



MINUTES – APPROVED
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Held at the NRPC Office
9 Executive Park, Suite 201, Merrimack, NH
March 20, 2013

Members Present:

Michael Dell Orfano, Amherst	Karin Elmer, Merrimack
Martin Michaelis, Amherst	Daniel Del Greco
Brad Vear, Amherst	Anant Panwalkar, Merrimack
Robert Larmouth	Chris Costantino, Milford
James Battis, Hudson	Janet Langdell, Milford
George Hall, Hudson	Kathy Hersh, Nashua
Richard Maddox, Hudson	Dan Kelly, Nashua
Jeff Rider, Hudson	Ed Gleason, Pelham
Thomas Young, Litchfield	

Others Present:

Glenn Davison, NH DOT

Staff Present:

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

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Chairman Langdell called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Langdell continued with the meeting by recognizing new Commissioner Chris Costantino representing the Town of Milford. She then asked for introductions from all others present.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

There were no members of the public present that wished to speak.

PUBLIC HEARING: 2013-2016 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENT #1

Roache summarized the proposed changes for the region included in the 2013-2016 S/TIP Amendment #1.

Boston Express: Manchester - Nashua ~ Amendment to add a new project with FTA 5307 Capital and Operating Program (Boston Urbanized area) funding.

Nashua Park and Ride: Construct Park and Ride and accessory facilities at up to two Nashua locations. Reintroduction of 2011-2014 TIP project into the 2013-2015 TIP with CMAQ funding.

Nashua East Hollis Street: Reconstruction of East Hollis Street from Main Street to Hudson town line to improve capacity proposing an advance and increase in the preliminary engineering and right-of-way funding from 2015 to 2013 and advance and increase in construction funding from years beyond the TIP to 2014.

Pelham – Main Street: Bridge replacement over Beaver Brook (both on red list). Updated project schedule delays construction to 2017.

Wilton-Milford-Amherst-Bedford NH 101: Safety improvements at various locations from Wilton to Wallace Road in Bedford as determined by the corridor study. 3 million removed from the project for child project for future safety improvements to 101 in Milford from Elm Street/101 intersection to Wilton Road and is expected to show as a minor revision in advertised for FY2016.

Various Statewide Projects

Roache informed the Commissioners that the projects in the Nashua region are primarily administrative in nature and are necessary to ensure that the TIP and STIP reflect the anticipated project schedule and maintain fiscal constraint requirements. He added that a legal notice was placed in the Nashua Telegraph and on the NRPC website and public comments were accepted through Wednesday, March 6th, 2013. No comments were received. Roache also informed the group that changes made by S/TIP Amendment #1 trigger a new conformity determination of the SE NH 8-hour Ozone Nonattainment Area and the City of Nashua Carbon Monoxide Maintenance Area and that the Nashua Metropolitan Area Air Quality Conformity Analysis (2013-2040), adopted October 17, 2012 continues to be valid. Roache asked if there were any questions. Kelly asked the where the Toll Road Project appears. Roache explained that the Toll project was not included in the TIP back in October, so it is currently off the table and not part of the current TIP, so therefore not part of the STIP. Kelly thought the widening of the turnpike was linked to that project. Roache informed him that it was not and it will need to be made clear in the new cycle. Maddox asked if the Park & Ride project would be serviced by Boston Express. Hersh answered saying one of the possible locations for the Park & Ride was in the Crown Street area and that it would be close to Boston Express, but not in their vicinity, but in an area served by NTS. She added that another possible location is Daniel Webster Highway near the mall and that Boston Express may divert to sites as needed. Hersh elaborated some saying that Boston Express is associated with Exit 8 of the turnpike, but not Exit 5. Langdell asked what a Forest Highway was. Davison said he would email Langdell the answer. Langdell asked to get attachments referred to in the S/TIP memo going forward. Diers informed the group that due to the size of the agenda packet, it was left out but going forward, packets would be linked in emails rather than attached. After further discussion, it was moved by Gleason and seconded by Young:

THAT the 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #1 be approved.

The motion **carried**.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – DECEMBER 19, 2012

The Chair asked if there were any comments on the minutes of December 19, 2012. There were no comments on the minutes and it was moved by Hersh, with a second from Gleason:

THAT the minutes of December 19, 2012 be approved.

The motion **carried** with 5 abstentions.

BUSINESS MEETING:

TEN YEAR PLAN PROJECT RANKING (ACTION REQUIRED)

Roache provided a presentation on the Ten Year Plan Project ranking process starting off with the various plans associated with the process.

