

 **NRPC MINUTES – APPROVED**
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
September 21, 2011

Members Present:

Martin Michaelis, Amherst	Mike Fimbel, Mont Vernon
Brad Vear, Amherst	Mike Tabacsko, Nashua
Peter Baker, Hollis	Ed Gleason, Pelham
Richard Maddox, Hudson	David Hennessey, Pelham
Stuart Schneiderman, Hudson	William Condra, Wilton
Janet Langdell, Milford	

Others Present:

Paul Lockwood, NHDES	Nancy Mayville, NH DOT
Steve Norton, NH Center for Public Policy	

Staff Present:

Kerrie Diers, Executive Director	Tim Roache, Assistant Director
Camille Pattison, Principal Planner	Julie Chizmas, Transportation Planner
Karen Baker, Program Assistant	

Call to Order

Chairman Langdell called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM.

Privilege of the Floor:

There were no members of the public in attendance that wished to speak.

Approval of the Minutes – June 15, 2011

The Chair asked if there were any comments on the minutes of June 15, 2011. It was moved by Gleason and seconded by Fimbel:

THAT the minutes of June 15, 2011 be approved.

The motion **carried** with 2 abstentions.

Public Hearing – STIP Amendment #3

Roache referred to the memo included in the agenda packet and explained that NRPC had received from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) Amendment #3 to the adopted Nashua Metropolitan Area 2011 – 2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The NRPC is amending the TIP to account for changes to projects within the Nashua region and to maintain consistency with the Statewide TIP (STIP). Below is a summary of the proposed changes to projects in the Nashua Region.

BROOKLINE – NH 130 - Construct sidewalks at two locations (09-06TE) - Project advanced from the Transportation Enhancement (TE) funding reserve list to the 2011 – 2014 TIP with \$473,000 in funding over FYs 2012 and 2013 - A project originally selected for funding dropped out of the program, making funds for the Brookline project available.

MILFORD – NH 101A and NH 13 - Improvements in the area known as the "Oval" to improve traffic flow based on ongoing traffic studies with the Town - Added \$221,000 in Right-of-Way funding in FY2012. Construction delayed from FY2011 to FY2012. Data entry error showing state match corrected to show local match - Anticipated project schedule updated. This project is associated with the South Street Project (Project ID 14837) and updates to funding reflect shifts of earmarked funds between projects.

Roache explained that the proposed amendments to the projects in the Nashua region are necessary to ensure that the TIP and STIP reflect the anticipated project schedule and estimate while maintaining fiscal constraint. He added that NRPC, in consultation with NH DOT, NH DES, US EPA, FHWA, FTA, and the other NH MPOs, has

confirmed that the proposed changes made by STIP Amendment 3 trigger a new conformity determination of the SE NH 8-hour Ozone Nonattainment Area and that the Nashua Metropolitan Area Air Quality Conformity Analysis (2011 – 2035), adopted June 15, 2011, continues to be valid. Lastly, NRPC placed a legal notice in the Nashua Telegraph. No comments were received during the 30-day public comment period. NRPC reviewed the amendment with NH DOT, NH DES, US EPA, FHWA, FTA and representatives of the MPOs, and TTAC. The TTAC carefully considered the proposed amendments to the projects contained in Amendment #3 at the September 14th meeting and recommended approval by the NRPC Commission at the September 21st meeting.

Schneiderman asked what the downside was if we fail to show constraint. Roache said that Federal Funding can't be used to move the project forward.

Langdell asked if the Brookline project was a Safe Routes to School Project. Roache answered that it was a Transportation Improvements (TE) project.

Tabacsko asked if the projects in STIP A3 would have to be re-engineered to 20% less in the scope of work. Roache said that something will have to be scaled back in the project.

Langdell asked about the cycle of the Amendments so far and if we would expect more. Roache answered that there would probably be 1 more STIP Amendment in the 4th quarter.

Chairman Langdell opened the Public Hearing for STIP Amendment #3 at 7:16pm.

There were no public present that wished to comment.

Chairman Langdell closed the Public Hearing for STIP Amendment #3 at 7:17pm.

Roache said that he was looking for a motion for approval of STIP Amendment #3. It was moved by Tabacsko and seconded by Maddox:

THAT STIP Amendment #3 to the adopted 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) be approved.

The motion **carried**.

Presentation: Steve Norton, Executive Director, NH Center for Public Policy Studies

Diers introduced Steve Norton, Executive Director for the NH Center for Public Policy Studies who would be providing a presentation on "Public Policy in NH – A Regional Approach". Norton gave a brief background on himself and pointed out that the NH Center for Public Policy also produced a report called "What is NH?" Norton proceeded with the presentation addressing questions as they were asked. The presentation can be viewed at the NH Center for Public Policy website by clicking on this link: http://www.nhpolicy.org/reports/nashua_regional_planning_commission_92211_v2.pps. In addition, the report titled "What is NH?" is available at this link: http://nhpolicy.org/reports/winh_for_web.pdf.

10 Year Plan Update

Roache first asked the group if they were familiar with the Ten Year Plan (TYP) and explained that per New Hampshire RSA 228:99 and RSA 240 the NHDOT is required to develop a Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan that identifies and prioritizes the critical transportation needs in NH. The TYP process applies an incremental approach to project programming that allows future year projects to be reaffirmed and prioritized in the biennial updates of the TYP. On September 6, 2011 the Draft 2013 -2022 Ten Year Plan was released by the NHDOT. This draft plan contains the priority projects that are critical to the maintenance and operation of the transportation system over the next ten years and can be completed based on the anticipated available revenue. Expansion of the system is not a priority under this draft plan, instead system preservation and maintenance is the priority.

