


APPROVED MINUTES
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
05/14/14

Members Present:

Bruce Berry, Town of Amherst
 Thomas Bayrd, Town of Hollis
 John Cashell, Town of Hudson
 Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham
 Kyle Fox, Town of Merrimack
 Wayne Husband, City of Nashua

Jason Hoch, Town of Litchfield
 Steve Dookran, City of Nashua

Others Present:

Paul Lockwood, NH DES
 Linda Dusenberry, NH DOT,
 Leigh Levine, FHWA

STAFF PRESENT

Tim Roache, MPO Coordinator
 Kerrie Diers, Executive Director
 Jen Czysz, Senior Regional Planner

Matt Waitkins, Field Data/Transportation Planner
 Camille Pattison, Principal Planner
 Karen Baker, Program Assistant

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 12, 2014 MEETING

Roache referred to the minutes of March 12, 2014 included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1 and asked for a motion to approve. Gowan moved to approve the March 12, 2014 minutes with a second from Cashell. The minutes were approved with one abstention.

EXIT 36S PROJECT UPDATE

Roache started off by saying that this was more than just a typical transportation study under the Transportation and Community System Preservation Program (TCSP). The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) in conjunction with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) received federal funding through the TCSP Program to conduct a study assessing the effectiveness of a south bound off-ramp at exit 36 on the F.E. Everett Turnpike, near the New Hampshire and Massachusetts border. The study will evaluate traffic flows and potential economic benefits to businesses in the area and will ultimately complete planning analyses in support of the development of a southbound off ramp on US Route 3 at Exit 36 in Tyngsborough, Massachusetts.

The primary goals associated with this project are to:

- Improve the operation of the major roads in the vicinity of the proposed Exit 36 Southbound;
- Address all modes of transportation;
- Provide efficient access to services and local and regional job centers;
- Generate opportunities for sustainable growth and economic development;
- Initiate opportunities for innovative financing and public/private partnerships; and
- Generate opportunity to mitigate traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions associated with the transportation sector.

To date, a draft Existing Conditions report has been completed which identified current Transportation impacts, Transit and Alternative Modes and Land Use. In addition, a 3 part draft Future Conditions report is near completion which will identify impacts and opportunities to the area in 2022 with no-build scenarios vs. build scenarios. Areas looked at for the study included traffic volumes, bike and pedestrian alternatives and land use & economic development. Other areas also identified in the study will include impacts related to passenger rail coming to the area, as well as cost and time savings. He clarified that this is not the rail study or any part of it.

Roache concluded saying he anticipated the draft documents to be ready late May with a conceptual layout & planning level cost estimate in early June from VHB. An implementation strategy is scheduled soon after that along with Steering Committee review and Public Meetings. Final documents are scheduled to be complete by the second week of July. He pointed out the project pages on both the NRPC & NMCOG websites.

Dookran asked if they received residential numbers from Gateway. Pattison said there were roughly about 6,000 with gateway. Pattison added that crosswalk actuation numbers are needed at all intersections on DW Highway and Spitbrook. The exception is on the Exit 36 off-ramp. Pedestrian overpasses are proposed at Danforth and DW Highway and Spitbrook and DW highway and would reduce delays even though they are more expensive. She added that there are sidewalk issues throughout the study area due to the narrowness of the sidewalks and the many obstructions. There was talk about opportunities for streetscaping due to the large amount of green space near Barnes & Noble and Old Navy.

Levine asked if the residential area residents worked in the area. Roache said the Travel Demand Model thinks so. Roache informed the group of Tynsborough's vision for their portion of the corridor and their hopes for a restaurant row. The issue will be the lack of utilities. Levine asked if there were any recommendations from EJ for transit folks trying to get to work. Pattison said it can be scoped to make a case for with the subsidized housing on the south side of Spitbrook.

Doorkran asked if in the no-build 2022 scenario if Tynsborough was accounted for on DW highway if they build. Roache said not really and if they did build, how much would it impact. He felt it would go up a little but not much opportunity without Exit 36S. He added that the model only goes just south of the line.

There was discussion from Dookran and Husband and the rest of the group on pedestrian/bike connections and needs, green spaces, and easements in the area and the huge cost of retail. Waitkins asked about the potential opportunity to put a bicycle-pedestrian connection in the old Dow Chemical Site. Hoch added that it could provide an internal connection opportunity also. Roache said there might be more grants in the future with the Grow America Act.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) UPDATE

Roache provided a handout to the group and proceeded to review the projects listed in the handout. He informed the group that there are 15 projects listed over the next few years. He added that not every community has a project in the NRPC Long Range Plan. He emphasized that it was important that we make sure our priorities are out there and that the TIP is a tool. Roache also informed the group that there were only 5 projects of towns in the region.

Roache continued by asking the group if they knew of anything for their town that is a need that we could try and get federally funded and to let him know and it can be added to the TIP. Husband referred to Sharon Ave and 101A and the Turnpike bottleneck. He said there is a private developer that is willing to bring in a 40,000 ft. box store and would also bring significant money to improve the stretch but Nashua does not have the money to match. Roache said that it should be eligible for federal funds because it is part of the highway system.

PREVIEW OF THE TRANSPORTATION DATA VIEWER

Roache provided a demonstration of the new NRPC Transportation Data Viewer (TDV) available on the website. He explained that the data was mapped from the projects included in the TIP and put into this viewer. It also shows projects that were amended. He showed the group the clickable features available which included location, funding, project cost, etc. He added that Long Range projects are also available in

the viewer and can be seen together with the TIP projects. Roache said it can give you a better idea of what is out there for projects and where. In response to a question from Lockwood, Roache answered that it is not searchable by DOT project number. Roache also said that projects show as cones are DOT projects and transit projects are not shown differently in response to a question from Dookran.

While Roache was on the New NRPC website demonstrating the TDV, he also reviewed briefly with the group how the rest of the site functions and where to find information. He reviewed LIVE Maps and the layers associated with it and added that Sara Siskavich was available to do demonstrations in the towns for those who are interested. Roache also pointed out the printable maps section.

OTHER BUSINESS

Fox motioned to adjourn with a second from Hoch. The meeting ended at 1:21 pm.