


APPROVED MINUTES
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
01/11/12

Members Present:

Kyle Fox, Town of Merrimack
 Jason Hoch, Town of Litchfield
 John Cashell, Town of Hudson
 Jeff Babel, Town of Hollis
 Steve Dookran, City of Nashua
 Wayne Husband, City of Nashua

Others Present:

Paul Lockwood, NH DES
 Bill Hoke, NH DOT
 Leigh Levine, FHWA

Staff Present

Kerrie Diers, Executive Director
 Tim Roache, MPO Coordinator
 Julie Chizmas, Transportation Planner

Jen Czysz, Senior Regional Planner
 Karen Baker, Program Assistant

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Tim Roache opened the meeting at 1:06 with introductions and review of the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 9TH MEETING

Roache referred to the minutes of November 9th, included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1 and asked for a motion to approve. Hoke moved to approve November 9, 2011 minutes with a second from Fox. All were in favor with 2 abstentions from Cashell and Babel.

STIP AMENDMENT 4

Roache informed the TTAC that NRPC has received from the NH DOT Amendment #4 to the adopted 2011 – 2014 TIP and is amending the TIP to account for changes to projects within the Nashua region and to maintain consistency with the Statewide TIP (STIP). The 4 projects affected are in Nashua. Two of the projects are to remain consistent with the TYP, 1 is a new project and the last one is a CMAQ adjustment.

- Nashua – 101A Widening and improvements, Phase I, from Sunapee St. to Blackstone Dr. - NH DOT's Draft 2013 – 2022 Ten Year Plan proposes to **delay** construction beyond 2014.
- Nashua – NH 130 Broad Street reconstruction from Coburn Avenue to Coliseum Avenue, including Dublin Avenue, to provide shoulders and safety improvements - NH DOT's Draft 2013 – 2022 Ten Year Plan proposes to defer this project.
- Nashua – Transit purchase of two new CNG buses (CMAQ Program) [06-13CM] result of a reintroduction of project from the 2009 – 2012 TIP that was not implemented; scope updated but no funding revisions proposed. During the 2005-2006 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program round, funds were approved to reduce Nashua Transit Service (NTS) headways. Since the award of these funds, NTS has revised their routes resulting in improved headways system-wide, making the original project unnecessary. NTS is requesting that those previously awarded funds be used instead to purchase two Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses for use on a new fixed route in the Derry/Salem area; operating funds for the new route were approved during the 2003-2004 CMAQ round. No new funds are being requested; the funding for the buses remains at \$913,000.
- Nashua – US 3 New project for planning analyses in support of the development of a southbound off ramp on US 3 at Exit 36 in Nashua, NH/Tyngsborough, MA through the TCSP program. NRPC was awarded a TCSP grant in August 2011 for this project and to obligate those funds, the project needs to be added to the TIP with Preliminary Engineering funds of \$244,000 in FY2012

The proposed amendments to the projects in the Nashua region are primarily administrative in nature and are necessary to ensure that the TIP and STIP reflect the anticipated project schedule and maintain fiscal constraint requirements.

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 4 trigger a new conformity determination of the SE NH 8-hour Ozone Nonattainment Area. The projects triggering this new determination are outside of the NRPC region and therefore, the Nashua Metropolitan Area Air Quality Conformity Analysis (2011 – 2035), adopted June 15, 2011, continues to be valid. Revisions have been made to the air quality analyses for the Rockingham and Strafford MPO portions of the SE NH 8-hour Ozone Nonattainment Area.

Roache also informed the group that a legal notice was placed in the Nashua Telegraph, accepting public comments through Friday, January 13, 2012. As of today, no comments had been received. A Public Hearing will be held on Wednesday, January 18, 2012 at the Nashua Regional Planning Commission at 6:15 PM at the NRPC office, 9 Executive Park Drive, Suite 201, Merrimack, NH 03054. Roache said this item would require action from the TTAC to recommend approval of the proposed Amendment #4 by the NRPC Commission.

