


NRPC APPROVED MINUTES
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
12/10/14

Members Present:

Colleen Mailloux, Town of Amherst
 Tom Bayrd, Town of Hollis
 John Cashell, Town of Hudson
 Elvis Dhima, Town of Hudson
 Jason Hoch, Town of Litchfield
 Kyle Fox, Town of Merrimack
 Jodie Levandowski, Town of Milford
 Bill Parker, Town of Milford
 Wayne Husband, City of Nashua Traffic

Steve Dookran, City of Nashua
 Chris Clow, City of Nashua
 Sarah Marchant, Nashua Community Development
 Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham

Others Present:

Paul Lockwood, NHDES
 Linda Dusenberry, NHDOT

STAFF PRESENT

Tim Roache, MPO Coordinator	Jen Czysz, Senior Regional Planner
Kerrie Diers, Executive Director	Mark Connors, Regional Planner
Matt Waitkins, Field Data/Transportation Planner	Karen Baker, Program Assistant

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Tim Roache opened the meeting at 12:03 with introductions.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 12, 2014 MEETING

Roache referred to the minutes of November 12, 2014 included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1 and asked for a motion to approve. Both Dusenberry & Hoch indicated they were not present at the November TTAC but are listed as present. Cashell moved to approve the November 12, 2014 minutes as amended with a second from Mailloux. All were in favor with 3 abstentions.

PRESENTATION: METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP) & THE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN (TIP)

Roache did a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the background of the Draft TIP and Draft MTP. He started by explaining that the MTP is serving a dual role as both the Transportation chapter of the Regional Plan and a stand-alone federally mandated plan in urban areas over 50,000 population. He said to think of the MTP as a policy level document designed to guide transportation investment in the region through a 20 year planning horizon. It contains analyses of future travel demand and a fiscally constrained project list to guide implementation and represents a holistic approach to the transportation planning problem.

The TIP is the list of all federally funded transportation projects and programs in the Nashua Region which includes a list of projects that are regionally significant and/or scheduled to receive federal transportation funds within the next four years. This short-term project list must be consistent with the MTP, covers at least 4 years, is fiscally constrained with regionally significant projects, federally funded with federal action and can be amended to adjust, add or remove projects.

Roache elaborated some on how the current MTP has changed from previous versions. By moving away from the travel mode per chapter approach and using the goals of the plan to develop the chapter allows us to discuss all modes of transportation to build on strengths in the region, address weaknesses, and identify opportunities and threats. He reviewed the chapters in the MTP starting with Mobility. He talked about how we get around and our reliability on the personal automobile trend that has been spread out of the past 50 years. He referred to one of the strengths of the region as having a great road network and the weakness of it being overburdened in east/west travel in some portions. Roache summarized the Quality of Life chapter and how it is affected by transportation; right now congestion is limited and parking is free

an ample, but with the changing demographic it has the potential to adversely impact the quality of life for many in the region. He questioned how many plan to age in place and how will you get around. The quality of life chapter will investigate transportation options. Next, Roache gave a brief summary of the System Sustainability chapter informing the group that 28 percent of state roads in region listed in poor condition also referring to the red listed bridges. The enormous amount of deferred maintenance over the years has resulted in a back log of unmet maintenance needs. He referred to the recent gas tax increase is which was not tied to inflation, and fuel efficiency which has been consistently improving, resulting in the buying power of gas tax falling every year. He also pointed out that the gas tax is a primary funding source for transportation improvements in NH. Lastly, he summarized the Implementation chapter. Implementation Chapter looks towards the horizon year of 2040 asking the questions of what gas prices will be in 2040 and will we still be relying on fossil fuels to get around. The MTP updates every 2 years, we should be able to see the trends coming down the road. He asked the group, so what will 2040 look like? He showed an image from 1950 with a family playing scrabble on a vacation trip in an automatic car. In the 50's, this was unrealistic, but today and moving forward, this is a possibility. Roache provided a 2010 to 2040 base year model map depicting what the region would look like for a "do nothing scenario" for all chapters of the MTP and what to do in 2040 in regards to mobility, quality of life, system sustainability and implementation.

