

 **APPROVED MINUTES**
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
06/08/11

Members Present:

John Cashell, Town of Hudson
Jeff Babel, Town of Hollis
Jason Hoch, Town of Litchfield
Roger Houston, City of Nashua
Louise Woodworth, Nashua Transit
Steve Dookran, City of Nashua
Leigh Levine, FHWA
Rick Seymour, Town of Merrimack
Sean Brown, Merrimack Intern
Kathryn Eagen, Merrimack Intern

John St.Pierre, Town of Amherst
Nick Alexander, NHDOT
Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham
Bill Parker, Town of Milford
Tom Galligani, City of Nashua

Kyle Fox, Town of Merrimack

Stephen Dookran, City of Nashua
William Rose, NH DOT

Staff Present

Tim Roache, MPO Coordinator
Kerrie Diers, Executive Director
Steve Wagner, Regional Planner
(Circuit Rider for Mason, Wilton & Litchfield)

Karen M. Baker, Administrative Assistant
Julie Chizmas, Transportation Planner
Matt Waitkins, Field Data/Transportation Planner

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Tim Roache opened the meeting at 12:08 with introductions

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 13TH 2011 MEETING

Roache referred to the minutes of April 13th, 2011 included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1 and asked for a motion to approve. Gowan moved to approve the April 13th, 2011 minutes with a second from St. Pierre. All were in favor.

STIP AMENDMENT 2 (ACTION ITEM)

Chizmas referred to the STIP Amendment 2 memo in the agenda packet and explained that The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) had received from NH DOT Amendment #2 to the adopted 2011 – 2014 TIP and NRPC is amending the TIP to account for changes to projects within the Nashua region and to maintain consistency with the STIP. Below is a list of the projects:

- Hudson – NH 111/NH 3A/NH 102
- Milford – NH 13/Emerson and Armory Roads
- Milford to Nashua – NH 101A
- Nashua – NH 101A
- Nashua – Broad Street Parkway
- Nashua-Manchester-Concord-Capital Corridor
- Wilton – NH 31
- Various Statewide projects

Chizmas pointed out that a conformity determination had to be made to the air quality and that fiscal constraint has been maintained. Additionally, NRPC placed a legal notice in the Nashua Telegraph

including a 30-day public comment period which ended on June 2nd and only a NHDOT comment was submitted and addressed.

Roache said action is required from the TTAC to recommend approval of the proposed Amendment #2 by the NRPC Commission. NRPC staff has reviewed this amendment in consultation with the NH DOT, NH DES, US EPA, FHWA, FTA and representatives of the MPOs, and recommend approving the proposed changes in this amendment.

Upon recommendation from TTAC, a Public Hearing will be held on Wednesday, June 15, 2011 at the Nashua Regional Planning Commission at 7:00PM at the NRPC office.

Parker moved to recommend for approval to the full Commission with a second from Cashell. All were in favor and the motion passed.

DISCUSSION: THIRD CROSSING OF THE MERRIMACK RIVER

Roache informed the group that Hudson has been making efforts on the east side of the Merrimack River to address congestion. In addition, the City of Nashua, the Mayor and NRPC started talking about addressing the same congestion issues due to the E. Hollis Street project. Roache continued by saying that what was once the Circumferential Highway project it is still in the NRPC LRTP, there is a need, and he felt it still can be built but lacks attention and is not taken seriously.

Chizmas provided 2 projected traffic volumes for 2035 scenarios showing the potential crossing as well as the currently funded projects in the NRPC MTP. Roache pointed out the project volumes re-affirm the need for this project. He asked the group to go back to their elected officials and let them know the need and to have a unified voice. There were two potential scenarios of where the crossing could go, both including an access road, with one connection going from NH102 to DW Highway and the other connection from NH102 to the FEE turnpike. Dookran asked if this included the BSP being in place. Roache said yes. Roache said the 2nd connection scenario goes through the Pennichuck Watershed, more downstream of the water intake. He said that you could see a reduction of 50-75% congestion on the Taylor Falls Bridge if this bridge crossing is done.