Roache added that a big part of the problem has stemmed from the recession and slow economic recovery and at the state level, the sun-setting of the \$30 vehicle registration fee and the flat gas tax rate of \$0.18 per gallon that has greatly impacted the state revenue available to match federal funding available to New Hampshire. This has forced the NHDOT to a long term reliance on toll credits as opposed to cash match. The use of Toll Credits effectively reduces the total cash available to a project by twenty percent.

In addition, at the federal level the Highway Trust Fund cannot support the current spending level without infusions of additional funds. As the reauthorization of the SAFETEA-LU is currently being debated by congress there are competing reauthorization/continuing resolution proposals which will greatly influence the available federal revenue available to New Hampshire.

In developing the Draft 2013-2022 Ten Year Plan, the NHDOT assumed that funding levels associated with a continuing resolution or reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU would be limited to what the Highway Trust Fund could sustain. Therefore the NHDOT assumed a thirty three percent cut in available Federal dollars to New Hampshire resulting in no more than \$100,000,000 available. Finally, the I-93 project, currently underfunded, adds additional financial pressure to already limited resources.

Roache summarized projects included in the Draft 2013-2022 Ten Year Plan (What's in); projects deferred from the Draft 2013-2022 Ten Year Plan (What's out); and projects anticipated to be funded and under contract prior to 2013 (Funded before 2013). He also referred to the [NHDOT Ten Year Plan](#) webpage and the [NH DOT Draft 2013-2022 Ten Year Plan](#) for more information. He concluded by asking if there were any questions.

There was a question on whether the funds for rail would be redistributed to the region, state or otherwise if the Rail Plan gets killed. Roache addressed this by saying the money does not have a NH tag on it and he did not think there was \$230,000 out there to be redistributed. Chizmas pointed out that the money was from a Federal Rail Grant.

Mayville pointed out that in the old TYP, there was \$150 million per year for 10 years and in the new TYP, it is \$100 million per year for 10 years. She added that this is 1/3 less of federal funds that we normally had and that is essential to make choices on what is important. Roache said he would like to know what NHDOT's perspective on what is needed.

Mayville pointed out that funding did not get reduced for State Aid Highway & Bridge projects, but the Betterment Program (resurfacing) projects did get reduced.

Roache informed the group of the GACIT hearings schedule and the one specifically for the Nashua Region being held on September 29th at the City Hall Auditorium at 7:00pm with Executive Councilor David Wheeler.

Vear questioned what the plan was when spread out into phases, for the 101A Improvements Project, now deferred from the TYP. Chizmas summarized that in 2011-2020, 11 million was programmed for the whole project. 2012 was when construction was scheduled to start and in 2011, Engineering and ROW acquisition was scheduled. Pattison said that nothing has happen with ROW. Vear, a regular traveler along this route, was unhappy with this. Roache said that NRPC had the 101A Project as a priority. Hennessey added that lack of east/west transportation affects the property values in the towns along the 101A corridor. Langdell agreed adding that it affects the ability to bring in new business. Vear added that he has had to drastically reduce cost of properties in the towns to the west along the corridor and that in choking 101A, it chokes business to the west.

Diers said that she and Roache were available to meet and strategize testimony for the upcoming GACIT hearing in Nashua, adding that they would meet with any town to discuss impacts of the TYP.

Fimbel informed the group of his move ten years ago from the 101A corridor to Daniel Webster Highway in Merrimack and his ease of traveling to get to points west via Continental Boulevard.

Program Reports

Diers referred to the 3rd quarter NRPC Program Highlights included with the agenda packet. She added that there were additional hard copies available; an electronic version via the NRPC website; and that e-copies would be sent out the following day to City/Town contacts for distribution to elected officials. Diers, Roache & Pattison briefly summarized the projects/programs NRPC was currently focusing on which are listed below.

Roache reviewed the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) emphasizing the need to identify priorities for the plan. He tied this in with the discussions of the Ten Year Plan. Maddox asked if there was time for written comment on the TYP. Roache said comments will be received through November 10th with hearings running from September through October 27th.

Pattison reviewed the Broadband planning portion of the program while Diers reviewed the mapping aspect of the program which NRPC has been working on for the past 2 years. Pattison informed the group of the Stakeholder meeting being held on September 27th at 9:00am at the NRPC office to discuss expanding Broadband. She also asked the group for participants from their municipalities informing them that meetings would be quarterly for the next 2-3 years. Veal said he wished there was a way to access where fiber is, pointing out that Fairpoint will not give out that information. He wanted a map and was curious as to why this information is not available. Maddox asked what else would be done for communities regarding Broadband. Pattison explained that the plan is to identify what areas are not serviced, barriers in those underserved areas, and expanding service in those areas. Final outcome would be a document of the needs of the region. Diers added that this was a national effort through a federal grant.

Pattison also informed the group of NRPC Energy Technical Assistance Program that Longval was working on with representatives from all the communities to develop a regional energy cooperative to with an end goal of decreasing electricity costs. Pattison also informed the group that she would also be working on Hazard Mitigation Plan updates for Nashua and Litchfield.

Commissioner's Roundtable

The Commissioner's Roundtable was held and there was some discussion on how to handle it in the future as well as a date change discussion for the December full Commission meeting. After further discussion, it was moved by Veal and seconded by Gleason:

THAT the December full Commission meeting be held on of December 14, 2011.

The motion **carried** with 2 Nays.

Adjourn

The next NRPC Commission meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 14, 2011 at 7:00pm**. Motion to adjourn came from Baker with a second from Condra. The meeting adjourned at 8:58pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kerrie Diers, Official Recorder