



APPROVED – MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Held at the NRPC Office
9 Executive Park, Suite 201, Merrimack, NH
March 21, 2018

Members Present:

Michael Dell Orfano, Amherst	Louise Lavoie, Mason	Dan Kelly, Nashua
Susan Ruch, Amherst	Bill Boyd, Merrimack	Ernerst Jette, Nashua
Jill Adams, Brookline	Karin Elmer, Merrimack	Dave Hennessey, Pelham
Tom Rogers, Brookline	Chris Constantino, Milford	Hal Lynde, Pelham
James Battis, Hudson	Janet Langdell, Milford	Kermit Williams, Wilton
Ethan Meinhold, Hudson	George Skuse, Milford	
Kim Queenan, Litchfield	Mike Fimbel, Mont Vernon	

Others Present:

Tim White, NHDES	William Rose, NHDOT
Suzanne Fournier, Brox Environmental Citizens	Michael Croteau, Litchfield PB
Charlene Takesian, Pelham	Tim Bethke, TomTom

Staff Present:

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director	Gregg Lantos, Principal Transportation Planner/MPO Coord.
Jen Czysz, Assistant Director	Matt Waitkins, Senior Transportation Planner
Sara Siskavich, GIS Manager	Karen Baker, Program Assistant

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Ruch opened the meeting at 7:05pm and informed the Commissioners that Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja was appointed as an Executive Committee member. She continued with introductions.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

There was no public present that wished to speak.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – DECEMBER 20, 2017

Ruch asked if there were any comments on the minutes of December 20, 2017. Lynde noted some grammatical errors. After further discussion, Boyd motioned with a second from Meinhold:

THAT the minutes of December 20, 2017 be approved as amended and placed on file for audit.

The motion **carried** with 4 abstentions from Kelly, Costantino, Jette and Meinhold.

PUBLIC HEARING: AMENDMENT #4 TO THE ADOPTED NASHUA METROPOLITAN AREA 2017 – 2020 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) & 2017–2040 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP) (ACTION REQUIRED)

Minkarah summarized the DOT process and Lantos reviewed the projects in TIP Amendment #4 to the adopted Nashua Metropolitan Area 2017 – 2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He stated that NRPC is amending the TIP to account for changes to projects within the Nashua Region and to maintain consistency with the Statewide TIP (STIP). NRPC is also updating the 2017 – 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) project list and fiscal constraint analysis to maintain consistency with the amended TIP project list. NRPC staff has reviewed this amendment in consultation with the NH DOT, NH DES, US EPA, FHWA, FTA and representatives of the MPOs, and recommends approving the proposed changes in this amendment. Lantos reviewed the projects listed in STIP A4:

<u>Project</u>	<u>FY</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Project Description</u>
Boston Express 68093 C,E,M,O	2017	Other	Administrative change only - move Boston Express funding from individual projects back to statewide program category
Hudson (41754)	2019-2020	PE	CMAQ project - NH 3A southbound right turn lane
Merrimack (10136D)	2018 2019 2020	PE ROW CON	Decrease final design cost by \$990k to more realistic level. Slight decrease - inflation adjustment. Slight decrease - inflation adjustment.
Nashua (10136B)	2019	PE	NH 101A widening - decrease in funds due to final design being moved to 2021 (beyond STIP years).
Nashua (41742)	2019-2020 2020	PE CON	CMAQ project - Heritage Rail Trail east construction.
Nashua (41745)	2018	Other	CMAQ project - extend NTS service to Walmart in Amherst.
Nashua National Fish Hatchery	2020	CON	Rehabilitate entrance road.
Pelham (41751)	2019-2020 2020	PE ROW	CMAQ project - Intersection improvements at NH 128/Sherburne Rd and NH 128/NH 111A.

Lantos referred to the last CMAQ round and how all but 1 of the projects was funded and the great job that staff did with the statistics and that 1 project was funded into the STIP. Lantos also noted that NRPC placed a legal notice in the Nashua Telegraph and on the NRPC website. Public comments were accepted through March 15, 2018. The amendment is fiscally constrained and meets applicable conformity requirements. Lantos also stated that the proposed amendment was also reviewed and discussed at the March 14, 2018 Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) meeting and the TTAC unanimously passed a motion recommending Commission approval of the proposed changes in TIP Amendment 4.

