


NRPC APPROVED MINUTES
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
September 11, 2019

Members Present:

Julie Chizmas, City of Nashua
 Todd Croteau, Town of Hollis
 Elvis Dhima, Town of Hudson
 Brian Groth, Town of Hudson
 Jenn Beauregard, Town of Pelham
 Dawn Tuomala, Town of Merrimack

Wayne Husband, City of Nashua
 Dave Morrison, Town of Mason
 Camille Pattison, City of Nashua – NTS
 John Savage, City of Nashua – NTS
 Peter Kohalmi, City of Nashua
 Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham

Others Present

Patrick Herlihy, NHDOT
 Linda Dusenberry, NHDOT
 Tim White, NHDES
 Jack Madden, Erdman Anthony

Leigh Levine, FHWA
 Rick Dowd, City of Nashua
 Evan Clements, Town of Hollis

STAFF PRESENT

Gregg Lantos, MPO Coordinator
 Matt Waitkins, Senior Transportation Planner

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director
 Sabrina Pedersen, Community Relations Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Lantos called the meeting to order at 12:07 pm with a round of introductions.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 14TH, 2019 MEETING

Lantos referred to the minutes of August 14th, 2019 included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1. White made note of a change in the spelling of the DERA Fund.

Husband motioned with a second from Dhima to approve the minutes from the August 14th, 2019 meeting. All approved unanimously with abstentions from Dawn and Gowan.

NASHUA-MANCHESTER-CONCORD CAPITAL CORRIDOR RAIL PROJECT

Herlihy presented about the Nashua-Manchester-Concord Capital Corridor Rail Project that is included in the State's 10-year Transportation Improvement Program. The project aims to provide passenger rail service in the capital corridor, the northern Panam rail line that goes from Nashua up to Concord. The project will be supported by Federal Transit Administration Funding, specifically the Capital Investment Grant Program. There is a process by which to access this funding: alternatives analysis phase (completed in 2014), project development phase, and operations phase.

The engineering needs to be reassessed, develop a new cost figure, and complete an environmental assessment. The track needs to be revitalized from Class I Freight (10 mph) to Class IV (79 mph). A firm financial plan, for at least a 20-year period, needs to be submitted and approved by FTA. Half of the funding must be committed by

the time of the construction phase and the other 50% will be matched by FTA. Alternatives are being looked at from the state, municipal, private, and other benefactors that can contribute to the funding.

Lantos asked if 50% is an overmatch. Herlihy explained that capital funding can go up to 80%, but they do not usually fund anything over 50%.

Husband asked if the cost includes the transportation infrastructure going to and from the stations. Herlihy confirmed with a yes.

Groth asked if alternatives include infrastructure improvements that supports getting to the station? Herlihy confirmed with a no. Husband added that there is some concern about where to put the stations.

Dowd asked if they would put in new tracks or replace them. Herlihy said that the tracks will most likely be replaced. Panam would dispatch the trains, running their freight between passenger services. Sidings exist for freights to use as well.

Minkarah asked about the definition of committed funds. Herlihy stated that he has the same question submitted to FTA.

Timewise, Herlihy stated that they are looking to get an RFP for selecting a consultant within a 9 to 12-month period. Once selected, there is a 2-year period to complete the engineering and financial plan. Herlihy will be meeting with MassDOT and MBTA to discuss the project with them. The last discussion occurred nearly four years ago about the project.

Madden asked whether Herlihy has investigated the FRA and Chrissy grants for rehabilitation of the track and car. Herlihy confirmed with a yes. The only issue with the Chrissy grant is that state would need to own the tracks. With the reduction of freight on the tracks, there is the potential that the state could acquire them from Panam.

Minkarah asked if the state is moving forward with Small Starts. Herlihy confirmed with a yes.

Lantos shared his experience meeting with MBTA during the passenger rail study. Their position was that New Hampshire would fund their own projects, but if tracks were upgraded it would impact their decision for extending to North Chelmsford.

Lantos asked if the consultant would be looking at the difference between average and marginal costs, potentially making a profit and extract some capital money. Herlihy said it would depend on the MBTA's enthusiasm.

Lantos added that there is a transit feasibility study, looking at extending bus services to the Lowell train station, for Herlihy to keep an eye on.

Discussion proceeded about if the state is looking at CMAQ funds to support the operations. Herlihy said that they have not looked at CMAQ funds, but they have 5307 Boston Urbanized Funding.

CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY PROGRAM PROJECT UPDATE

Waitkins presented about the CMAQ update. Friday, September 6th was the deadline for application submissions. Three applications were submitted from the region. These encompass one from Nashua and two from Milford. Waitkins explained that a scoring subcommittee of three to five members, who are not applicants, will need to be organized. Presentations from the applicants will be completed at the October TTAC meeting. The subcommittee

will need to meet after the presentations to score them, and subsequently present scores at the October NRPC Executive Committee. Final recommendations will be submitted to NH DOT by the end of October.

White added that staff who are signed up for LPA certification or already certified can earn 5 points to a score.

Waitkins asked if any members would like to volunteer on the subcommittee. White responded yes if there is no issue from NH DES. Groth, Gowan, and Cummings asked to be added to the subcommittee.

Chizmas asked if applicants will be able to meet before the presentation date and after the air quality results come out. Lantos confirmed with a yes.

STAFF UPDATES

Lantos talked about the public hearings scheduled for the 10-year TIP. In our region, there will be a meeting on September 25th in Nashua. Another meeting will happen on September 26th in Milford.

Lantos shared that the MPO will be undergoing its 4-year TMA area certification review on October 23rd and 24th.

Lantos concluded that ridership estimates have been completed for the transit feasibility study. The cost analysis will begin in next month.

Waitkins added that Nashua will be hosting a table at the farmer's market to collect public input about the NH statewide bicycle and pedestrian plan.

NHDOT, NHDES, FHWA UPDATES

Dusenberry announced that NH DOT will be having public hearings across the state for the statewide bicycle and pedestrian plan. The survey is available to the public on the website: <https://nhpedbikeplan.com/>

Herlihy announced that the final meeting for strategic transit assessments, next 20 years or so, will be in September. In addition, he shared that the state rail plan will be updated with a focus on freight rail planning.

White shared that DES is starting a new round of DERA funding starting October 1st. NH DES anticipated that this year's program will have over \$700,000.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

ADJOURN

Gowan motioned with a second from Chizmas to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.