



**APPROVED MINUTES
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
10/21/09**

Members Present:

Roger Houston, City of Nashua
Steve Dookran, City of Nashua
Tad Putney, Town of Brookline
Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham
Dave Lent, Town of Merrimack
Rick Seymour, Town of Merrimack
Jeff Babel, Town of Hollis

Nick Alexander, NH DOT
Chris Skoglund, NH DES
Jason Plourde, Greenman-Pedersen

Others Present

Tim Roache, Assistant Director
Julie Chizmas, Transportation Planner

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Tim Roache opened the meeting at 12:10 and proceeded with introductions around the table.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 18TH 2009 MEETING

Roache referred to the minutes of August 18th 2009 included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1 and asked for a motion to approve. Gowan moved to approve the August 18, 2009 minutes with a second from Babel. All were in favor and the motion passed.

2009 – 2012 TIP AMENDMENT #3

Roache informed the group that their approval of TIP Amendment #3 was primarily procedural - there are no NRPC projects in the Amendment, but there are statewide projects that require MPO approval. Most of the changes are related to the removal of anticipated ARRA funds that were ultimately not received. A copy of the TIP Amendment and the related financial constraint document was included in the agenda packet as Attachment 2. Roache asked Nick Alexander, NH DOT, if the rail project in the current TIP would be removed since the NH DOT decided not to apply for \$300 million in federal funding under the "High Speed Passenger Rail Program"; Alexander replied that that will be addressed in TIP Amendment #4. Babel motioned to recommend STIP Amendment #3 to the Executive Committee for approval with a second from Gowan. All were in favor and the motion passed.

2011 – 2020 TEN YEAR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Chizmas summarized the content of the "Comparison of the 2009 – 2018 Ten Year Plan, 2009 – 2012 TIP, and 2011 – 2020 Ten Year Plan" included in the agenda packet as Attachment 3. The report provides a side-by-side comparison of projects across the various Plans. Roache informed the group that the only project that appears to not have been carried forward in the Draft 2011 – 2020 Ten Year Plan (TYP) is a Merrimack Park'N'Ride project, which was described in the previous TYP as "Park'N'Ride, 250 spaces – Intermodal Facility near RR facility, FEE Tpk, and US 3". This was a 1994 Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) project that Roache believed was tied to the passenger rail project, but which the NH DOT indicated was planned to coordinate with the Northern River Crossing/Circumferential Highway project. Alexander stated he would confirm which project the Park'N'Ride was actually associated with. Roache said he would also follow-up on this project to find out if the CMAQ funds for this project would go back into the funding pot or if they could be used for a different Park'N'Ride project. Alexander said NH DOT is trying to clean up Transportation Enhancement (TE) and CMAQ projects that have been on the books for several years. Roache stated that other than the Merrimack project, there were no major projects that weren't included in the Draft TYP and there were no new projects added. He added that the

NRPC didn't push for new projects given the funding situation faced by the DOT, but said in the next several months, the NRPC would be addressing how to get new projects into the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to formalize using it as a staging ground for projects that can then be prioritized and moved through the planning process. He informed the group that the Governor's Advisory Committee on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) would be meeting on November 18th, 2009 at 2:00 pm at the DOT offices in Concord to review public comments on the draft Plan and to finalize their recommendations that will be presented to the Governor. Roache asked Alexander if he was aware of any changes that had occurred in the Plan since it was originally released for public comment; Alexander was not aware of any changes. Roache told the group if he did become aware of any changes, he would be sure to let everyone know.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT (TE) APPLICATION RANKING PROCESS

