


NRPC APPROVED MINUTES
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
January 13th, 2021

Members Present:

Natasha Kypfer, Town of Amherst	John Savage, NTS
Joan Cudworth, Town of Hollis	Wayne Husband, City of Nashua
Mark Chamberlain, Town of Lyndeborough	Julie Chizmas, City of Nashua
Dawn Tuomala, Town of Merrimack	Pete Kohalmi, City of Nashua
Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham	Matt Sullivan, City of Nashua
Jenn Bearegard, Town of Pelham	Lucy St John, NH DOT
Caleb Cheng, Town of Hudson – NRPC	Tim White, NH DES
Cassie Mullen, Town of Mason - NRPC	Leigh Levine, FHWA

Others Present

Chris Buchanan	Jim Battis, Town of Hudson - Commissioner
Ed Weber, City of Nashua - Commissioner	

STAFF PRESENT

Gregg Lantos, MPO Coordinator	Jay Minkarah, Executive Director
Matt Waitkins, Senior Transportation Planner	Derek Stahl, Transportation Planner
Mason Twombly, Regional-Environmental Planner	

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Lantos called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm and went the roll call of attendees by community/organization. The protocol for participation in the virtual meeting was presented.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 18TH, 2020 MEETING

Lantos referred to the minutes from November 18th, 2020 included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1.

Gowan motioned with second from Chamberlain to approve the minutes. There were no members who opposed or wished to abstain. The minutes were approved.

SOUHEGAN VALLEY RAIL TRAIL CONCEPT PROPOSAL

Waitkins began the presentation with a brief overview of the project. The group originally was a complete streets committee but evolved to the Friends of Souhegan Valley Rail trail to focus efforts and to bring awareness to this project. The proposed multipurpose rail trail is a 16 mile stretch along Rt 101A that is currently in the process of changing ownership from Pan-Am. The goal is to work with the new ownership of the rail to incorporate the multipurpose rail trail or rail with trail. Buchanan stated that the current focus in transportation is mainly focused on vehicular traffic, building/maintaining roads with the idea of having as many cars traveling on roadways as possible and minimizing traffic levels. This has equated to larger/wider roads and greater speeds of vehicles and without proper infrastructure, can negatively impact the safety of alternative modes of transportation for pedestrians and bicyclists. A physics-based approach shows that a crash involving a pedestrian at 40 mph it is almost certain that a fatality will occur. Roadways with speeds between 40-60 mph should include physical separation between pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Supporting the need for such pedestrian infrastructure, it was found that around 25% on Americans do not own a vehicle or cannot drive a vehicle. More specifically, in the project area there is around 3,000 households that do not own a vehicle and

rely solely on alternative modes of transportation. Other than addressing existing needs for pedestrian infrastructure, there are other benefits can be seen from bike/ped facilities. Economically, local businesses can benefit from these types of facilities with increased foot traffic and it can also be found that property values have increased in “walkable” areas and typically spend much less time on the market. Lastly, health benefits can be found with bike/ped facilities making it easier and safer for pedestrians to get out and recreate regularly. The route of the proposed rail trail extends from Crown St in Nashua to Wilton. Within 2 miles along the route, there are about 115,000 residents (54% of Nashua planning region), 63,400 jobs, 3,000 Zero vehicle households, 368,000 NTS annual ridership, 68 miles of trails, and 66 parks. The route can be broken up into 5 segments:

1. Crown St – Broad St (Nashua)
2. Broad St – Merrimack TL (Nashua)
3. Merrimack TL – Rt 122 Intersection (Amherst)
4. Rt 122 – Westchester Dr (Milford)
5. Westchester Dr – Wilton Downtown (Milford/Wilton)

Minkarah stated that he has spoken with the Vice President for the northeast at CSX and that they are aware of this project. Lantos commented that after discussions with staff, the plan would be for this project to be submitted to the LRTP. Based off the Amherst Rail Trail project, he calculated the project cost would be about \$9.5 million and would be willing to adjust the number as needed. Also, Lantos asked Buchanan if he would propose the project as 5 separate phases with specific costs referring to the 5 subsections discussed. Buchanan responded that he has been in touch with a civil engineer who is willing to donate time on this project and giving an estimate. He added that if this were to be a rail with trail facility, there are several separated grade crossings that would severely impact the cost of the project as these crossings are built for rail only at this point and additional infrastructure would be needed to support the ped facility. As for the segmentation of the project, Buchanan would yield to Lantos’ judgement in presenting it in whatever approach is the most realistic for the project to be approved and built. Chizmas asked what years the project would be submitted into. Lantos responded that right now he is looking at 2040-2045 timeframe. Chizmas recommended that the project be submitted as one whole project until we know the actual logistical breakdown of what the project would be. Lantos agreed and stated that right now it is listed as one project. Chizmas also stated that it would be beneficial to have a member from each of the involved communities on the board to keep the project moving. Buchanan agreed and stated that’s their eventual goal.

SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURE/REVISION TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AGENCY SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURE

Lantos recommended to address both highway safety and public transportation safety performance targets in one motion. Lantos referred to the fact that the public transportation safety performance measures were discussed in the last TTAC and that there was one minor change to safety events which affected the rate which was changed to “per 100,000 vehicle revenue miles”. Lantos referred to attachment 3 in the agenda packet and started the discussion on the highway safety performance targets. He stated that within our region, a 5-year rolling average is used and including the 2019 data, the average has dropped to 10.4 fatalities per year which is the lowest point since this method was introduced in 2012. Lantos noted that since 2017 there has been a more stable database in obtaining this data and believes this may be contributing to the lower numbers having access to more accurate data. More specifically, since the year of 2017 the rate of serious injuries has been seen to dramatically decrease. All of the performance targets are seeing a decreasing trend, and because of this, the 2021 targets would be 10.4 fatality total, .619 fatality rate, 57 serious injury total, 3.30 serious injury rate, and 7.3 for non-motorized fatal and serious injuries. Lantos opened the floor for a motion to approve the public transportation safety performance target revision as well as the new highway safety performance targets.

Chizmas motioned with a second from Chamberlain to approve both safety performance targets. St. John abstained, and all else were in favor. The motion passed.

FY 2022-2023 UPWP SUMMARY

Lantos began the discussion by stating that this is still in the planning stages and that if there are specific planning tasks that members would like to have included to let him know. He also stated that this will be submitted to DOT in early February. Key tasks for each of the UPWP categories are as follows:

- **100 – MPO Administration and Training**
 - FY 20-21 UPWP Performance Report
 - Mid Contract Report
 - FY 24-25 UPWP
 - SYNCRO Training
- **200 – Policy and Planning**
 - GACIT Hearings (Fall '21); TYP Project Submissions (8/22); Project Prioritization (11/22)
 - Stormwater Coalition; Environmental mitigation strategies for new MTP projects; EJ performance metrics
 - Alignment of State & Federal transportation planning processes/Update TYP development procedures
 - Monthly coordination meetings between MPOs, State, Federal agencies
 - Update of 2020 CMP Report Congestion Stats
 - ITS Update -carryover from current UPWP (6/22)
 - Update all Performance Measures (Safety, Infrastructure, TTR, TAM, PTASP); MTP Major Update (12/22)
 - Planning level AQ Conformity for TIP/MTP; Emissions modeling if required
 - Tech Assistance to State Plan Update
 - Complete Streets Advisory Comm; Implement 2021 Regional Bike-Ped Plan Update
 - Data Collection & Analysis (Truck counts, Generation Rates, O-D patterns)
- **300 – Public Involvement and Coordination**
 - TTAC Meetings
 - Update the 2020 PPP as needed
 - Continue Increased Use of Survey Instruments; Targeted Outreach to Underrepresented Transp. Groups
 - Quarterly meetings, supplementatal as needed
- **400 – Plan Support (Data, Modeling, GIS)**
 - HPMS Counts, Regional Traffic Model Counts
 - RSMS Projects (upon request); Evaluate Brookline RSMS Implementation; Infrastructure Assessments
 - Supporting Data Layer for Transportation Planning
 - Census 2020 Boundary Smoothing (Spring 2022); Update Base Year & Projected Population & Employment for MTP Modeling (Summer 2022)
 - NPMRDS Speed Data; Potential Travel Origin-Destination Data
 - Model enhancements; Application for MTP Update (Fall 2022); Potential Model Integration with other MPOs
- **500 – Technical Assistance and Transit Support**
 - Transp Chapters for Master Plans; Requests for Counts, Data Analysis, Review of Traffic Impacts; Merrimack Exit 12 Interchange Study Update
 - State Coordinating Council; Data/Tech Assistance to NHDOT
 - TAP, CMAQ Application Assistance & Data Analysis; Road Safety Audit Process
 - None Anticipated (requires separate work scope)
 - Staff Support for RCC Meetings

- NTS Tech Assistance (e.g map updates); Implement recommendations from previous studies; Nashua Rail Committee Tech Assistance
- Establish Baseline of TDM Programs (e.g.surveys of employers); Evaluate Traffic Impacts of Potential TDM Alternatives
- **600 – FTA 5305e Transit Study**
 - Regional Volunteer Driver Program Study (6/23)

NOTIFICATION OF TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM SOLICITATION

Lantos stated that the project minimum is \$320,000 federal and the max is \$1 million federal, and all projects require a 20% local match. Eligible projects include on/off road trail facilities, infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors, and SRTS infrastructure activities. Letters of interest are due by Friday, February 5, 2021.

NHDOT, NHDES, FHWA UPDATES

Pelham – Lantos stated that NRPC looked into possible routes for truck drivers that could potentially drive through Pelham to get to the Hudson distribution center. It was found that there may be a 1% increase in truck traffic, but in a rural community any increase in truck traffic won't go unnoticed. Gowan stated that this provided enough insight to convince the board of selectmen that a private consultant is not needed and that there are a lot of people involved in this project already. He does not believe that pelham will see a significant increase in truck traffic based on amazons proposed use of the facility.

DOT – No Updates

DES – 17 applications for the State Clean Diesel Program were received in November and the successful applicants are currently being notified. There will be additional funding left over and the second round of applications are due by 1/19/2021. All info can be found on the website.

FHWA – President signed a Covid-19 relief package for \$10 Billion towards highway infrastructure. No details are available currently but will notify once more information is available.

ADJOURN

Chamberlain motioned with a second from Savage to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.