


DRAFT MINUTES
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
11/09/11

Members Present:

Kyle Fox, Town of Merrimack
 Tim Thompson, Town of Merrimack
 Bill Parker, Town of Milford
 Mike Fimbel, Town of Mont Vernon
 Steve Dookran, City of Nashua
 Kathy Hersh, City of Nashua
 Wayne Husband, City of Nashua

Others Present:

Mark Sousa, City of Nashua
 Louise Woodworth, City of Nashua
 Joe Mendola, City of Nashua
 Ed Gleason, Town of Pelham
 Paul Lockwood, NH DES
 Bill Hoke, NH DOT
 Leigh Levine, FHWA

Staff Present

Kerrie Diers, Executive Director
 Tim Roache, MPO Coordinator
 Julie Chizmas, Transportation Planner
 Karen Baker, Program Assistant

Matt Waitkins, Field Data/Transportation Planner
 Steve Wagner, Regional Planner
 Jen Czysz, Senior Regional Planner

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Tim Roache opened the meeting at 12:10 with introductions

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 14TH MEETING

Roache referred to the minutes of September 14, included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1 and asked for a motion to approve. Sousa moved to approve September 14, 2011 minutes with a second from Parker. All were in favor.

UPDATE TO THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS FOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Roache informed the TTAC that NRPC, in cooperation with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and partner Metropolitan Planning Organizations, conducted a review of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment process to improve efficiency and enhance public involvement. One identified opportunity is to reduce the length of the TIP amendment process which can currently take up to 90 days to complete, impacting project schedules and costs. A flexible public comment period has been proposed that would allow the MPO, in consultation with NHDOT, DES, FHWA and EPA, to recommend a length for the public comment period between 10 and 30 days, based on various factors including the magnitude of the changes being proposed, the relative sensitivity of the projects included, and any factors that require timely actions, e.g., emergency maintenance, federal funding lapses, etc. NRPC has updated the Public Involvement Process for Transportation Planning to reflect this proposed action. This update is open for the federally required 45 day public comment period when making changes to the Public Involvement Process, which runs through December 30. Roache added that TTAC would take this up for vote in January after the full Commission has been made aware at the December meeting.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATEExisting Demographic Conditions

Chizmas presented demographic data for NRPC communities based on the 2010 Census. Data discussed included population, age, and housing. Data compiled from previous Census' was also reviewed as an indicator of trends in these categories. Below are some of the results of the data analyzed:

- 0.4% average annual growth rate between 2000 and 2010 (slower than previous years)

- Mason, Mont Vernon, and Pelham had higher percent changes in population between 2000 and 2010 than between 1990 and 2000; all other communities had lower percent changes with Nashua and Wilton having negative percent population change (lost population)
- Fewer kids in communities
- 65+ populations are growing
- Percent of population under 45 is decreasing as population ages
- Number of households in communities is increasing but average household size is decreasing
- Number of family households is also increasing, with the exception of Nashua and Wilton; average family size is decreasing, with the exception of Mont Vernon
- Number of housing units within each community still increasing but there are higher rates of vacancy in 2010 as compared to 2000, with the exception of Mont Vernon
- Number of residential building permits decreasing in most communities over the last few years

Levine asked if the low income minority data was looked at. Chizmas said that it would be later when developing the MTP. Chizmas concluded her presentation on existing demographic conditions. Roache introduced Jen Czys, new Regional Planner to do a presentation followed by discussion on where population projections for the future.

Demographic and Land Use Projections

Czys presented preliminary net migration alternatives for each town in the NRPC Region that would be inputs to a population projection model which utilizes the Cohort Component Method. The model was developed in-house and its base data includes the 2010 U.S. Census population for each town and births and deaths data were queried from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services' online database. Additionally, survival rates were obtained from NH OEP's past population projections. She explained the 5 steps used to come up with the population projections:

1. Calculate the Distribution of Net Migration using the ratio of estimated net migration per age cohort (2000-2010) to the total.
2. Calculate the Historical Net Migration looking at each decade since 1970 and graph as a single point.
3. Calculate the Projected Net Migration using the historical points with 4 possibilities of future migration graphed (low, middle, high and the historical average)
4. Calculate the Birth Rate and Project Births using the average birth rate from 2005-2009 assumed to remain constant, that all women 15-45 were considered to be capable of child-bearing, and the ratio of M/F births from 2000-2009 for projected births.
5. Project using population by age cohorts and gender multiplied by the State survival rate, projected net migration was added for each cohort and then repeated over 5 year intervals until 2040.