DRAFT 2015-2018 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) – ACTION REQUIRED

Roache passed around an updated project list from the 2015-2018 TIP. He said not a lot had changed from last month. He summarized the projects and asked TTAC representatives from the towns with projects for confirmation that the project was still a go and if there was any additional input and/or changes. Overall, Roache said that most projects were ROW or PE and there was not much construction over the next 4 years. Hudson-NH 111 & Library Street Traffic Light Upgrade would have a minor revision that would show in next TIP. Roache did not think the E. Hollis Street roundabout, showing a completion date of 2016 was realistic and may end up as an amendment. Roache referred to the several NTS projects listed with FTA funds, specifically asking Marchant if the Bus Expansion & Fleet Replacement projects were realistic for 2015. Marchant said yes to both. Roache felt the Milford Oval earmarked project would be in the first amendment. Dusenberry relayed to Parker that Jameson needed some more information in relation to the project. After further discussion, Gowan motioned to recommend approval of the Draft 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to the NRPC Commission at the December 17th public hearing with a second from Parker. All were in favor.

DRAFT 2015-2040 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP) – ACTION REQUIRED

Roache commented that he felt the project list included in the MTP needed another cycle to catch up. He added that he would need a recommendation from TTAC on the plan and the projects included in the Plan. Fox commented that project 10136D and 10136 PE and ROW seemed quite large. He added that it also shows in the TIP as Milford to Nashua. Roache commented that this was the parent project and D was one of the child projects, but the 5.6 million in PE is an issue, adding that he would figure out what the mix up is. Also, the Hudson Parkway project (old Circumferential Highway) was not specifically listed. Roache informed the group that there was a change in format by DOT on the projects. He said he would address this and that the project was still in the Long Range Transportation Plan and would carry forward. Parker commented that Milford project #20253 numbers seemed off as well. Roache said the public comment period was still open and he would address these issues. Hoch commented on the disappearance of the bridge designations. Roache informed that these were bundled and spread out to meet fiscal constraint. Roache asked the TTAC if they felt comfortable making a recommendation on the MTP pending the projects being corrected. Cashell motioned to recommend approval of the Draft 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) to the NRPC Commission at the December 17th public hearing with a second from Hoch. All were in favor.

PROJECT PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT TEN YEAR PLAN (DISCUSSION)

Roache referred to the standard set of criteria that was done for the first time with recommendations for DOT and how well it worked. He added that he was looking to improve on the process going forward. He passed around a handout with information on the process that all the RPC's were working together on to improve on the scoring process. He added that some of the criteria used were subjective and date had to be included. He referred to the 22 projects that the NRPC scored versus the up to 120 projects that the other RPCs scored and we are trying to scale this back. He added that they are looking at a threshold so that if a project does not meet it, we won't score it and make the focus more on what should be the highest ranking criteria (safety, maintenance, etc.). So, what do we score and rank Roache asked and referenced the Hollis 4 Corners project which was a priority in the past. He questioned if it still was a priority to the town saying when you have a project that is sitting there for who knows how long, dropping it from the list does not hurt and it can always be revisited later. He suggested focusing on what you really want to do.

Roache also suggested a re-evaluation of the projects that are included in the MTP and asked the group if we solicit for new projects and are there unmet transportation projects in your community. Roache referred to the long and short application forms used to start the process of getting a new project into the lineup. He also informed the group of the Google doc developed by Strafford. Roache said what he would like to see is an application process to get a project in using the same form all across the state. He added that if the project identity's the purpose and need, has legs, is valid and there is money, there is a good chance it would make it. Roache said he is looking to have a solid project list and asked the group for a list of priorities that have a chance of advancing along with a policy level statement to hand in with the list to DOT (ex. passenger rail, fixing 101A, etc.). Diers said years ago they had one for rail and felt it would be valuable adding that North Country Council says the same thing to legislature and policy makers across the board. Roache said it does not mean we ignore the smaller projects, but it is not also just about the big ones. Roache provided an example of 3 priorities of the Staff & Rockingham RPC back when they were an MPO and how 2 of those 3 priorities are nearly complete.

Roache asked the group if there were any new projects, besides the Pelham one. Fox mentioned the Merrimack Wire Road intersection where there needs to be a light or roundabout. Roache said a large part of the next meeting will be this discussion. There was discussion about a high priority project in Nashua to remove the jug handles and the long and short term plans to deal with them and how the short term plan does not benefit Nashua as much. Parker mentioned that the pre-construction on Amherst and Armory & Route 13 that should start in the Spring. Dookran informed them the last phase of the Broad Street Parkway is under contract.

Hoch motioned to adjourn with a second from Cashell. The meeting adjourned at 12:58 pm.