

 **APPROVED MINUTES**
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
10/10/12

Members Present:

Jeff Babel, Town of Hollis DPW
Jason Hoch, Town of Litchfield
Jodie Levandowski, Town of Milford
Sarah Marchant, Town of Amherst
Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham
John Cashell, Town of Hudson
Tim Thompson, Town of Merrimack

Steve Dookran, City of Nashua
Wayne Husband, City of Nashua

Others Present:

James R. Repass, National Corridors
Paul Lockwood, NH DES
Leigh Levine, FHWA
Nick Alexander, NHDOT
Karla Kemp, NHDOT

STAFF PRESENT

Tim Roache, MPO Coordinator
Jennifer DiNovo, Regional Planner

Matt Waitkins, Field Data/Transportation Planner

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Tim Roache opened the meeting at 12:08 with introductions.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 12TH MEETING

Roache referred to the minutes of September 12th, included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1 and asked for a motion to approve. Babel moved to approve the September 12th, 2012 minutes with a second from Gowan. All were in favor.

GUEST SPEAKER: JIM REPASS, CHAIRMAN NATIONAL CORRIDORS INITIATIVE, INC. OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL CORRIDORS INITIATIVE, INC. AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR RAIL BETWEEN LOWELL AND NASHUA

Jim Repass discussed the history of the National Corridor Initiative (NCI) and how he became involved in the organization. He described the mission of the NCI and the activity of the organization around the country. He provided examples of corridor projects where NCI has been involved. His presentation included a discussion of "Value Capture" to fund operations of the rail service. He also described how revenue from increased property value and development is a direct result of the rail service that could be allocated to support operations.

Roache discussed a similar concept to "Value Capture" that has been discussed in New Hampshire. Waitkins stated that it sounded like a Tax Increment Finance Zone (TIF). Repass stated that we do not use the word TIF anymore. The new term is TIZI Transportation Infrastructure Zone Investment.

ACTION ITEM: RECOMMENDATION TO ADOPT TRANSPORTATION PLANNING DOCUMENTS FOR THE NASHUA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MOTION REQUIRED)

Roache opened the discussion of the Transportation Planning Documents. He stated that the documents will be reviewed individually. Roache began with a summary of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Roache explained that NRPC completed a minor update to the MTP. He stated it is simply an adjustment to the anticipated project implementation dates, with funding adjusted to inflation. The goals, objectives and text were not changed. A motion to approve the minor update to the 2013-2040 Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan and projects list was made by Gowan with a second by Babel. Passed unanimously

Draft 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program

Roache described the Transportation Improvement Program as a fiscally constrained listing of the surface transportation projects and improvements expected to occur over the 4 year period, in this case, 2013-2016. In

New Hampshire it is updated on a two year cycle that more or less coincides with the update of the States Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan. Roache stated that we went over the details and text of the document at the September meeting and reviewed the projects listed in the TIP located in Appendix A.

Roache asked for any other questions or concerns related to projects listed in the TIP other than the Bedford Merrimack Open Road Tolling project. Roache lead the discussion on the Bedford/Merrimack Open Road Tolling Project. He stated that NHDOT presented the project as being:

1. Contingent upon a system wide toll increase.
2. The current assumption is that the ORT would be implemented in the current location of the Bedford toll with no changes to the Merrimack ramp tolls.
3. Any relocation of the Bedford plaza or placement of ORT (or possibly AET) elsewhere which may or may not impact the Merrimack ramp plazas would need to be vetted through the legislature and passed into law.

Concerns raised and discussed:

- Projects scope is undefined – Not clear where the project will be located.
- What impact if any will this project have on the Merrimack Ramp toll and the total toll burden of Merrimack residents?
- Is it reasonable to assume that funding will be available via a legislative toll increase?

Roache asked for other concerns. Thompson motioned to list construction phases of the project as illustrative purposes, but leave engineering in TIP. Second by Hoch. Dookran asked if the timeframe for engineering will result in out of date or obsolete plans. He added it doesn't make sense to tie up engineering funds if the project doesn't move forward. Roache explained that leaving engineering funds in place saves time and money by avoiding an amendment process. Alexander added that it is Turnpike funds so other projects will not be impacted. There was no additional discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Draft 2013 – 2040 Air Quality Conformity Analysis

Roache described the Air Quality Conformity Process in relation to the TIP and MTP. He stated that the AQA analysis shows that the projects proposed in the 2013-2016 TIP and 2013-2040 LRTP do not worsen Air Quality in the region and that the precursor pollutants produced by the transportation network fall below the budget set by the NHDES. Any changes proposed by the toll project do not impact the AQA because the project was coded as exempt from the AQA analysis. Cashell made a motion to approve the Draft 2013-2040 Air Quality Conformity Analysis. Second by Dookran. Passed unanimously.

2015 - 2023 TEN YEAR PLAN: KICKOFF DISCUSSION

Roache stated that the two year transportation planning process is continuous and that we are about to begin the next update cycle. He continued stating; as we look to the next two year cycle we have the opportunity to combine our resources with other planning initiatives like the Granite State Future and NHDOT Ten Year Plan Process. In the next few months, a key item on the TTAC's agenda will be determining the transportation improvement projects that will achieve the vision of the region, defined by the TTAC in the spring of 2011 as: "The Nashua region has a comprehensive and reliable multi-modal transportation system that enables universal access for all travelers, including disabled, youth, and seniors, to all points within and beyond the region. Our transportation system enables a highly mobile community and promotes economic growth, public health, and enhances the natural environment. The Transportation system is adaptable to changes in demographics, economic conditions and energy related forces. Sufficient funding supports the operations maintenance and expansion of our transportation infrastructure to continuously meet the needs of the region."

Roache asked the TTAC members to consider the vision and goals/objectives as they submit local and regional needs. In next several meetings, the TTAC will establish a process for tying needs with goals and objectives to meet the vision.

Roache reviewed interim results of the transportation needs survey. The TTAC discussed the Merrimack River Crossing and Passenger rail project. Roache stated that he wants the TTAC to prioritize top 3 projects or needs to present to Commission. Roache stated that NRPC will keep the survey open for a couple more months.

Roache stated that the upcoming process will require consideration of performance based planning. Alexander stated that a Rule Making Process at national level is underway. NRPC staff will develop performance goals in cooperation with NHDOT.

STAFF AND PROJECT UPDATES

Roache distributed the project advertising list.

Motion to adjourn came from Gowan with a second from Babel. The meeting adjourned at 1:23 pm.