Czys added that to complete the required base data needed to run the projection model, NRPC must also generate a set of unique projected net migration rates for each town. The rates can be impacted by factors such as employment opportunities, existing highway access and planned expansions, community build-out conditions, planned or anticipated developments, local regulations including growth control ordinances, land availability and current urban or rural conditions; and other anticipated policy changes that may affect potential growth. She explained that input from the TTAC, the full Commission, and planning staff would be gathered before selecting the most probable projected net migration rate for each community. Czys concluded that using the current census data, decline is the future population projection (less babies and less people to have babies, all necessary for future growth population), and we are seeing this issue as a state. Additionally, in the past, the OEP 2003 survival rate was used for projections; we are looking for more accurate survival rate data. She explained that this was just a forecast.

Dookran asked if quality of life is an impact. Czys said yes. Fimbel commented that the quality of schools have a big impact. Gleason felt the economy is skewing the data and mentioned the 17 permits Pelham had last year. He added that Pelham is growing.

Thompson spoke of the Merrimack Outlets coming and the potential for a large project to be announced that would bring 400 jobs. In addition, the Airport Access Road opening will have an impact and Merrimack would be watching this closely for the Merrimack Master Plan update. Thompson felt that this was a positive growth projection for Merrimack.

Dookran commented that NH has the lowest unemployment rate but are faced with this doomsday prediction. He added that natural disasters and the economy play a part in the impacts and therefore NH should not be examined on its own due to issues in other parts of the country.

Hersh commented that what we want and what has caused this decline should be an understanding and used to affect change. She added that in Nashua from 2009-2011, there have been 552 new residential units. Hersh said she would send data along which would reflect impacts of change for Nashua. She mentioned other building projects completed or to be completed in Nashua that show a positive impact and asked what more can be done to make the region more marketable. Roache said that NRPC would be going to each community with the presentation and emphasizing the importance of the numbers for future policy and change decisions.

Parker asked if potential development and building permits will help for future migration and if there was a way to factor in population of folks moving to Milford to work in Merrimack. Czys said there was, it would be helpful and individual modeling projections can be done for larger communities, but basic inputs would be needed.

Husband asked how neighboring regions are factored in (ex. I93 expansion). Czys said subjective criteria are used to select the most probable net migration alternative. Roache added that new road connections and transportation connections are also needed for the model. Hoke suggested using the DMV vehicle registrations data for conformity purposes since they have info on gender and age.

Czys answered yes to Hersh in regards to whether public transportation availability is taken into consideration. Roache added that if rail was in place, the assumed would change the curve. He added that specific numbers are not plugged in, only subjective data and in the past, public transportation data was not used in the Travel Demand Model because the numbers were so small.

Wagner said you will see blips in Litchfield due to large cluster developments and over 55 units being constructed and completed due to the bridge crossing. Friedman said once the numbers are established for migration, other inputs will be used for the model. Roache said this will be presented to the full Commission at the December meeting once we have more details and information the group would see it again.

STAFF AND PROJECT UPDATES

Roache responded to Dookran that a 3rd crossing of the Merrimack River is needed to relieve the traffic congestion on Taylor Falls Bridge and a working group should be formed with representatives from Hudson, Merrimack, Litchfield and Nashua. He added that data was collected on DW Hwy and at all points on the TFB prior to the opening of the AAR will be collected again in the spring to see the trends (Waitkins is currently working on) and he felt the data will show it is still necessary.

Motion to adjourn came from Parker with a second from Gleason. The meeting adjourned at 1:20 pm.