



NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
03/18/09
APPROVED

Members Present:

- Tad Putney, Town of Brookline
- Louise Woodworth, Nashua Transit System
- Steve Laurin, Town of Merrimack
- Bill Parker, Town of Milford
- Joe Mendola, City of Nashua
- Steve Dookran, City of Nashua
- Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham
- Leigh Levine, Federal Highway Administration
- 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
- Lucas Siik, NH DOT
- Corey Spetelmas, NH DOT

Others Present:

- Tim Roache, Principal Transportation Planner
- Steve Wagner, NRPC Regional Planner
- Karen M. Baker, NRPC 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 February 18th TTAC meeting. Steve Laurin said the word “using” should be added after the word “been” on the last page in the sentence starting with “In addition” and then motioned to approve with the amendments. Roger Houston seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

AMENDMENT #1 TO THE 2009-2012 TIP

Roache reviewed Amendment #1 of the 2009-2012 NRPC TIP informing the group that it was noticed in the Telegraph and the comment period ended on March 16th. He received a significant amount of public comment mostly on rail and all in favor of building it. None of the comments required action. Roache pointed out that the rail project moved to a new analysis year and that this has been done 2 times previously. NRPC has taken credit only for the proposed Nashua Rail Station with the remaining credit going to the SNRPC as opposed to the previous analysis in which NRPC took credit for it all. Roache pointed out the tables on page 2 reflecting the differences between the analysis adopted in October of 2008 and the changes of STIP Amendment #1. He added that we were within the budget on all pollutants, there were no changes in the statewide level and that we were in conformity.

Roache mentioned the Amherst project which advanced construction to 2009 because of the possibility of stimulus funds for the project and the reason for putting it with this amendment adding that there would be no impact on fiscal constraint.

A meeting attendee asked if we knew what statewide projects were getting for funding. Nick Alexander gave some detail:

- 129.4 million for highway and bridge projects throughout the state

- 14.9 million from the above total for municipal projects eligible for federal aid that are ready or near ready to start construction and that are in the funding programs in the Ten Year Plan
- 3 million for each district for resurfacing
- 3.9 million for Transportation Enhancement projects (7 currently in region)

Alexander added that all existing and eligible projects are invited to apply for funding if they can get through the requirements in a timely manner.

Roache asked for a motion from the TTAC to recommend to the Executive Committee for approval the TIP Amendment #1. Bill Parker motioned with a second from Jeff Gowan. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Roache added that if there were any more projects in the region to add to the list of projects to email him the information. A member of the group asked what the requirements were. Roache said the project needs to be shovel-ready to be eligible to apply for funding. Alexander said they ask for letters of intent and that currently, they only have received letters from Amherst, Hollis, Litchfield, and Milford. He added that the due date is Friday, the 20th and they were still waiting for a letter from Merrimack on the Merrills Bridge project.

2011-2020 TEN YEAR PLAN UPDATE

Roache reviewed the memo included in the agenda packet reminding the group that they would not be soliciting new projects, but looking at the existing projects and what is important regarding transportation needs and how do we address this (ex. moving projects around). He added that identifying the needs and priorities of the region and making recommendations to NHDOT as a long term goal would also be necessary. Roache said that a similar process was done on the seacoast which helped move the top priorities along with funding.

Laurin asked what the criteria were to get the projects where they are now. Roache said most were congestion related, safety related or economic development related (ex. regional impact projects, red list bridges, etc.). Alexander suggested looking into what other RPC's or MPO's use adding that is pretty simple criteria, mostly yes & no questions. Roache said that if stimulus money frees up, it would be good to have a list together with top priorities that would help benefit the region. He added that NRPC could compile the list to forward onto NHDOT. Alexander added that it would be good to know the info on the projects when making their decisions. Roache said it would give us the ability to shift stuff around if we cooperated together and with NHDOT. He asked the group to write up ideas and descriptions, adding that he would not score or rank anything and that the list would just be available if some money became available, at which time he would get back together with the TTAC to discuss.

Bruce Berry gave an example of the 101A project in Bedford which 7 years ago was a project priority but others viewed it as a 30 year out project. He asked if there would be an option of phasing this project when working with NHDOT on it. Alexander said it is good to phase and suggested talking to bordering neighbors. Houston referred to the Exit 36 Southbound proposed project and maybe getting some funds for it from Massachusetts. Roache said these projects can be pushed if we can get a clear consistent message to drive home and to be ready down the road. Joe Mendola referred to the 101A widening project which is currently short-funded and suggested that be a project to consider as a priority. Levine said readiness should be criteria. This helps deal with surplus funds and the reverse situation adding that it is a good idea to distinguish projects. Roache said he would like to get a short list of projects and prioritization rather than use the old method of ranking. Roache concluded by asking the group to email their project priorities to him.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM UPDATE

Tabled until the next TTAC meeting.

NEW OZONE ATTAINMENT AREA BOUNDARIES

Chris Skoglund updated the group on the new Ozone Non-Attainment area. He passed around information and a map showing the new areas. He pointed out the areas in non-attainment and the new boundaries adding that EPA was very receptive to this. He also mentioned the helpful comments received from 3 RPC's, the TTAC, and Commissioner Campbell. He proceeded to review the rest of the map in detail. Skoglund pointed out that EPA had until November 2009 to respond with comments, March 2010 regarding the new boundary area, and March 2011 for conformity to occur. He did not expect to see a new budget within the timeframe mentioned above and EPA would provide guidance. In the meantime he said to use the current budget and he would keep NRPC up to date as he hears.

Roache said with the new boundary, NRPC would now also be modeling now for the towns of Mont Vernon, Lyndeborough and Mason.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT (TE) AND CONGESTION MITIGATION AIR QUALITY (CMAQ) PROGRAMS

Roache informed the group that had been 4 years since the last round of TE & CMAQ programs and that it is up to NRPC along with other RPC's to solicit the programs. He added that once they get the go ahead, he would hold an informational meeting to let everyone know. Additionally, the new programs will have a much faster turn around on reimbursement as opposed to the last round, only will need to have your match ready, and should start up in April or May of 2009.

Roache asked if there were any TE project ideas adding that projects that have faired best in the past where those that were started previously. Dookran had issue with past processes, but said he would still submit for the next round due to the faster turn around on the money.

Regarding the CMAQ programs, Roache said that DES and DOT were not fond of projects like bike paths or sidewalks as CMAQ projects and want to see projects that reduce VMT as a benefit. A member of the group asked if there were any technical definitions on bike paths, trails, recreational trails, and commuter trails; what are recreational vs non-recreational. Roache said linking transportation modes or trails to get to bus stations or to work would be an example. Dookran asked if a bike facility would ever be seen as a CMAQ project. Alexander said it goes back to the air quality benefit. Dookran said two previous submittals for bridge crossings to high schools as TE and CMAQ projects were rejected. Roache said that NRPC was available to help put together the projects and help with the applications. Alexander said that previous project estimates were significantly more when the project submitted and to watch on this round when applying (know what the project will cost 4 years out). He added that short turn around on funding this time should help. The projected funds for TE statewide would be 4 million and more for CMAQ.

Roache informed the group that all municipal agreements on sidewalk maintenance (winter) will be rewritten due to DOT and DES inability to agree. He added that new language would be incorporated into the new agreements.

Roache also informed the group that NRPC would be working with NTS to provide additional services as well as the Mayor.

Houston motioned to adjourn with second from Laurin.

The meeting adjourned at **1:25pm**.