Dookran asked if the funds would be reduced or redirected for the Nashua projects. Roache did not know what would happen and explained that money that is deferred out of a project is to maintain overall fiscal constraint. He added that he thought the NH 130 project was still in the TYP but moved from 2017 to 2022. Dookran had concerns that discussion with Nashua regarding projects were still not reflected in the TYP. Husband felt there was some lack in communication. Roache was baffled some as to why the 101A project would be delayed when a Final Design has already been completed. Dookran asked what good a 7 to 8 year Final Design would be once the project comes up again. Roache said the TYP should be finalized in 6 months and there would probably be 1 more amendment.

Dookran asked what it would mean to Nashua if they did not approve this STIP A4. Roache said it is this group's responsibility to make a motion on the amendment for Commission approval. Husband had concerns with discussions the City had on compromises on Nashua projects and then to find out the NH 130 project has been moved. Dookran followed that sentiment saying that this could happen again where projects get changed or sacrificed for others. Husband motioned to NOT approve the Amendment 4 to the 2011-2014 S(TIP). Cashell seconded the motion. Further discussion ensued. Lockwood asked how this would affect the projects. Roache said it will hold up anything proposed in the amendment. Cashell said not to take it personally and referred to an older CMAQ project that funding was cut on and only half done. He added that they are just now doing the second half. Husband understood there would be cuts, felt if they should have known this previously and consequences resulting. Roache said NRPC would have someone at the Public Hearing on January 18th for an explanation and Nashua have someone at the meeting. Levine said condition for recommendation of approval pending an explanation. Gowan added there should be clarification based on the letters/discussions to/with DOT and it not reflecting in STIP A-4. Roache referred to and read from the letter sent to DOT regarding project priorities. Dookran added that the City sent a follow up letter as well which resulted in no further response. Lockwood had concerns about the NTS CMAQ CNG Bus project not happening and asked if the amendment could be partially approved. Levine said yes. Husband asked how they go about making a point. Diers said they are not disrupting the process and this is the right way to go about it. Roache added that action needs to be taken to give direction. Fox questioned if additional information could be given prior to and then voted on by email before the January 18th Public Hearing. Cashell said it deserves a full explanation. Diers said the MPO is supposed to give communities a voice. Husband withdrew his motion.

Dookran then made a motion to recommend the Commission approve all projects in the 2011-2014 STIP Amendment 4, but NOT the Nashua NH101A and NH130 projects until a full explanation to the City is provided. Cashell seconded. All were in favor.

Chizmas asked what type of explanation they were looking for. Dookran replied “why this action was taken on the Draft TYP”.

UPDATE TO THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS FOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Roache informed the TTAC that NRPC, in cooperation with the NHDOT and partner MPO’s, conducted a review of the TIP amendment process to improve efficiency and enhance public involvement. One identified opportunity is to reduce the length of the TIP amendment process which can currently take up to 90 days to complete, impacting project schedules and costs. A flexible public comment period has been proposed that would allow the MPO, in consultation with NHDOT, DES, FHWA and EPA, to recommend a length for the public comment period between 10 and 30 days, based on various factors including the magnitude of the changes being proposed, the relative sensitivity of the projects included, and any factors that require timely actions, e.g., emergency maintenance, federal funding lapses, etc. NRPC has updated the Public Involvement Process for Transportation Planning to reflect this proposed action and opened the federally required 45 day public comment period which runs through December 30. Roache informed the TTAC that they received public comments back from Peter Baker, who is also a Commissioner, and member of the Executive Committee. Comments were addressed and are provided in the table below. He added that they will be updated in the Public Involvement Process.

