informing them of the finding and necessity public meeting held on February 17th in which a decision was made to go forward with the project with stipulations.

Bill Parker was hopeful that construction for the South Street Improvement Project would start this summer.

Bruce Berry said they were trying to move the whole Amherst Town Hall Beautification Project into 2009 due to the fact that 2010 is 250th year anniversary of Amherst. The Town would prefer to get the project done during the 2009 construction season so that Amherst Village is not a mess during the celebration in 2010. The Town is working hard to move the construction phase of the project to FY 2009 in order to start construction by this summer (2009).

Waitkins noted that the NH 130 project in Nashua, the Northern Crossing of the Merrimack River project, the Amherst, Bedford, Milford, Wilton 101 Lane Expansions project, and the Everett Turnpike Exit 36 Southbound Ramp project (which would involve coordination with Massachusetts) were more in the 10 year range. Waitkins said the goal is to get a handle on what projects are still relevant and go over in detail at the next meeting. Williams asked the group to look at the list and consider the projects for recertification to include in the list. Williams also said that the process on some of the high priority projects may have the opportunity to accelerate due to the potential of some new money in the coming years.

LOCALLY COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

Waitkins passed around a handout outlining process and the steps to date on the Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan (LCTP) which was developed to recognize the needs for non-emergency transportation. Listed below are some of the process steps:

- LCTP was adopted in December of 2006
- Goal #1 was to be a part of the Statewide Coordinating Council (SCC)

- Goal #2 was to create a Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)
- Developed a set of By Laws and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the help of Nelson Nygaard publication
- Letter submitted to SCC for RCC recognition
- RCC goal is to develop minimum criteria for and RFP for a broker or Regional Transportation Coordinator (RTC) to assign trips.

Currently Granite State Organizing Project (GSOP) is working with Nashua Transit Systems (NTS) to develop a demand response system with an overall goal of increasing regional transit. Sousa informed group that the State has not allocated any funds for this process and there could be a funding issue. Currently the number of trips is higher than 260 and NTS is continuing to work with GSOP in hopes of becoming a service possibly similar to CART. Additionally they are looking into a fixed route system. Parker informed the group that all 4 towns (Amherst, Milford, Wilton, Brookline) are seeking funding through town warrant articles.

NEW OZONE ATTAINMENT AREA BOUNDARIES

Waitkins informed the group that EPA ozone standards have been lowered and this means that ozone non attainment area boundaries in New Hampshire must be revised. Even though Ozone levels in NH are improving portions of New Hampshire will be designated non-attainment for the new standard. The southern and southeastern portions of state continue to be the focus. Waitkins introduced Chris Skoglund of the NHDES to further explain. Skoglund informed the group of their task of coming up with a new 8 Hour Ozone Non-Attainment Area due to the new standard.

Skoglund and Nick Alexander (NHDOT) discussed several scenarios that have been proposed for new configuration of boundaries. One proposed boundary groups the NH non-attainment area with MA and RI which would not be preferable to NHDOT and the NH MPO's.

Another boundary pushes the existing boundary west to include portions of western Hillsborough County and would include Pack Monadnock in Peterborough.

Steve Williams suggested separating the mountains region due to the high altitude and also had concerns for NRPC communities that were currently not in non-attainment areas that would be now and questioned the model used.

Williams said that ozone was not just tailpipe emissions. Skoglund agreed adding that a lot of the problems with ozone are coming from New York and Boston. He also pointed out that a lot of major cities west of New England are in attainment and there are no ozone problems until you get here.

Skoglund said that NHDES would continue to work with EPA to minimize the impact to NH MPO's of changing the non-attainment boundaries.

Skoglund informed the group of a program which address or help air quality reduction impacts. The Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) is an EPA grant and loan program created in 2005 to help reduce diesel emissions by helping to offset the cost for retrofitting heavy-duty vehicles such as motor coaches with clean diesel technology. Retrofits are defined broadly, including any one of retrofit's 5 Rs (refueling with cleaner fuel; rebuilding with engine upgrades; repowering with new engines; retrofitting with the addition of emissions control technologies; and replacing vehicles with new ones). 100% will be covered for anti idling and only a portion will be covered for vehicle emission reductions. DES will be partnering with DOT in putting the program together and sending out an RFP. Sousa said Nashua would be very

interested in this and they are currently at B-5 but would like to be a B-20. In addition, Keene has been using for 8 years. Alexander said this was not a long term program, so get your applications in.

Steve Laurin asked for definition on anti-idling technology and emissions. Both Skoglund and Alexander explained.

Sousa motioned to adjourn with Parker seconding.

The meeting adjourned at **1:28pm**.