


NRPC APPROVED MINUTES
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
02/08/17

Members Present:

John Cashell, Town of Hudson	Steve Dookran, City of Nashua
Tom Young, Town of Litchfield	Wayne Husband, City of Nashua
Dawn Tuomala, Town of Merrimack	Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham

Others Present

William Rose, NHDOT	Liz Strachan, NHDES
Leigh Levine, FHWA	Nate Miller, SNHPC
David Hennessey, NRPC Commissioner Pelham	Suzanne Fournier, Brox Environmental Citizens/Milford

STAFF PRESENT

Julie Chizmas, Senior Transportation Planner	Tim Roache, Executive Director
Matt Waitkins, Senior Transportation Planner	Karen Baker, Program Assistant
Cassie Mullen, Regional Planner/Circuit Rider for Mason	Andrew Smeltz, GIS Specialist
Stephen Meno, Regional Planner II/Circuit Rider for Wilton	

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chizmas opened the meeting at 12:08pm with introductions. She also introduced new staff members Smeltz, Meno and Mullen.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 11, 2017

Chizmas referred to the minutes of January 11, 2017 included in the agenda packet as attachment 1. She asked if there were any corrections and if not, for a motion to approve. Gowan moved to approve the January 11, 2017 minutes with a second from Young. All were in favor.

GUEST PRESENTATION: NH TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS – WILLIAM ROSE, NH DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION

Chizmas introduced Rose from DOT who proceeded with a presentation for the TTAC on the NH Transportation Planning Process: What do we do now; how can we do it better; and how does better address TMA needs?

Rose summarized how the current process seems to work with a group of silos (the regional long range transportation plans), from which an unconstrained regional list of projects comes and is added into the TIP. The TIP provides a prioritized listing of projects constrained to available funds within a 4 year horizon. There is no requirement that the TIP relate back to the list of projects and financial plan, but it does need to reflect back on the LRTP and is supposed to be in agreement with the STIP.

He explained the Ten Year Plan is where the STIP comes from and essentially controls what is in the TIP. Rose said that it's really not how it is supposed to work. He said that it would look better if you break down the silos because they are really processes that are linked. Rose reviewed the individual pieces stating that all 9 regions complete a regional transportation plan (Long Range Plan for the rural areas and a Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the MPO RPCs) which is an intensive endeavor with significant public involvement and analytical effort. These policy documents drive the project identification and selection. Based on the process, the metropolitan plans currently provide a long range list of projects and details on funding for at least a 20 year horizon.

The NH Ten Year Plan is the statutorily designated program of projects for the state and the statutes recognize the federal process represented by the STIP, but as the first 4 years of the Ten Year Plan. Rose explained that this means the regional TIPs are developed in consultation with the State's draft TYP which is assembled by NHDOT but does not adopt that plan. The GACIT process, public hearings and legislative processes that happen after the release of the draft are all part of the consultative process. He emphasized the "in consultation process" with the new TMA designation programming authority that NRPC has. Rose explained what's involved in the consultation rounds:

- Part 1 - The regional documents are used to build first draft of the TYP and meetings are held between NHDOT & each region regarding the TYP
- Part 2 - RPC presentations of projects w/NHDOT assistance at regional meetings where feedback is received and edits are made to draft TYP
- Part 3 - Another round of presentations, more feedback on the draft TYP and more edits by NHDOT to the draft
- Part 4 - Adoption based on projects from the region's draft LRPs and TIPs.

Rose concluded that the best part of the process is that due to the sustained consultative process, the STIP update process becomes easier and a tool to manage federal funds to implement the Ten Year Plan.

Roache asked what happens in the process if a smaller project in the UZA that is a priority for the TIP and there are dollars in the TIP for it gets turned down by or thru the consultative process. Do we look to federal highway to see if there is a violation? Rose said there are negative consequences if you can't agree. He noted the need for the consultative process. Roache commented that the new trend has been in the right direction. He added that this new process should put regional RPCs to the forefront and DOT in the background playing more of a support role and for GACIT hearings unlike in the past process. Roache had concerns with discrepancies in the region between the TYP and the regions TIPs. Rose noted that there are still some details that have to be worked out over the next couple years. Dookran noted his confusion even after doing this for such a long time and the goal of the TYP. Rose briefly explained the TYP purpose noting that it has been through many processes over time and financial is a big part of the goal and reason for the TYP. Dookran said he wished there was a way to track the process on projects and their process. Rose said they are currently working on that. He noted that the STIP process is used to track federal dollars.

Roache asked how to change the past TYP process problem of having a stagnant list of projects that get stuck on the list but change 2 to 3 times and the NRPC ends up taking the heat for. Rose said they just started delivering on a TYP and that any factors can be articulated by DOT (ex. ROW, construction changes, etc.). He noted that the TYP can be reasonably constrained between 2 & 5% as opposed to STIP constraint which has to be exact.

