

***Nashua Regional Planning Commission
Northern Middlesex Council of Governments
Exit 36 Southbound Public Outreach Plan
October 2012***



Purpose

The Exit 36 Southbound Planning Study is a collaborative effort between the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC), the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), the City of Nashua, New Hampshire and the Town of Tyngsborough, Massachusetts. The intent of the study is to analyze the impacts and benefits of expanding Exit 36 on Route 3 to a full interchange. Currently, Exit 36 is only accessible to northbound travelers, while southbound motorists who want to access the businesses on Middlesex Road in Tyngsborough and Daniel Webster Highway in Nashua must exit Route 3 at Exits 1 or 2 in Nashua or Exit 35 in Tyngsborough and work their way to the commercial areas, including the Pheasant Lane Mall. NRPC has estimated that 13,300 vehicles per weekday divert to Exit 1 in New Hampshire. This has increased the level of congestion on both sides of the interchange and has a negative impact on the businesses in the area. Additionally, there has been some discussion for several years regarding the extension of the Lowell commuter rail line into New Hampshire. The Exit 36 southbound ramp could play an important role in supporting a rail or multi modal facility in south Nashua.

This Public Outreach Plan outlines how the NRPC and the NMCOG will inform and seek input from community officials, residents, businesses and the traveling public. Throughout the course of this study, several approaches will be used to encourage public input and discussion, and all opinions and comments received will be documented and considered in formulating the recommendations outlined in the final report. This Public Outreach Plan is consistent with the Northern Middlesex MPO's (NMMPO) Public Participation Plan and the Nashua Regional MPO's (NRMPO) Public Involvement Process for Transportation Planning.

Public Outreach Strategies

A Project Steering Committee has been established and will meet throughout the study period. Alternative outreach mechanisms will be used to engage the larger public through social media and a project website. Up to three public meetings will be conducted using an open house workshop format, which will allow interested parties to review data and plans and speak directly to the planning staff conducting the study. Workshop stations will feature plans, graphics and analysis relative to the subject areas.

1. Land Use and Economic Development Analysis Workshop Station will feature:
 - a) Properties for re-use and land recycling based on local and regional priorities;
 - b) Economic development tools that are available and appropriate for both the New Hampshire and Massachusetts portions of the study area; and
 - c) Benefits of improved transportation access to existing and new jobs and services.

2. Transportation/Transit Analysis Workshop Station will feature:
 - a) Summary of existing and future traffic conditions;
 - b) Review of existing bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and suggested improvements to those facilities;
 - c) Opportunities to expand upon the City of Nashua's existing access management improvements along Daniel Webster Highway using recommendations from the NRPC Access Management Plan;
 - d) Opportunities to accommodate a regional transit center serving rail and intercity bus; and
 - e) Recommendations for improving local and regional transit service. Suggestions may include: opportunities to utilize the new ramp for express service from Downtown Nashua to the Pheasant Lane Mall and other retail destinations; connecting service between Nashua and Lowell; and a Travel Demand Management analysis aimed at reducing the number of vehicle trips to and within the project study area.

3. The Conceptual Design Workshop Station will feature:

The conceptual plan developed, using planning tools such as the NRPC Travel Demand Model, GIS datasets and analysis techniques.

4. The Environmental Resources Workshop Station will feature:
 - a) A summary of wetland resources in the project area;
 - b) A summary of historic properties;
 - c) Known hazardous materials sites; and
 - d) Rare species and wildlife.

In addition to the public meetings, interested parties will be kept informed of progress on the study through electronic communications from NRPC and NMCOG, as well as appropriate social media outlets, including a project web page, Twitter and Facebook. All public meetings will be posted by the Nashua City Clerk, the Tyngsborough Town Clerk and on local cable community bulletin boards. Press releases may be issued to local media outlets and the public meetings will be advertised in the local newspapers. Updates on the study will be included in NRPC's online newsletter and printed in NMCOG's quarterly newsletter. All meetings will be conducted at accessible locations and language interpretive services will be available upon request with advanced notification. All documents produced throughout the study period will be made available in accessible formats upon request. Please call NRPC at 603-424-2240 or NMCOG at 978-454-8021 with requests for accessibility.

Draft and Final Report - Opportunity for Public Comment

NRPC and NMCOG will cooperatively prepare a draft and final report documenting the study's technical methodology, the public outreach effort, findings and recommendations, and shall present copies of both the draft and final report, with all accompanying documents, to the Project Steering Committee,

NHDOT and MassDOT. The draft and final reports will include all text, conceptual plans, maps, table, and graphics necessary to present the study's conclusions and document the rationale for these conclusions. The draft and final reports will also contain an Executive Summary, which can be produced as a stand-alone document for widespread general distribution. Additionally NRPC and NMCOG staff will make presentations on the study's findings to the City of Nashua and the Tyngsborough Board of Selectmen. The draft report will be released for a 30-day public comment period and the final report will reflect the input and comments received during the comment period. The report shall be posted electronically on the NRPC, NMCOG, City of Nashua and Town of Tyngsborough websites. Technical appendices shall be bound into a separate document and will be made available upon request.