


NRPC APPROVED MINUTES
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
February 12, 2020

Members Present:

Tad Putney, Town of Brookline Todd Croteau, Town of Hollis Mark Chamberlain, Town of Lyndeborough Dawn Tuomala, Town of Merrimack Julie Chizmas, City of Nashua Wayne Husband, City of Nashua	Peter Kohalmi, City of Nashua Sarah Marchant, City of Nashua Daniel Hudson, City of Nashua Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham Brian Adams, Town of Wilton
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Others Present

Karin Elmer, Commissioner – Town of Merrimack Jennifer Reczek, NH DOT Linda Dusenberry, NH DOT	Pete Stamnas, NH DOT Leigh Levine, FHWA Richard Barry, State Rep/Merrimack
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STAFF PRESENT

Gregg Lantos, MPO Coordinator Matt Waitkins, Senior Transportation Planner	Jay Minkarah, Executive Director Derek Stahl, Planning Technician Sara Siskavich, Assistant Director
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CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Lantos called the meeting to order at 12:08 pm with a round of introductions.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 8TH, 2020 MEETING

Lantos referred to the minutes of January 8th, 2020 included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1. Levine referred to the FHWA updates and noted that full funding should be available for the “Obligational” Authority rather than Operational.

Gowan motioned with a second from Chamberlain to approve the minutes from the January 8th, 2020 meeting. All were in favor and the motion passed.

FY 2019 – 2022 TIP AMENDMENT 3

Reczek presented the proposed changes to the scope of the Merrimack Project 10136D, 101A improvements from Boston Post Rd to Continental Blvd, which is included in the Tip Amendment 3. The revised scope includes capacity and safety improvements at the intersection of NH 101A/Continental Blvd by adding a 3rd lane. The Boston Post Rd/Craftsman Ln intersection will include safety improvements but will remain two lanes and not address the capacity issues at Boston Post Rd. Reczek stated that the reduced alternative addresses improvements needed while also incorporating the concerns of the abutter. Boston Post Rd intersection will see minimal improvements; however, the Continental Blvd intersection will see same improvements as the original full build.

Minkarah asked for a summary of the abutter’s concerns. Reczek summarized concerns which included:

- Sidewalks and length of crosswalks
- Stormwater treatment not being required

- Blasting disrupting business operations
- Would damage ground water
- Communication lines interrupted affecting business
- Snow Storing Issues
- Use of Right of Way
- Adding lane would cause traffic backups during construction and limit emergency vehicle access

Husband expressed concern that the addition of an eastbound travel lane was eliminated from the current scope of work based on one property owners' concerns. If the property is sold to a future property owner who does not share these concerns, the eastbound travel lane is lost based on concerns that no longer exist. Reczek stated that the project won't be ruled out in the future and that the design would still be there to complete the full build. She mentions that the additional EB lane would most likely have to be a future standalone project.

Chizmas commented that the City of Nashua has many abutters for their 101A project and expressed concern that one abutter was able to have this much impact and cause this amount of change to the scope of work and the possibility of this setting a precedent for their future project.

Lantos stated that the 10 year plan is at mid-point of a political process to complete but that he didn't believe that it's best to enact the project change through a STIP amendment while the TYP process is in midstream. Reczek responded and said that it needed to be up to date in the STIP to be on schedule and on time for the advertising period.

Stamnas stated that generally changes to the scope of work for a project are not made using the legislative process in the 10 year plan. Minkarah responded saying that this project was modified through the GACIT process. Elmer asked for clarification of the possibility of adding the EB lane, that has been removed from this project, to the Nashua project. Reczek stated that it would likely have to be a separate standalone project. Chizmas expressed the need to discuss these changes with other communities that were not present because 101A is a major roadway and the proposed modifications would impact the whole region. Chamberlain added that people throughout the region, not just in Merrimack, use that corridor and the congestion wastes resources, time, etc.

Putney asked what improvements were being seen with the proposed modifications. Reczek stated that there is not much change being seen through the Boston Post Rd intersection with the AM Peak delay reducing from 114.5 to 101.8 seconds with the modified scope. The Continental Blvd intersection AM Peak is projected to reduce from a 99.1 to 34.2 seconds. Husband added that what you've seen is what your going to get referring to the lack of improvements being made at the Boston Post Rd Intersection and stated that significant modifications were needed.

Rep. Barry asked where we were at in the process, whether this was time for decision making or to give opinions and input. Reczek responded that at this point it is pretty much out of DOT's hands in terms of how much they can do. Lantos responded saying that the TTAC group gives a recommendation to the MPO to either adopt or not adopt the amendment. Husband questioned whether it was possible to recommend changes but with a stipulation to change back to the original scope. Putney asked what would happen if we recommended not to accept changes and continued to suggest that the vote should be no because the situation seems political. Stamnas stated that if the recommendation was no, that it would push back the project and it could potentially be pulled in the future. Levine asked what the MPO's procedures were and was unsure whether it was possible to approve an amendment and with one project removed. Julie recalled one circumstance relating to the Merrimack tolls where an amendment was approved with one project change removed. Lantos recommended to approve the amendment with protest to the 101A project change and to utilize the legislative phase of the TYP to restore the full project. Stamnas added that the public hearing would be the best time to give input on the project

modifications. Tuomala stated that she would like to see the whole project completed, however, would rather see some improvements rather than nothing. Chizmas expressed the need for more data and information of the effects of these modifications.

Hudson noted that the budget with the given modifications did not change and asked if the project were to go back to the original scope if the budget would increase. Reczek responded that it would. Elmer stated that she had a problem with one abutter being able to make this change as well as the fact that the public does not have a say in this.

Marchant motioned with a second from Gowan, that NRPC write a letter to the public works committee expressing that we need more time to discuss with our communities and to restore the full build. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Tuomala motioned with a second from Gowan to approve the amendments with the recommendation to change the Merrimack project back to its original scope. Putney opposed, all else were in favor and the motion passed.

SUMMARY OF NH RPC DIRECTORS' MEETING

Minkarah stated that they are still waiting on the Ten Year Plan to reach legislature. He noted that they have front loaded the budgeting on bridge improvements due to inflation. Minkarah also stated that we accumulated more toll credits than we needed and there was a proposal for a way in which to sell the excess toll credits to other communities or states in need generating a new source of income for the state.

Lantos summarized the recent LPA Brainstorming session with RPC's and municipalities at NHDOT:

- DOT recommends on-call consultants for towns. Even if projects moved back in the TYP, towns should move ahead with engineering as projects may be advanced if progress is made. Towns have not been hitting the mark for advertising projects.
- Consultant said that DOT review process holds up projects sometimes – can take much longer than 30-day target. SHPO sometimes requires extensive studies, even when it is known there are no historic impacts.
- Have been complaints on length of training for LPA certification- now down to one day with re-certification on their own.
- Need to streamline process as it can become unaffordable for communities. Estimated \$300k in Exeter rose to \$800k.
- Nate Miller said in VT they do second level of training for larger towns they are then given more control, less review. NHDOT said there is risk in this.
- NHDOT said 75% of towns not sending in monthly invoices & progress reports and are not meeting performance targets.

Lantos also mentioned that the Transportation Planners Collaborative will be relaunching.

NHDOT, NHDES, FHWA UPDATES

There were no updates given.

ADJOURN

Gowan motioned with a second from Chamberlain to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 1:39pm.