


APPROVED MINUTES
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
12/11/13

Members Present:

Bruce Berry, Town of Amherst
 Bill Parker, Town of Milford
 Thomas Bayrd, Town of Hollis
 Jason Hoch, Town of Litchfield
 Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham
 Kyle Fox, Town of Merrimack

Wayne Husband, City of Nashua
 Stephen Dookran, City of Nashua

Others Present:

Paul Lockwood, NH DES
 Linda Dusenberry, NH DOT
 Leigh Levine, FHWA

STAFF PRESENT

Tim Roache, MPO Coordinator
 Matt Waitkins, Field Data/Transportation Planner
 Julie Chizmas, Transportation Planner

Kerrie Diers, Executive Director
 Mark Connors, Regional Planner
 Karen Baker, Program Assistant

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Tim Roache opened the meeting at 12:11 with introductions.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 13, 2013 MEETING

Roache referred to the minutes of November 13, 2013 included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1 and asked for a motion to approve. Gowan moved to approve the November 13, 2013 minutes with a second from Lockwood. All were in favor and the minutes were approved.

NH DOT PRESENTATION: STATEWIDE ITS ARCHITECTURE

Roache informed the group that guest speaker, Denise Markow from NHDOT due to present information about the ITS Statewide Architecture at the TTAC today had cancelled due to illness. He added that she would be at the January meeting to present. Roache elaborated some on the type of discussion that would ensue in regards to ITS Architecture. He informed the group that there would be certification that NRPC would have to go through going forward due to the Census designating NRPC as a TMA. He summarized the mock review process that NRPC went through in October with Levine and representatives from FTA, DOT, MA DOT & Federal Highway. Roache summarized the agenda approach that NRPC took as opposed to the traditional Power Point presentation. He added that Chizmas was in attendance and provided a trigger finger to navigate through NRPC's website to provide the information requested. Levine commented that he felt the mock review went well and a joint draft report will be available hopefully by December. Levine added that this is a 4 year cycle for certifications and that the real review will come next fiscal Federal year. Roache added that in the future the TMA Reviews will be noticed and TTAC & Commissioners will be invited. Roache said there were no issues in relation to compliance at the mock review.

STAFF AND PROJECT UPDATES***Amherst Street Traffic Study Draft Results***

Chizmas explained that in May of this year the Town of Amherst asked the NRPC about doing a traffic study on Middle Street in the Village Green area due to complaints to the Selectmen that speed of traffic on Middle St was a problem and it was being used as a cut through and avoiding coming to complete stops. The purpose of the study was to see if closing Middle Street would alleviate this. Since NRPC had recently purchased Synchro Traffic Analyzing software, a pilot study could be done. She explained the area as single family residential with Town offices at east end of Green and the School Administrative offices on Middle St. In addition, there is a market and church in the area of the study with sidewalks throughout. Chizmas informed the group that about a month after school started, directional tube counts were done as well turning movement counts in the study area. Results from this showed that Middle Street's peaks were during AM school and evening commuter traffic with less traffic in the afternoon. Boston Post Road and Amherst Street had almost the same volumes and peak

times. Results from the study showed that the majority of traffic was at or below speed limit on Middle St and above the speed limit on Boston Post Road at all count sites conducted in the morning. Other information gathered from the data was:

- All stop controlled intersections were at a Level of Service (LOS) A;
- The signalized intersection at Boston Post and Amherst St was at a LOS B;
- Most of 'truck traffic' on Boston Post Road was in the morning due to school buses;
- There was heavy pedestrian activity around the Market;
- School walkers accounted for most of pedestrian traffic during morning peak; and
- Non-school related walking observed more in the afternoon.

The purpose of the study was to assess the needs of the area and to determine if closing Middle Street would alleviate the traffic issues. Using the posted speed limit and putting the data collected into the Synchro software and moving the through traffic on Middle St over to Boston Post Road yielded no results in the LOS and only showed slight increases in delay. Chizmas asked if there were any questions or comments.