7:13pm – Public Hearing Opened by Ruch

Lynde stated that the Town approved their portion of the match and asked why such a lengthy process for the Pelham project. Lantos asked Rose if he had any input on this. Rose was not aware of the specifics but noted that there the project still needed some design and the engineering should start in October. Lynde stated that they are spending resources and do not want to wait and asked that the project be expedited.

7:15pm – Public Hearing Closed by Ruch

Boyd made a motion with a second from Hennessey:

THAT the NRPC Commission approve the Nashua Metropolitan Area 2017 – 2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #4 with the caveat that Lynde’s request to expedite the Pelham project be relayed to DOT.

The motion **carried**.

AMENDED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) (ACTION REQUIRED)

Minkarah summarized the DOT process per government regulations required under 23 USC 134 and Section 5303 of the Federal Transit Act. He then passed the floor to Lantos who explained that the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) included in the agenda packet is between NHDOT, NRPC, RPC, SNHRPC and SRPC and is per Federal Certification Requirements for MPOs. Lantos added that this updated MOU is in response to a corrective action that resulted from an NRPC certification review by the FHWA and FTA in 2015 and was directed to NHDOT and the Nashua MPO with respect to Transportation Management Area (TMA) programming authority, directing that the programming of TMA-specific sub-allocated funding be compliant with Federal requirements and be incorporated into the agreement document. He noted that key elements in this updated draft include adopted safety and transit asset management performance measures and the Transportation Management Area (TMA) Programming Process for the Nashua UZA.

Lantos noted that the original plan was to develop a separate TMA programming process, through a committee representative of the Nashua UZA (So. NH MPO & the Nashua MPO). Instead, NRPC, in consultation with NHDOT and SNHPC, opted for a more streamlined process that utilizes the existing MPO structure where funds to be sub-allocated to the MPO's will be apportioned based on population and roadway mileage. The usual project selection process will be used for projects to be programmed with sub-allocated funds. In addition to programming of funds, adoption of Safety Performance Measures and Transit Asset Management Performance Measures are the other key focus. These have been previously presented to the TTAC and NRPC Commissioners and approved.

Lantos concluded and noted that this new process would have to be phased in and that this document is still a draft with one additional provision to be incorporated that would enable TMA programming of Transportation Alternatives Program funds in addition to the Surface Transportation Block Grant funds. Lantos asked Rose for clarification. Rose stated that the final piece is the funding estimate dollar amount and language from DOT. Minkarah stated that April is the target date for the final revision adoption by the Executive Committee.

There were members of the Commission that had concerns about adopting the MOU due to NHDOT handling the money. Some were under the impression that the NRPC would be handling the money. There was a question regarding the TAP funding process. Rose stated that DOT was working on the breakout of funds and would agree to go along with the statewide process using the criteria and projects selected and then have a conversation of needed. He added that the wording has to be developed by the end of May. There was a question to Rose on if this reflected the DOT process. Rose was not sure. Waitkins stated that the Performance Measures would need to be adopted by the end of May and this could be an issue. Adams wanted to know why this was not presented previously. Minkarah stated that this is coming from DOT and that approval can be done by the Executive Committee. There was concerns on how much time would be allotted for review. Rogers suggested approving the draft MOU subject to Executive Committee final adoption once the language is available from DOT. Hennessey was disappointed and said it seems we are sending all authority to DOT. Minkarah said it does when it applies to the TMA. Lantos asked Rose if it was \$200,000 per round for TAP. Rose stated that this is already the way it has been done and that sub-allocated if for \$200,000 for TAP. Williams commented about DOT managing the money and that you will get more money if you go by the process or target for TAP. Kelly asked how this is prioritized. Rose referred to the Statewide criteria and selection committee that is used. Ruch felt the Commission thought the process was going to be different but it is the recommendation by staff that the EC approve the final to keep the process moving forward. Langdell asked where the Performance Measures are spelled out in the MOU. Minkarah stated that the Performance Measures were previously adopted. The MOU is the other piece, and both will have to be incorporated and presented to the FTA. Elmer asked that page numbers be added. After further discussion, Elmer motioned with a second from Langdell:

THAT the Commission adopt the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) subject to the Executive Committee's final review and adoption once the DOT language is available.

The motion **carried**.