Miller commented on the consultative process noting that it is was the lowest on the scale and is just asking an opinion where cooperation and coordination are mandated and are needed to make a project move forward.

Cashell commented that NH is going to have to work diligently to get their fair share of the big pot of money coming and felt that Governor Sununu should be a big part of this and key and should go to Washington to speak. He noted the Town of Hudson's cooperation with the state on a project and they want to assist but Hudson has decided to self-fund the project. Cashell commented that it is important that the MPO do something to help make a local project move forward and be implemented. He also noted the importance of having TTAC better understand the process especially new members.

Gowan noted that most communities could get projects funded locally. He referred to a much needed roundabout on a state road in Pelham and wondered if there was a way you got the ok from DOT to do the project and then charge DOT after where the community has already done all the grunt work. Rose said once upon a time, there was a program you could do that with but not any longer.

In response to a question from Husband on the LPA process, Rose suggested using a stakeholder partnering approach to reduce time and noted that Federal Highways does not distinguish how dollars are worked or distributed.

NASHUA TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREA PROGRAMMING AUTHORITY

Chizmas provided an update on a draft process for administering the Nashua Transportation Management Area Programming Authority, developed collaboratively with Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission. Chizmas provided a presentation and showed a map of the Nashua TMA area which covers 2 States, 4 MPOs, 17 Communities with a population of about 226,400 People and approximately 300 eligible miles of non-NHS roads (excludes local roads) and about 10 miles in MA and includes the towns of Auburn, Londonderry, Derry and Windham which will require coordination and cooperation between NRPC SNHPC and NHDOT.

Chizmas explained that under federal transportation regulation the MPO has the authority to prioritize and program projects into the regional Transportation Improvement Program. NHDOT is then supposed to compile the region's TIPs into a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. Chizmas stated that the programming authority is only on Surface Transportation Block Grant funds for the Nashua Urbanized Area Transportation Management Area. She summarized some of the eligible activities as highway/bridge, transit capital, & operational improvements, recreation trails, bike/ped projects, and highway/transit safety improvements.

Chizmas stated that NRPC will be the lead agency with coordination with SNHPC and there will be a TMA committee which will consist of 1 representative from the 14 TMA towns, 1 representative from each MPO TTAC, Public Transit Provider, NHDOT and FHWA & FTA. She noted that MA receives Nashua UZA funds through MA's STBG allocation and are not part of the NRPC/SNHPC TMA. She summarized the draft process:

1. Develop an agreement between NRPC, SNHPC and NHDOT
2. Establish an MPO/TMA subcommittee
3. Nashua UZA STBG funds would be treated like a programmatic category similar to CMAQ or TAP. These funds and projects would be removed from the traditional Ten Year Plan GACIT Process and give the programming authority to the towns in consultation with NHDOT.
4. Adapt existing project prioritization criteria to prioritize projects that are ready to move forward into the TIP.
5. MPO/TMA subcommittee administration, prioritization and selection of projects to be funded in the Nashua MPO TIP.
6. Matching funds Sources

Lastly, Chizmas provided a timeframe for the process with early 2017 for finalization of process with input from NHDOT, FHWA & FTA; late 2017 to establish a TMA sub-committee and adopt TMA By-laws; Summer/Fall of 2018 for definition of emphasis areas and review and confirmation of project evaluation criteria; and lastly, January to June of 2019 for solicitation, evaluation, prioritization of TMA projects for the 2019-2022 TIP and selection and programming of the projects in consultation with NHDOT.

Roache stated that he would like to have Commissioners sit on the TMA committee. He also commented that this is what people have been looking for; an elevated level of responsibility of what hits the ground for transportation projects. He added that this is not for large dollar projects.

Fournier asked what has changed if you have funding. Chizmas said time has changed and that this was a corrective action that set this forward. Levine said the idea was to have the process in place for the 2017 STIP update, but there was not enough time to it was changed to 2019 to have it in place with a focus on TMA sub-allocated funds.

STAFF UPDATES

Chizmas informed the TTAC that TIP Amendment 1 was coming up and is expected to be released in next week or two. She noted that there is 1 regional project in Pelham for a bridge replacement on Main St.; 2 Statewide projects adding a new Tier 2 pavement rehab project and reducing funding for Tier 2 maintenance paving project. She expected to do a 10-day comment period because it is a small amendment and would be seeking a recommendation at the March 8th TTAC meeting.

Chizmas also informed the group of the Project solicitation is out for projects for the MTP. Deadline is March 10th. Projects will be scored and prioritized through April with the highest ranked projects sent to NHDOT for consideration in years 2027 and 2028 of the 2019 – 2028 Ten Year Plan. She noted NRPC's allocation for TYP to be around \$4.2M (\$2.1M/year). She concluded saying there are online or pdf forms available for submittal.

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn came from Young with a second from Cashell. The meeting ended at 1:10pm.