- **MTP** - The Metropolitan Transportation Plan, a federally required plan that lists multimodal projects over a 20-year period and is the source from which specific projects are identified, prioritized, and selected for funding through the Ten Year Plan and TIP.
- **TYP** – The Ten Year Plan lists projects funded through both state and federal programs “intended to be under construction in the next 10 years”. *Required by State law.*
- **TIP** - Lists federally and regionally significant_funded projects programmed for implementation in the next 4-years. *Required by Federal law.*

Roache further explained the frustration in the process in past years where projects were solicited, identified, prioritized and submitted to result in an unrecognizable list of projects causing frustration and apathy. Gleason commented on the process the last time and the frustration with the DOT outcome and asked if this would eliminate it this time. Roache said it would not necessarily eliminate the problem but everything would be more transparent and you would see how everything comes together. In addition, new process is different this time due

to the Consistent Statewide Project Scoring Criteria they are using based on the Decision Lens Software that DOT is using.

Roache summarized the process:

- *OCTOBER TTAC Meeting* - Kicked off the 2-year cycle that updates the Transportation Improvement Program, State Ten Year Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, discussed Decision Lens Software, and the need for consistent criteria.
- *NOVEMBER TTAC Meeting* - Cooperatively developed project scoring criteria, updated criteria definitions, updated existing NRPC criteria to fit statewide process, compiled project data to support criteria, and continued coordination with NHDOT and RPC's.
- *DECEMBER TTAC Meeting* - Discussed 8 evaluation categories and 20 criteria within those categories, State of Good Repair, Safety, Significance, Mobility, Environment, Economic Development, Support and Potential for Success and then asked the TTAC to weigh the categories and criteria using an online survey and to share that survey with other town staff.
- *JANUARY TTAC Meeting* - The survey results were discussed and criteria with averaged weights were approved with Safety, Maintenance of the System, and Mobility ranking as the top three criteria. From this, a list of existing regional projects to be scored (from current plans) was confirmed. Projects with TIP funding in FY13 & FY14 were considered funded and not scored (per NHDOT guidance). Lastly, a subcommittee formed with representatives from Brookline, Hudson, Merrimack (2), Milford, Nashua (2), and NRPC Staff to score projects.
- *FEBRUARY TTAC Meeting* - Fact sheets with data/information relative to the categories and criteria were developed for the 18 projects to be scored. A meeting was held to go over the projects, fact sheets, and score sheets as well as additional project information and scoring guidance that was developed based on committee feedback. Objective criteria (e.g., based on road classification and traffic volumes) were pre-scored by NRPC staff. A second meeting was held to review and discuss how each scorer evaluated each of the projects, and revisions were allowed based on discussion. Final scores were compiled and projects prioritized.

The outcome resulted in the Nashua NH101A Phase 1 & 2 Widening & Improvements (which was bumped out of the last TYP) with the highest score followed by the US Route 3 Nashua/Tyngsborough MA Exit 36SB construction and Passenger Rail Nashua-Manchester-Concord. Roache explained that the next step is to submit the project scores and priorities to NHDOT by April 1st and they will put it into their Decision Lens Software to come up with a priority list. He asked if there were any questions. Elmer, who was on the subcommittee said when scoring the projects, said the committee review made every one of the projects defensible. Hersh, also on the subcommittee said it was virtually impossible to weigh a project to get it to score high for a personal pick. Battis asked how much variance there was as he felt that some projects were higher than others and the subjective nature of the criteria. Chizmas referred to the agenda packet showing this info. Maddox asked how this is relevant when there is only \$200m out there and there is \$800m just alone in the first 4 projects on the top of the ranking list. Diers explained that not every project being funded comes from the same pot of money. Roache added that we do not know where the project will be after it gets to the state level. Rider commented on the Rte. 3A/111 project ranking higher than the 3rd river crossing. Chizmas attributed that to safety and air quality. Langdell asked if the fact sheets used in the scoring process could be put on the web. Roache said yes. Dell Orfano was comfortable with the process but had concerns on whether all the other RPCs were putting the same effort into this. He added that the transparency is great if it is consistent, but he had concerns with the political influence. Roache said the other RPCs are using the same criteria and most do a good job, but he was unaware of the effort put forth. He added that it is different this time because you will be able to see all the impacts, who gets cut and who is affected. Dell Orfano asked if this would expose a skewed decision. Davison said it would be hard to get a skewed decision due to the amount of criteria and DOT will be scoring all projects submitted and if there is some difference, it will be open for a discussion and an agreement on the score. Davison added that all would be using the same criteria and that the RPCs would also be ranking DOT projects to look for discrepancies and then it will all go into Decision Lens to prioritize the projects. Next would be the Draft TYP and then to the DOT Commissioner, the GACIT process and lastly out to everyone to lobby or present a case.