Chizmas described the content of Attachment 4 in the Agenda packet – a summary of the project applications submitted for TE funding – and informed the group that NRPC staff would be scoring and ranking the applications within the next month. Those rankings will be presented to the TTAC at the November meeting for their discussion and approval. Once approved by the TTAC, the rankings will be presented to the NH DOT before the December 10, 2009 deadline. The DOT's Transportation Enhancement Advisory Committee (TEAC) will hold a meeting in February (tentative date) where applicants are strongly encouraged to give a presentation on their proposed project. It was noted that presentations need to be submitted to the NRPC prior to the meeting so they can be compiled onto one CD for the TEAC. Roach informed the group that these presentations can make or break a project being selected by the TEAC, as there are many projects from around the state being proposed. He stated that the NRPC will be at the meeting to facilitate the presentations by its member communities, but that the passion and knowledge the applicant's have for their project needs to be projected to the TEAC to make their project rise to the top. He closed this topic by stressing that applicant's be well prepared for the February TEAC meeting.

CONGESTION MITIGATION & AIR QUALITY (CMAQ) PROGRAM UPDATE

Roache informed the group that the NH DOT was scheduled to release the 2009 – 2010 CMAQ application and guidance document last Friday (October 16), however comments from the RPCs and the Department of Environmental Services (DES) delayed that release. He stated it was clear that the CMAQ application was developed using the Transportation Enhancement (TE) application as a template, but the programs are fundamentally different and CMAQ scoring needs to have more weight put on congestion mitigation and air quality issues than currently exist in the draft CMAQ application. Skoglund concurred that the application seemed to focus more on the planning process than on reducing congestion and improving air quality. The DES will be meeting on October 22nd to discuss their concerns in detail. Roache expects that DOT will be releasing a revised application and set of guidelines within the next few weeks, hopefully with more emphasis on air quality and congestion mitigation benefits. He said in the past, smaller bicycle/pedestrian projects didn't have as high an air quality benefit to do well when up against, for example, a larger-scale mass-transit project, but he would like to see these non-motorized projects compete more successfully in this next round. Since the RPCs will be conducting the air quality analyses for the proposed CMAQ projects, he suggested that applicants get in touch with the NRPC early on in the process. Roache then asked the group if anyone is planning on submitting a 2009 – 2010 CMAQ application, with Dookran indicating that Nashua has a few signal project ideas. Dookran also stated they have an existing CMAQ-funded signal project that is being held up because they are waiting for a municipal agreement from DOT which they requested several months ago. Alexander stated he would look into it. Roache also knew of one Nashua Transit System CMAQ project that hadn't advanced, which he would be looking into to clarify why the project hasn't moved forward. As with the 2009 – 2010 TE process, active CMAQ projects awarded in 2004 and before will receive additional scrutiny by NHDOT during the application review. If a project has not been completed due to inaction by the managing entity, new applications for funding may be denied. Roache stated that the CMAQ application process is similar to the TE process, requiring Letters of Intent, followed by attendance at a municipally managed workshop,

and then submittal of completed applications. Alexander stressed that the NH DOT would be looking at how projects will provide a positive cost-benefit solution. He also stated that at the end of FY2009, an “enormous” rescission of unobligated balances of Federal-aid highway funds took place; NH’s rescission amount is \$41 million, with a “good chunk” of those dollars coming from the CMAQ program. Typically, the CMAQ program awards between \$16 and \$18 million in project funding, but this round will be limited to \$10 - \$12 million. Roache commented that those funds primarily are spent on projects within non-attainment zones; Skoglund replied that a project can be outside of a non-attainment zone if it provides an air quality benefit within a zone, to which Roache replied that can be difficult to prove.

OTHER

Roache asked if there was anything else anyone would like to discuss. There was no reply. He stated that a new Safe Routes to School grant cycle is currently open – did anyone have any projects? Dookran stated Nashua currently has three travel plans completed and will be meeting with NRPC Transportation Planner Matt Waitkins the following week to discuss them. Roache informed the group that the Hollis SRS travel plan was approved and that with a travel plan in place, communities can now apply for up to \$250,000 for infrastructure improvements.

Gowan motioned to adjourn with a second from Dookran. The meeting adjourned at **12:40pm**.