


**NRPC APPROVED MINUTES**  
**NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**04/08/15**

**Members Present:**

Colleen Mailloux, Town of Amherst  
 Tom Bayrd, Town of Hollis  
 John Cashell, Town of Hudson  
 Jason Hoch, Town of Litchfield  
 Rick Seymour, Town of Merrimack  
 Donna Pohli, Town of Merrimack  
 Raymond Blethen, Nashua Transit System

Chris Clow, City of Nashua NTS  
 Steve Dookran, City of Nashua  
 Wayne Husband, City of Nashua Traffic  
 Sarah Marchant, City of Nashua  
 Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham

**Others Present:**

Paul Lockwood, NHDES  
 Leigh Levine, FHWA

**STAFF PRESENT**

Tim Roache, Executive Director  
 Matt Waitkins, Field Data/Transportation Planner  
 Mark Connors, Regional Planner

Jen Czysz, Principal Planner  
 Karen Baker, Program Assistant

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Czysz opened the meeting with introductions at 12:08pm.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 11, 2015 MEETING**

Czysz referred to the minutes of March 11, 2015 included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1 and asked for a motion to approve. Gowan moved to approve the March 11, 2015 minutes with a second from Mailloux. All were in favor.

**TEN YEAR PLAN (TYP) PROJECT PRIORITIES SCORES**

Czysz passed around handouts with the Weighted Overall Project Priorities for the 2017-2026 TYP and 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and MPO Transportation Project Evaluation Criteria used to evaluate the proposed transportation projects. She provided a brief overview of the handouts and compared the scoring in this current round to the last round of scoring. She pointed out that some categories were eliminated in this round and weights were also shifted. She asked TTAC for their initial reaction to the results of the project priorities, negative or positive. Gowan remarked about the nice work done on the handout.

Roache commented that the Exit 36 project ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> last round but ended up 13<sup>th</sup> this round which he felt was due to the elimination of the economic impact criteria in this round. He felt that with the upcoming Tiger grants, this might not show well. Czysz said that in conversations she had with Southwest RPC, they had also encountered the same issues with some projects falling in the rankings due to the elimination of subjective criteria in this round. She said that this could be articulated when presenting the priorities to DOT. Czysz pointed out that Exit 36S received points last round under the "State of Repair" category as new infrastructure but did not for this round given that DOT has issued a policy statement prioritizing investment into "keeping good roads good." Roache felt that in terms of major projects, Exit 36 was second to the Capitol Corridor rail. Hoch commented that all major points dropped in ranking. Roache commented on the amount of traffic that would be taken off DW Hwy with the Exit 36 project according to the traffic model and it would not have as much of a chance getting into the next TYP without additional funding outside of the Ten Year Plan process and if it shows this low in the ranking. There was further discussion on the major projects that dropped significantly in the ranking from the last round. There was also talk about restructuring the 101A projects. Roache suggested an amendment would be forthcoming to combine the ROW and Engineering for the projects into Phase A and Phase B for all the construction treating the corridor a single project.

Levine asked if based on the regional allocation if it would be fiscally constrained. Roache said they drew a line when they hit the 20M threshold, but if there were additional dollars remaining, the rest of the projects would be addressed. He did not think that fiscal constraint would be impacted.

Dookran asked if NRPC would be applying for a TIGER Grant for the Exit 36 project. Roache said the grant is geared to capital improvement and was unsure if engineering and environmental could be included but said he would look into this. He added that the project would also need support from Massachusetts.

Czys asked the group if they thought any project priorities should be shifted. Marchant felt that Exit 36 should higher ranked be due to the benefit of environmental impacts by doing the project referring to the 25% decrease in traffic along DW Hwy. Dookran said it boils down affordability. Roache felt that they should be consistent cycle to cycle and that due to the change in criteria this is less possible. Hoch agreed saying it happen with all the major projects and suggested adjusting the score for projects that scored 0's under the "State of Repair" criteria. Dookran said to rank the large priority projects and then rank the others. After further discussion on where to rank the major and minor projects, and based on a suggestion from Marchant, the group decided to use one set of criteria to give major and minor projects scoring with a top score of 100 for non-major projects and a top score of 80 for major projects and show how they fit together overall and how they rank overall. Czys asked for a recommendation from the TTAC to present to the Executive Committee for approval. Cashell motioned with a second from Hoch that the Executive Committee approve the scoring methodology and proposed project ranking as recommended by the TTAC giving major and minor projects scoring and showing how they fit together and rank overall.