Section	Comment	Response/Action
Section 2.1.2 Electronic Mailing Lists:	Commenter questioned why “just placing notices on the NRPC website is not enough?”	All notices are placed on the NRPC website. The goal of electronic mailing lists is to notify decision makers of the listing and direct traffic to the website.
Section 2.1.4 Targeted Neighborhood Meetings:	Commenter supported the concept of targeted neighborhood meetings.	No action needed. NRPC will continue this practice.
Section 2.2.2 Public Workshop Meetings:	Commenter suggested changing the phrase “will be used” to “may be used”.	NRPC agrees that the phrase “may be used” is appropriate and allows more flexibility. Document will be updated to reflect this comment.
Section 2.2.4 Visualization Techniques:	Commenter questioned why visualization isn’t just part of other outreach methods.	While visualization could be considered part of other outreach methods, FHWA specifically requested that MPOs include visualization techniques as part of the process.
Section 2.2.5 Web Site and Social Media:	Commenter stated that this is the best method if it can be maintained.	NRPC agrees and is making efforts to improve the web site and increase the use of social media.
Section 2.3 List of Interested Parties:	Commenter questioned if interested and affected parties vote on the transportation planning decisions.	Voting on transportation planning issues occurs at the MPO level. The Interested parties list will include MPO members and members of the public/business community. Interested parties are encouraged to participate and testify but voting is done by MPO members.

After a brief discussion, Babel motioned to recommend to the Commission for approval the proposed changes to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission Metropolitan Planning Organization Public Involvement Process for Transportation Planning, with comments from Baker incorporated. Gowan seconded the motion. All were in favor.

There was a question on the requested digitalization. Levine pointed out it was a requirement. Roache informed the group that there would be a Public Hearing on this at the January 18th Executive Committee meeting at 6:15pm.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

Existing Conditions

Roache passed around the draft Existing Conditions chapter of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (formerly the Long Range Transportation Plan). He explained that it was a snapshot of the trends in region and would be used as a basis for the project needs and analysis for population. He added that this was a draft that would eventually be on the web and have more text as opposed to the vast amount of graphics and tables currently in the Plan. He asked for input on the formatting and said he hoped this new MTP would be a better reference and guide. Additional information on NTS, trends, Boston Express and how they are doing will come later. Chizmas added that she was still waiting on data from the Census on commuting patterns between towns within the region. Other information included in the chapter was data on land use, existing conditions of bridges in the region, corridor and turnpike trends, traffic volumes and conditions, and travel time data on congested corridors.

Cashell asked when they should expect the final. Roache said the draft needs to be done by September/October and the final at the December 2012 Commission meeting. He added that the portion on population projections that Czysz is working on should be done by February once she has received all that comments and information back from the towns. Cashell felt that growth in Southern NH is still going to continue to grow due to the huge amount of potential due to the I-93 construction and the Manchester Airport Access Road opening.

Levine asked if there was going to be a goals and objectives section. Roache said once a baseline has been identified it will be done, but closer to the end of the process. Additionally, there would be information on performance measures and performance based planning and a needs analysis. Lastly, Roache said staff would be looking at old plans to see if anything happened that was listed in the plans as well as a scenarios and objectives section in an effort to identify where or how to get the best value for your money. The hope is to have more compact realistic goals. He referred to the Seacoast who consistently identified their high priority projects year after year and now 2 of those big projects are being constructed.

STAFF AND PROJECT UPDATES

Roache passed out the updated project advertising schedule to the group. He also passed out a summary sheet of the Inter-Department Communication Governor & Council meeting held on November 30th at the Statehouse. Included with the summary was a list of Ten Year Plan Deferred Projects Prioritized to Reinstitute. Visit <http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/typ/documents/deferredlist.pdf> for a complete listing. Important items for this region are as follows:

- Commissioner Clement noted that through the initial release of the 2013 Draft Ten Year Plan and all 27 public hearings, the Department recommended a fiscally conservative and constrained plan. The plan focused on preservation and maintenance, addressing red listed bridges, addressing needs on I-93, and funding mandated federal programs.
- Motion was made and approved to add Milford Jennison Road bridge project into the Ten Year Plan in 2013 as a State Aid Bridge project.
- Motion was made and approved to add specific language to Wilton-Milford-Amherst-Bedford 13692 identifying location of work from westerly intersection of NH 101/NH101A intersection to Wilton town line. No changes to schedule or funding.

Motion to adjourn came from Husband with a second from Fox. The meeting adjourned at 1:22 pm.