PRESENTATION – SARA SISKAVICH, NRPC GIS MANAGER AND JENNIFER CZYSZ, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: PLANNING FOR PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

Czyszc started off by informing the Commission that the NRPC recently completed the Parks and Playgrounds project which was funded through a grant from the HNH foundation that has funded several projects aimed at combating childhood obesity. Obesity rates have steadily increased among New Hampshire (NH) children over the last ten years. She noted that 28% of NH third grade students were either overweight or obese as cited in the NH 2013-14 Third Grade Healthy Smiles – Healthy Growth Survey compared to within the City of Nashua where 35% of third graders were overweight or obese in 2013. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, children need 60 minutes of active play time every day, but only 25 percent of children meet that standard. Kids without a park or playground in their neighborhood are 26% more likely to be obese.

Czyszc noted the challenges in the lack of resources such as data, how to guidance, funding, and volunteers. In addition, policies don't promote access to play, from lack of consideration in plan review process to "do not climb" signs and access (23% live ½ mile from community center and 65% within half mile of a park). Czyszc passed around the parks and playgrounds infographic, noting that there was demand at the municipal level to create these tools. Czyszc passed the floor to Siskavich who would be presenting information on past successes and new solutions such as inventory of assets, analysis of existing conditions, map products, planning guidebook, and case studies.

Siskavich summarized the process taken develop an inventory of the recreational assets available in the NRPC region. She noted the many sources used to gather data from: municipal recreation departments, existing GIS data layers, advisory committees, and authoritative websites and in person meetings. Siskavich informed the Commission of the mapping approach taken using polygon delineation and ESRI event layer for points to develop a data model with recreational information such as facility name, type and address, centroid coordinates, managing organization, drinking water and bathrooms, hours and operating season, and website URLs. Siskavich stated the next step was to do an analysis of the existing conditions of the recreation area using common denominators such as school playgrounds, baseball or multi-use fields and open space/trails and then identify its many unique assets. After this extensive data collection, 153 ballfields, 67 playgrounds, 8 pools, 8 beaches, 4 sledding hills, 3 rinks, 3 dog parks and 56 open space areas with trails were identified and mapped and added into NRPC's open GIS data portal. Siskavich also noted that that NRPC's standards environmental maps were also updated to include recreation. She also provided a brief demonstration on the ESRI template created Story Map of recreation areas in the region associated attributes.

Langdell asked what it would take to get everything up on the Story Map. Siskavich noted that pictures are challenging with childless staff showing up with a camera at playgrounds. She added that low or no cost amenities was a focus and they decided not to include areas of facilities that were not municipally managed. Williams commented that it looked like NRPC tried to get a good cross section. Siskavich said yes, and it is not a comprehensive list. Williams asked if there was a complete list. Siskavich said no, but it could be added to. Williams asked if Purgatory Falls was part of the list and what criteria was used to determine which areas should be included. Minkarah said low cost, public access was the criteria and information from municipalities. Ruch commented that is was a great piece of work. In response to questions from the group on whether specific recreation areas were included in the list, Siskavich said if it is municipally owned, it should be in there. Williams asked if a more comprehensive list could be posted so they could see how facilities were being marketed. Langdell referred to a school that she felt could help in expanding this. Siskavich noted that this translates really well on phones.

Czys referred to the Parks and Playgrounds Guidebook and summarized its components to renovate, create and maintain a playground through master plans, regulations and ordinances, play friendly policies. She also touched on playground funding, siting, layout and equipment, safety and maintenance as well as successful case studies.

Langdell asked if the guidebook included planning for multigenerational for all ages, noting that often, it is parents, grandparents or guardians that accompany children to playgrounds. Czys stated that it is geared for kids that would not be driving by themselves and it talks about folks bringing those kids. Fournier asked about conservation and recreational assets going together and asked for an explanation. Siskavich stated that those two datasets go together and are natural resource based and are often located alongside of these parks. There was discussion on areas that did not fit that criteria of conservation and recreation and how they are classified. Langdell noted the steps that Milford took to create a business connection between recreation and conservation areas in the town.