Roache informed that the North Bridge crossing, which connected to the Henry Burke Highway, proposed in 2009 was not on the table anymore there was no intent to bring it back. He asked if anyone had any other ideas of suggestions for another location to have a Merrimack River crossing. Roache added that the Sagamore Bridge will benefit from having a crossing in place and would see a 25-50% reduction in traffic congestion. The biggest obstacles would be location, environmental impacts, and cost.

Roache asked Seymour what issues might come about from Merrimack. Seymour said one of the main ones would be additional traffic on the Daniel Webster Highway due to the Outlet Mall coming in. Currently it is gridlocked from 4 to 5:00pm and there would be the potential of more gridlock and congestion. He added that there is no possibility of widening the northern part of town to alleviate added congestion. Fox said there would be an issue if they decided to have a toll put in. He added that if they eliminate a toll, there might be more support. Roache said that the current scenario did not include a toll.

Roache then asked Litchfield what issues they might run into and what he felt the support would be from Litchfield. Hoch thought there was some interest in Litchfield due to the amount of traffic on 3A south and the possibility of eliminating that problem with an access road. He added that most of the right of way is still there. Roache said the model is for a scale of the road to support 70,000 vehicles or less.

Dookran felt that the North Bridge did not go through because it was an established neighborhood. Roache agreed, but also said that if a different approach were taken, it might have been different, but likely still had the same result. Dookran thought that there was some proposed legislation that was introduced after this to prevent it from being introduced again. Diers thought it was something along the lines of prohibiting public/private partnerships from financing City/Town projects.

Diers asked Roache if there was any merit to the local road bridges idea that he had as a way of relieving the congestion and was it worth discussing. Roache felt that it was something a subgroup of the TTAC could work on. Roache added that based on a whitepaper from 2003, the further north the connection, the less the benefit to the Taylor Falls Bridge. Levine felt an analysis including scenarios for a bridge crossing would be good. Cashell said a key is to make sure there is a connection to NH102. Roache said all scenarios go to NH102, but not to the FEE Turnpike. The ultimate obstacle would be whose backyard. Roache said in order to have this access road go through, you will need cooperation and agreement from both sides of the river. Cashell felt there would be no objection from Hudson.

Roache felt that TTAC should bring to full Commission and create a working group to study this, folks at policy level. Cashell suggested throwing a poll in the newspaper to get a feel when it gets to that point. He felt that a lot of public support would be necessary. Roache felt maybe the venue to use first would be the update to the MTP to bring it back on the radar. Cashell said there would be issues in Hudson if something is not done. Having a crossing would create a lot more convenience and eliminate congestion in Hudson. He questioned what congestion that could be created on the west side of the River by building a bridge. Roache said a policy and technical level working group should be created to study this. He asked for a motion to bring this to the full Commission to get it moving. Cashell motioned with a second from Hoch to bring this issue to the full Commission to create a working group. All were in favor.

2014 – 2040 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP) UPDATE

Roache informed the group that the MTP update would be starting on July 1st. This would include a series of public input sessions and weigh in on chapter updates. He was looking at October 2012 for completion.

STAFF AND PROJECT UPDATES

NHDOT Project Advertising Schedule Updates

Chizmas referred to the latest project advertising schedule included in the agenda packet and briefly reviewed the listing. She added that she had spoken with the project manager on the Airport Access Road that the anticipated open had been moved up to November 2011 as opposed to the initial date of the summer of 2012. Roache said traffic counts would be conducted on 3A and Daniel Webster Highway prior to and after to have recent counts.

Roache informed the group that he applied for a TCSP Grant for the Exit 36S ramp.

Dookran informed the group that the 101A Final Design had not started yet and the City was waiting on some final documents from the state regarding funding. He also said that the Ledge Street SRTS grant that the school was awarded was now accepting bids for the project. Lastly, the CMAQ project that the City had slated for August was going to be delayed.

Gowan motioned to adjourn with a second from Parker. The meeting adjourned at **1:00pm**.