Gleason wanted some reassurance that we were not throwing out a more important project for one involving Massachusetts. Hersh said she had not thought of MA as paying for that project and added that Northern Middlesex County of Governments (NMCOG) applied for the grant and that support from MA would be done in MA. She felt it was a matter of local and regional support, not funding. Vear asked when the results would be out. Davison was hoping for mid-June. Roache asked if there was a motion for support as developed. Gleason made a motion with a second from Kelly:

THAT TTAC reviewed the process and project scores and recommended the MPO support the priority list as developed by the scoring subcommittee.

The motion **carried**.

FY2014-2015 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) REVIEW

Roache reviewed the UPWP with the group explaining that its intent is to guide the MPO and is used as a scope of work with DOT. It is written broadly to be able to work with our communities and is pretty much the same as in the past 3 cycles with a few minor changes. Roache walked the group through the document providing a very brief summary of each of the tasks listed. He further explained that any and all other federal dollars need to be listed in the document and it is still in draft form. The final approval will be necessary in June and this is primarily for Commissioner's for review. Kelly asked where this was a statement of work of the MPOs if the categories change. Roache said all MPO's use the same format and that maybe only individual tasks may vary. He said any comments or suggestions can be emailed to him.

NASHUA REGIONAL PLAN UPDATE

Diers provided an update of what has been going on with the Regional Plan during the last quarter. She provided direction to the Granite State Future webpage via wireless access highlighting the various tasks completed and new components of the site. Diers informed that group that all data collected at this link could be used to provide town by town results for use in their master plan updates. She summarized the following:

Regional Framework – Part of the statewide effort resource tool on all topics that will be talked about in our Regional Plan with hyperlinks throughout to documents at the state level. Good tool for local communities. Hersh was impressed with this but felt it would be challenging to keep it up to date.

Online Forum/Blog – Comments can be added and you can comment on other folk's comments. You can also put in an address and comment on that specific location. Great resource for current planning topics.

Topics – Each RPC has their own online forum page, meetings/workshops, missed meeting/workshop page and a documents page. She referred to the Housing Workshop being held on March 29th at the NRPC office and the Regional Advisory meeting being held in April.

Events/Meetings/Workshops – Diers specifically informed the group of the Listening Session being held April 30th at the Nashua Senior Center put on by UNH. She added there would be several of these listening sessions across the state and encouraged folks to check out the events page.

What We've Heard – What are your neighbors saying and all in a nutshell.

Langdell asked if NRPC could put out a 10 minute informational video on how to use the website and associated pages. Vear suggested a small card to put at libraries where folks would have access to computers and the internet. Diers said that was a great idea. She added that they are creating a portal page with more directions on how to use the site. A member asked what the timeframe was for data collection in which Diers informed that it was open-ended. She added that by the end of the summer the info from the website will be fed into topic workshops, then by fall working on how it all fits together and where to go from there. Maddox suggested a 10 minute video with an address for non-email folks (the ones that come out to vote) to provide their input. Langdell said it would serve a dual purpose by showing the multiple ways to provide input. Diers informed the group that there would be another update in June and that by the Fall, the Commissioners will be asked to help. There will be a lot of work and she encouraged each of the Commissioners to sign up for one of the topic committees, specifically, she was looking for

some folks for the Natural Resources committee

BUSINESS MEETING – QUARTERLY WORK PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Diers said most everything that was pretty much discussed as part of the meeting but wanted to highlight some of the new programs. She informed the group that there were a lot of new pilot Land Use and Environmental Programs. She referred to the Milford Community Planning Grant project and asked Langdell if she wanted to elaborate. Langdell said that its main purposes are to preserve open space, explore affordable housing and not be so hard on developers.

Diers also referred to the Soak up the Rain project which will address stormwater management issues on Baboosic Lake in Merrimack. She was hoping that this project could be set up as a pay it forward. Diers added that we were waiting for final draft MS4 Guidelines from DES to develop our own model.

Maddox asked if NRPC had a 10 minute Household Hazardous Waste video to run on the local cable access channels explaining what to do with Hazardous Waste and where to bring it. Diers said we did not, but one could be generated. Maddox felt this would help. There was concern from other members that 10 minutes would be too long and would lose the attention of their viewers. A suggestion was to do a flash technique in between programs.

This concluded the program reports portion of the business meeting. Diers informed the group that the 4th Quarter Program Highlights would be mailed to the contact list.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Langdell informed the group of a new agenda item going forth to just provide bullet items of what the Executive Committee has been discussing. She asked Diers to summarize the Executive Committee action items.

COMMISSIONER'S ROUNDTABLE

The Commissioner's Roundtable was not held.

ADJOURN

The next NRPC Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 19, 2013 at 7:00pm. Motion to adjourn came from Maddox with a second from Young. The meeting adjourned at 8:57pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerrie Diers, Official Recorder