


**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**08/10/11**

**Members Present:**

Jeff Babel, Town of Hollis  
 Joe Mendola, City of Nashua  
 Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham  
 Bill Parker, Town of Milford  
 Kyle Fox, Town of Merrimack  
 John St.Pierre, Town of Amherst

**Others Present:**

Paul Lockwood, NHDES  
 Nick Alexander, NH DOT  
 Leigh Levine, FHWA

**Staff Present**

Tim Roache, MPO Coordinator  
 Julie Chizmas, Transportation Planner  
 Steve Wagner, Regional Planner

Karen M. Baker, Administrative Assistant  
 Ryan Friedman, Senior GIS Planner  
 Matt Waitkins, Field Data/Transportation Planner

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Tim Roache opened the meeting at 12:12 with introductions

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 8, 2011 MEETING**

Roache referred to the minutes of June 8th, 2011 included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1 and informed the group that the minutes could not be approved because there was not a quorum. He added that they would be included on the agenda for approval at the September meeting.

**ACCESSING LOCAL CENSUS DATA ONLINE – STAFF PRESENTATION**

Friedman provided a visual presentation on how to access the 2010 Census data. Population, households, families, age, sex, race, & ethnicity were amongst the categories that 100% data counts were available for. He referred to the two sites that are accessible via the US Census website ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)) and explained each:

New American FactFinder - [factfinder2.census.gov](http://factfinder2.census.gov)

- Data from Census 2010 and Census 2000
- Basic Census data in all geographic levels

Legacy American FactFinder – [factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov)

- Data from the American Community Survey (ACS), the Economic Census, and population estimates
- Detailed ACS data (has replaced the Census long form from Census 2000 and earlier).

Additionally, the transition from legacy American FactFinder to the New American FactFinder would continue through the Fall of 2011 and data on the Legacy FactFinder would be moved to the New FactFinder. The Legacy American FactFinder would be discontinued in the Fall of 2011.

For sub-community totals (Tracts, Block groups, and Blocks) Friedman provided a step by step tutorial on how to obtain data by selecting the area on the maps, typing in the town, drawing a box around the boundaries or if available typing in the census tract or block number, as well as many other filtering options. He pointed out that New Hampshire Cities and Towns are considered County Subdivisions.

#### American Community Survey data

- 1, 3, & 5 Year Estimates
- Provides detailed data at various geographic levels, and replaced the Census “Long Form”
- 3 Main Datasets with 3 year estimates for Nashua, Merrimack, & Hudson at the community level only and yearly estimates for Nashua only

Friedman concluded his tutorial presentation, asked for any questions, and informed the group of an online self-animated version would be available on the NRPC website as well as factsheets by community that could be used as comparisons with other community factsheets. Lastly, he informed the group of other places to obtain census data information:

- NH OEP – State Data Center
- Other State Agencies
- NRPC

#### **METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE**

Roache informed the group that there had been some varying updates done to the MTP (formerly the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)) in the past and that the new version will be more useable. First item for the MTP update will be to come up with a vision statement. He passed around a draft document containing 5 potential vision statements that could be used as the MTP vision. He added that Waitkins was looking at older versions of the LRTP from 1988 and 1996 to see what was said about the year 2000 in terms of the future of transportation. The new version will be a more realistic version with a focus on earlier shorter term goals. Roache referred to the attachment 2 memo included in the agenda packet and asked for input on the following:

- What are the needs of the existing transportation system in the Nashua Region?
- What will be the needs of the future (2040) transportation system in the Nashua Region?
- What role will public transportation (rail and other transit) and non-motorized travel play in meeting those needs?

He added that answers to these very important transportation related issues will be key factors in the development of the 2013-2040 MTP. Babel felt there were too many people and not enough money to support change. He also felt that outside factors may be dictating how the transportation system develops in the future.

Gowan felt that a huge factor was the aging population in NH and what the life expectancy will be in 2040. Roache responded to this by asking the group how they felt people would get around when they are no longer able to drive. He gave an example of “in the 2040 the Nashua region will accommodate elderly transportation, jobs, etc”. He referred back to the Draft Vision Statements handout and asked the group to take a look and provide input. Waitkins had concerns with the word congestion in the 1<sup>st</sup> statement. Roache asked if the vision was congestion free roads in 2040 and that it would be unrealistic to say that we are not going to have capacity issues or be able to solve capacity. He suggested there should be a balanced approach.

Gowan suggested melding statements 1 & 5 together and to add “supports economic growth” and “enables universal access....” to number 5. Alexander liked the second sentence in #4 and added the money is the key to achieving vision. Gowan suggested also taking out the “including access to/from the Manchester and Boston airports.....” out of the #5 draft vision statement.

Parker suggested adding “a system that adapts to change, demographics, economic and energy related forces”. Mendola agreed with #5 but said he would throw in “efficient.” Gowan liked “all travelers” and felt it was a legitimate concern. Roache agreed with Waitkins about the word “congestion” and it never going away after looking at the visual map provided. He added that mobility is a big problem especially east & west crossing the river. In addition, Gowan said there are issues with performance measures due to the lack of quantification. Levine suggested establishing a baseline in integrating and analyzing using performance measures, which will help in prioritizing the projects. He added that the LRTP is project specific and recommended bringing the data from the project into the picture. Roache said that travel data was being collected for this process and the Boston Urbanized area in Pelham was collected first. There was no congestion, so they moved just outside the area.