TRANSPORTATION PROJECT UPDATES:

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update

Lantos informed the Commission of the project solicitation for the MTP and that NRPC is starting it early to be proactive and be ready and then get back onto the 2-year cycle. He added that a memo will be sent out in the next few days with a link to the project solicitation form of which will be using the same criteria for prioritizing. Lantos noted that bridges and roads will need to be fixed and this will cost money, but there are no exact numbers or dollar amounts, just general numbers. This will have to be factored in when prioritizing our projects and some major projects may have to be moved to illustrative that have not advanced out due to funding. Minkarah informed the group of the MTP Survey is currently being shared with municipal websites and Facebook pages to help us understand how area residents and workers are using the transportation system and to get input into the preferences and priorities of the people we serve. Fimbel asked what the turnaround is. Minkarah was looking to wrap it up pretty quickly. Kelly asked what is being done with the data. Minkarah said it would be used to inform the MTP update and what we are looking to see for improvements and eventually to inform for the Ten-Year Plan. Langdell asked if TTAC would be involved in the usual manner for process and criteria. Minkarah said yes.

Nashua Transit System Expansion Feasibility Study Update

Minkarah informed the Commission about the Expansion Feasibility Study Update that NRPC is working with NTS on. Czys noted that it will include a survey that will be shared. She added that we are trying to stagger surveys. Another component will be hands on workshops along the bus routes and education on expanded transit service. Minkarah also noted that the survey will also be seeking input on the demand from residents and businesses. Langdell noted the lots of outbound from Nashua to the west for work. Czys said that will be included in the outreach and smaller group meetings.

Commuter Rail Update

Minkarah stated that the 4 Million that was set aside for the rail study was removed by the NH Legislature but then reinstated. He added that the Nashua Rail committee is still meeting. Jette asked if this group had taken a position. Minkarah said not unless it was done previously and that we did take a position on the Nashua study. Kelly commented that it is not for a study but for the EIS and engineering costs. A member commented that the Ten-Year Plan is endorsed by NRPC. Minkarah stated that he attended a hearing on this and the Senate was in favor but changed it to a bus service study and he felt there was enough interest on the House side to get it back. Jette stated that Nashua has endorsed this and are very passionate about it. He commented that Daniels, Avard and Sanborn are not in favor and encouraged the Commissioners to keep this moving along and talk to your legislators to put it back in and get back into the Senate. Jette added that is an extremely important regional thing, not just to Nashua but to the Airport as well. Jette referred to the Boston Surface Rail proposal and the limitations and associated cost of having privately funded passenger rail. He concluded that future development would benefit if commuter rail were available for all, not just the top tier. Williams was not optimistic of its changes this year. There was discussion on how to further educate people.

Langdell noted that the NHARPC can take a position and does follow but can't lobby. Kelly commented that an educational paper is needed to explain this and the 4 million needed for the track.

GENERAL UPDATES:

HHW 2018 Collection Dates

Minkarah informed the Commissioners of the 2018 Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection season that would be kicking off on Saturday, April 21st in Nashua at the Department of Public Works and there will be 5 more collections in the 2018 season with one being held in Milford in May and a Thursday collection in June.

NRPC Annual Forum

Minkarah reminded the Commissioners of NRPC's 35th Annual Forum being held the next week on March 29th at the Courtyard by Marriott in Nashua. He also noted that one more speaker Kelly Dunn from BAE has been added to the lineup of panelists for an employment perspective for the Forum.

Trainings and Workshops

Minkarah stated that NRPC has two workshops scheduled at NRPC: An Economic Development Brownbag on April 5th at Noon, and a Planning Board Basics Training on May 17th from 6-8pm.

NRPC Office Space Search

Ruch stated the NRPC lease is coming up and NRPC is working on an RFP that should be distributed next week. She added that a subcommittee has been set up and asked if there were any Commissioners are interested in being on the committee to reach out to Minkarah, Cysz or herself. Kelly asked where NRPC employees want to be. Ruch stated that surveys were sent to staff and stakeholders and those surveys are being assimilated for the RFP. Kelly asked what the results of the survey were. Minkarah explained some of the components of that were used for the questions for the survey such as: routes, commutes, attributes of the physical location and space, accessibility and accommodation of Commissioners and Staff, all of which are very important. Kelly asked if those results from the survey could be shared with the Commissioners. Minkarah said yes. Langdell asked if the final draft of the RFP could be sent to the Commissioners. Minkarah said yes.

PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHTS

Minkarah referred to the Program Highlights included in the agenda packet which provides a brief synopsis of the projects the NRPC has been working on over the last quarter.