#### **NRPC BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN**

Waitkins provided a presentation on the draft NRPC Regional Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan. He explained that they want to make their planning documents easy to read, to the point and attractive, and to tell a story so people will be drawn in. Waitkins said the vision of the plan will be to identify planning, development and implementation policies that will bring about change to both the transportation system, resulting in a bicycle and pedestrian friendly region and the increased use of non-motorized travel for everyday transportation. The update process has focused on examining implementation of the recommendations from 2005 plan, the recent public outreach results showing significant public support for increased transportation options, and renewed interest at the Federal level. This update was overseen by a workgroup of regional and state stakeholders who gathered information about existing conditions & trends, redefined goals and objectives and identified action steps, partners, required resources, and a timeline for implementation. Waitkins provided some statistics from the plan on the percentage of residents that bike or walk to work, percentage of car trips under one mile and the percentage of obese or overweight adults in the Nashua Region and NH as well as the changing landscape which includes fewer young drivers who are also willing to pay a premium to live in a walkable location. He pointed out key findings and bike and pedestrian success stories in the region. Lastly, he summarized the plan goals, objectives, action items and recommendations. He asked the group for feedback by asking 4 questions:

- Based on your experiences, what types of bicycle/pedestrian efforts have been most successful in your communities?
- Is there more support in your community for implementing bicycle and pedestrian projects now than 10 years ago?
- Is it easier to make a case for funding such initiatives at the local level?
- How can the NRPC be most effective in assisting and advancing local bicycle and pedestrian efforts?

Marchant referred to a TAP grant that would provide pedestrian and bike access over Canal St. with connections to the Heritage Rail Trail East. She also informed the group of the southwest trails project which will include 4.5 miles from Southwest Park with connections to other trails.

Seymour talked about Merrimack's plan to connect town center trails to the high school and parks on DW Hwy using money from a TAP grant.

Dookran talked about the connections that would be made and sidewalks once the Broad Street Parkway is complete. He briefly summarized the process Nashua uses with new projects to improve bike and pedestrian access. He talked about the obstacles this time of year they have due to the many sidewalks and with the snow. He added that the elected officials do not want more sidewalks built if they can't maintain them or keep them clear. In addition, NH law says you can't require residents to clear sidewalks.

Hoch encouraged the group to keep advocating for sidewalks and bike trails as it is part of the transportation network. He added that sidewalks are considered an extra. Blethen talked about the big issue in Nashua they had this past year when analyzing their bus stops due to lack of pedestrian/bike access. Czysz said that enhancing pedestrian access to existing transit was a consideration when scoring the projects.

Marchant said NRPC could help by pointing out grant opportunities and support communities in the grant application process. Dookran added that emphasizing quality of life (in wintertime) could maybe change votes and would address the needs. Waitkins thanked the group and said he hoped that the Bike/Pedestrian workgroup would morph into a stakeholder group to assist with implementation.

#### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

##### ***Climate and Economic Resilience Planning***

Roache informed the group of the conference that he, Mark Connors, Justin Kates, Venu Rao and Chris Skoglund attended in March on climate and economic resilience planning. He felt there is the potential for future funding to head in this direction. He proceeded to tell the group about a vulnerability analysis that was presented at the conference, using projected increase in temperature data for 2040-2070, where they were able to predict vulnerable areas and identify appropriate mitigation and adaptation actions. He added that Justin Kates said this is also an opportunity to work as a region for emergency response and tie this to emergency preparedness and share struggles with surrounding communities. Roache added that maybe NRPC could assist with education.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Czysz asked if there were any requests for TTAC agenda items or if anyone had any projects to talk about to email her.

Mailloux motioned to adjourn with a second from Husband. The meeting adjourned at 1:20 pm.