Levine mentioned a Scenario Planning Webinar which he felt would be very helpful in because it looks at the existing land uses, growth and integrating transportation into the scenario. Waitkins agreed after referring to the plans he had been reading and the cost to increase capacity that it would be a better way of quantifying to compare the alternatives.

Roache showed a draft conceptual outline for update on the MTP explaining that his idea is to overhaul and make it a much more efficient document, shorter, but more concise. Additionally, if something comes up based on feedback, analysis from the feedback would be used to change the document. Levine felt this was a good way to encourage public participation by using scenarios. Roache said NRPC would also be doing some surveying and would utilize Constant Contact specifically for the MTP information and he may also in the future ask for some type of help possibly in the form of an MTP subcommittee. Lastly, he would bring the feedback on the vision back to the full Commission and at the next meeting goals and objectives would be discussed.

#### **STIP LEAN REVIEW PROCESS**

Roache referred to the “Streamlining the TIP Amendment Process” memo included in the agenda packet and explained that NRPC in cooperation with the NHDOT and the 3 other MPO’s have begun a review of the TIP amendment process. Under NHDOT’s direction NRPC has participated in a “Lean” review of the Transportation Improvement Program amendment process. The Lean process is about creating value for the customer through improving efficiency and minimizing waste while using the fewest resources possible. The goal is to identify opportunities to improve efficiency and enhance public involvement in the TIP amendment process.

Through a series of review sessions, representatives from the New Hampshire MPO’s, FHWA and NHDOT reviewed the current TIP amendment process and identified several opportunities to streamline the process. Three of these opportunities are currently being considered for possible actions to streamline the process and improve value for the customer.

#### **Identified Opportunities:**

1. ***Reduce the length of the process:*** The current TIP amendment process can take up to 90 days to complete impacting projects schedule and cost.
2. ***Improve public involvement:*** Amendments are currently advertised through legal ads published in the Nashua telegraph resulting in little public input at a significant cost.
3. ***Educate decision makers and simplify the information:*** Few who participate in the TIP amendment process fully understand the process and information they are presented.

#### **Proposed Actions:**

1. ***Flexible public comment period:*** For each amendment the MPO in consultation with NHDOT, DES, FHWA and EPA will recommend a length for the public comment period between 10 and 30 days.

The recommendation will be 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.

2. **Targeted advertising and alternative media outlets:** Use cable access municipal websites and social media to advertise the amendments. Directly contact elected officials regarding the proposed amendment for their consideration and input.
3. **Educate decision makers on the decision process:** Simplify and clarify amendment reports and information. Sub-allocate funds give the region a bigger role in the process. What are the impacts of the decision they are being asked to make.

Fox felt using other outlets to advertise the amendments was a good idea, would cover more people and less language could be used in the legal ads, therefore saving money. Levine informed that the flexible comment period would be applicable with amendments and that new STIP's would still have the required 30 days comment period.

Additionally, Roache said they are looking to do a MPO 101 presentation similar to the Commissioner 101 presented to new Commissioners, in an effort to help Town Councilors, Board of Alderman & Selectmen better understand the process. A future effort regarding the MTP would be finding a way to address the difficulty in explaining the shifts in money and potential impacts to other projects in the region. Gowan suggested using fewer acronyms.

#### REAUTHORIZATION UPDATE

Roache reviewed reauthorization updates: 1). A 6 year, \$230 billion dollar Surface Transportation bill signifying a 35% cut from the previous bill with a reduction in funding to be made up by private investment and includes expanding government loan programs and eliminating red tape in the federal process. The Senate is currently working on a two-year, \$109 billion dollar bill that includes \$12 billion that is not currently funded; and 2). A proposal to eliminate MPO's under 200,000 population from an urbanized area.

Roach had no other information and would inform the group if he anymore on these proposals. Additionally, the Nashua region's population exceeds the 200,000 and should not be affected.

#### STAFF AND PROJECT UPDATES

- Chizmas informed the group that the NHDOT Project Advertising Schedule updates was included in the agenda packet.
- Roache informed the group that a summit or subcommittee was being worked on to address the Merrimack River Crossing, the Airport Access Road (traffic counts will be done), and the impact to Taylor Falls Bridge.
- Ten Year Plan should see in August with GACIT Hearings available in Draft form with the first one in this region on September 29th with Councilor Wheeler and a second with Councilor Wiczorek who represents Litchfield and Hudson on October 19th. Roache asked Alexander what the role for the MPO's would be for the GACIT Hearings. Alexander said it would be a similar role as the last time adding that they are the Councilor's hearings and that DOT is there to support them.
- A 1.5 million funding threshold was agreed upon through Federal Highway with 600million over 10 years which should represent current 10 year plan since no new projects were added.
- Last word on the Airport Access Road opening was for November.
- TIP Amendment 3 has been released in draft form with 2 projects from our region; Brookline TE and a Milford project. No change to the Air Quality

The meeting adjourned with at **1:37pm**.