NHDES Sourcewater Protection Grant

Minkarah explained that the NRPC will use the NHDES Local Source Water Protection Grant funds to determine improvements to local planning and emergency response protocols. Recent national events highlight the need for improved planning and emergency response to prevent large spill events that may affect drinking water quality and public health of residents within a metropolitan area. In the Nashua region there are hundreds of documented spills and releases of harmful substances, some of which are discharged into Pennichuck Brook and the Merrimack River, both primary sources of drinking water for the City of Nashua. For the purposes of this work, the study area for this project will include the following communities: Nashua, Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack, Hollis, Amherst and Milford.

COMMISSIONERS ROUNDTABLE: 8:47PM

MASON – Lavoie: At town meeting, no discussion on budget but on the 250th celebration on August 25th and associated renovations.

NHDES – White: January 2018, State designated as beneficiary for the VW Settlement to be able to utilize 31 million. Next step is mitigation fund plan on how to use the dollars. Draft will be posted on NHDES website, 5-6 meetings for input on draft. Governor's committed to 15% for EV charging infrastructure per region. No process developed yet to distribute money which is currently being held by the trustee. Estimate of 2019 for details regarding specific use of funds. Press releases will be on OSI & NHDES website. Eligible parameters are

listed on OSI site in the consent decree. Purpose is to reduce nitrogen oxygen emissions. Lynde and Kelly had questions on types of projects that would qualify. Williams asked for info to be sent to the Commissioners.

PELHAM – Lynde: Received a 1.2 million Federal grant for Shelburne and Mammoth Rd intersections which are State roads. Looking into another roundabout. Entered into a contract with NRPC for trail mapping. Takesian – First time in history for Pelham to have 2 women on the Board of Selectmen.

LITCHFIELD – Queenan: Latest ballot passed for the establishment of a Heritage Commission and Demo Ordinance and a Master Plan Chapter. Croteau – Getting bond approved for new Fire Station which is long overdue.

HUDSON – Battis: Just stepped down from Conservation Commission. \$25 million bond approved to redo Auburn School and then turned down by voters but passed funding for Lowell Road to Sagamore Bridge. Also passed was the building of restrooms on Benson’s Park.

WILTON – Williams: Town is NRPC’s best customer on a per capita basis. Both warrant Articles passed in Wilton, now only 34 remain.

MERRIMACK – Boyd: April 10th is election day. 4 people running for 3 seats. School board entered into agreement to purchase Brentwood School. State agreed to settlement with St. Gobain; Merrimack to be hooked up with Merrimack Village District for water and meeting to be held on whether the district should still stand based on the PFOA issue. Has a seat on the Drinking and Groundwater Committee; public hearing on April 18th. Website for trust fund MBTE settlement with 2 million available for applications for grants and loans for water improvement.

MILFORD – Skuse: Great voter turnout with over 1900 citizens even with the snow. 36 out of 37 warrant articles passed. Langdell – Fougere did not get select seat, Dargie won seat. Also, major Fire Station renovation passed on first vote.

BROOKLINE – Adams: Brookline redoing playground portion of ballfield, can privately fundraise and have picked a vendor. Comment on the amount of commercial vacancies and the importance of the Planning Board and Zoning Board to pay attention to ordinances created that could have an adverse effect building new vs. rehabbing. More cost effective in some cases to build new than to buildout. Rogers – Town Meeting Warrant Article for the Town to be part of the Natural River Scenic and Wild Study has unanimous support. Town Road Agent retiring, Town voted to fund a DPW Director.

MONT VERNON – Fimbel: SB2 which governs school district was done by ballot, pretty hefty increase. Heritage Commission voted in. Library is 100 years old, owned by Daland Trust on Town-owned land. Town voted to buy library and Daland Trust to build new library. Commented on the need for employers and to keep employees here.

NASHUA – Jette: Not first time on Commission. Was Chair in the 80’s and represented Merrimack. Nashua decided to buy Alec’s Shoe Store and voted to renovate and turn into a performing arts event center and to raise 4 million from private donations. Wastewater treatment funded by users so money that is raised will pay expenses, took out of budget, now two former and one aldermen sued the City. Superior Court judge ruled that it did not matter because a spending cap is illegal. Now it is being appealed by the same group. Over 1 million under spending cap if it was in effect for new budget. It is proposed to base commercial value on rental info for more accurate assessment of commercial properties.

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn came from Boyd with a second from Skuse. The meeting ended at 9:18pm. The next Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 20, 2018 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director: _____