Husband commented that a rule of thumb of 10 miles per hour used for speeding during non-peak times is what they have used in Nashua with the police department when there are concerns with speeding. He added that in most cases they find most are not speeding. Berry felt the exercise was good and that problems at Amherst if Middle were closed could regenerate elsewhere. Chizmas had concerns with that due to the fact that Amherst PD and FD use the road as a cutover. Next steps would be presentation to the Amherst BOS and the decision on whether to have a warrant article for town meeting. Chizmas asked if there were any other suggestions. Husband suggested re-looking at the speed at 85% and show traffic simulation. Berry referred to future construction in the area that is scheduled and that it would be handy to have Middle Street as diversion during this construction. He added that he has a memo drafted and that should they choose to close Middle Street, that they avoid doing it before the upcoming construction projects. Dookran suggested thinking about the long term needs in regards to ROW and getting it back. Waitkins referred future construction and implementation of improved sidewalks that came out of the SRTS Plan.

Gowan questioned using Synchro for analyzing the Pelham roundabouts before and after construction. Chizmas provided an example using Synchro of the delay with a roundabout vs not having one at a problem intersection. The delay went from a 41.9 second delay to a 4.5 second delay with the roundabout. Roache commented that this is a small example of what we can do for our municipalities. Roache referred to the signal optimization that was in the last amendment and was looking for feedback on what folks hope to see with optimization weekday vs. weekend and peak times. He added that 101A Merrimack west to Milford town line is the focus. Husband suggested working with the bordering towns and tying in with their system when possible as Nashua has done before as part of a CMAQ project. Husband added that in Nashua, Main Street is a top priority for him. Parker asked the focus could be extended into Milford. Chizmas said that it could be doable. Levine asked about the ITS Architecture and tying in with other towns for signalization. Chizmas said she heard that it was better than it used to be. Chizmas mentioned other intersections that were on the list for optimization. Berry questioned Amherst signals along the Merrimack 101A corridor which is the focus for optimization, and if DOT maintained, why he pays the electric bill on them. It was unclear who maintains the signals.

Final Outline for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Roache provided copies of the final MTP Chapter Outline which will also tie in with the GSF Regional Plan. Roache reviewed with the group noting that there were no huge changes and that the Existing Conditions chapter would be slightly different. The Future Conditions chapter would rely on the models. He explained that the 4 goals outlined last year would also be included using the "what was heard" from the transportation workshops with the hope of using a case study for one of the goals. To wrap up everything, there will be a conclusions and recommendations chapter. Roache added that federal requirements will be in the implementation section. The effort is to remain consistent.

Roache referred to the Monopoly money exercise that was held at the November 18th Transportation Workshop where each participant was given \$100 transportation dollars and asked to prioritize the money across 5 categories: Build new roads and bridges; Fix the existing roads and bridges; Maintain and expand regional transit service; Intercity bus and rail service; and Pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Dollars were tallied by category and compared to the funding distribution in the current MTP. The results showed that the current plan is heavily weighted towards the construction of new facilities while the opinion of the public suggests a more balanced approach to transportation investment. Diers referred to the UNH survey and the data collected from the region and how it compared. Roache added that there was a little more science behind the UNH survey. Roache asked the TTAC to provide input on the chapters as they are drafted. Diers informed the group that all 5 outlines for the Regional Plan would be posted online and that anyone who wishes to provide input to please do so. The hope was to have a full draft by June with adoption by the September or December.

Highway Fatalities

Mark Connors provided a brief overview of traffic fatalities in the state and region so far in 2013. He noted that there had been 11 fatalities in the region so far in 2013 occurring in the City of Nashua and the towns of Amherst, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield and Mont Vernon. Of the 11 fatalities, seven were in motor vehicles, three were pedestrians or bicyclists and one was riding a motorcycle. He noted that New Hampshire had already experienced 127 fatalities so far in 2013, which was above year-end levels in 2011 and 2012. Levine, from FHWA, noted that reducing traffic fatalities is a performance measure many MPOs are evaluated on. Chizmas added that part of the Highway Safety Improvement Program, of which she is a representative on the committee, is to reduce the number of fatalities.

Chizmas pointed out the Advertising schedule included in the agenda packet.

Dookran motioned to adjourn with a second from Gowan. The meeting ended at 1:25 pm.