


**NRPC APPROVED MINUTES**  
**NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**Members Present:**

Natasha Kypfer, Town of Amherst Tad Putney, Town of Brookline Joan Cudworth, Town of Hollis Brian Groth, Town of Hudson Elvis Dhima, Town of Hudson Don Kirkland, Town of Hudson Leigh Levine, FHWA Mark Chamberlain, Town of Lyndeborough Dawn Tuomala, Town of Merrimack Lincoln Daley, Town of Milford	Camille Correa, NTS John Savage, NTS Wayne Husband, City of Nashua Matt Sullivan, City of Nashua Julie Chizmas, City of Nashua Pete Kohalmi, City of Nashua Kimberly Rummo, NHDOT Tim White, NHDES Peter Howd, Town of Wilton
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**Others Present**

Leah Sirmin, FTA Marty Jack, Representative	Wendy Hunt – Greater Nashua Chamber of Commerce
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**STAFF PRESENT**

Gregg Lantos, MPO Coordinator Jay Minkarah, Executive Director Caleb Cheng, Regional Planner III	Matt Waitkins, Senior Transportation Planner Derek Stahl, Transportation Planner Mason Twombly, Regional-Environmental Planner
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**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Lantos called the meeting to order at 12:06 pm and went the roll call of attendees by community/organization. The protocol for participation in the virtual meeting was presented.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2021 MEETING**

Lantos referred to the minutes from the June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1.

***Chamberlain motioned to approve the minutes with a second from Husband. Putney and Correa abstained and all else were in favor. The minutes were approved.***

**CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS DRAFT REPORT PRESENTATION**

Lantos began the presentation by stating the goals that the staff has developed to help accomplish the main objectives of the CMP. Goal #1 is to reduce the transportation network congestion and improve efficiency. This relates to areas where Level of Service grades are equal to a D or lower. Goal #2 is to increase mobility for alternative modes of transportation. This includes the completion of the Bike/Ped Plan update, as well as increased mode share for NTS and efforts to fill accessibility gaps referring to transit last mile connections. Goal #3 is to improve safety performance. This involves the reduction in vehicle crashes, provide adequate facilities for bicyclists, and improve Level of Stress ratings. The CMP toolbox includes strategies the help reduce congestion on the roadways. Within the CMP toolbox there are Highway Physical Improvements, Transit Strategies, Bike/Ped Improvements, Transportation System Management Operations, Transportation Demand Management programs, and Access Management. Lantos began summarizing the congestion measures in the region starting

with looking at the traffic volume trends. For the multimodal performance measures, Lantos pointed out that there are many stagnant or decreasing traffic trends throughout the highways in our region, however, there are certain areas in which have seen significant growth. One area that has seen growth is on the Turnpike in Merrimack which is why NRPC is currently conducting the FEET Exit 12 Study. The most significant decreasing trend occurs on Main St in Nashua which has been reducing at about 3% per year. Along with traffic count trends, Travel Time Index (TTI) can also be used to assess congestion. The TTI is calculated by taking the average travel time divided by the free flow travel time. The results of this analysis found there are only a few roads within the region which have congestions issues which includes the FEET in Merrimack, NH 101A in Nashua, and NH 111A in Nashua/Hudson. Lantos stated that he used the NPMRDS data to calculate these values. Level of Service (LOS) values were calculated for arterials and intersections to determine the congestion throughout the CMP Network. Any road that received a LOS score of E or F is considered unacceptable although there are certain locations which currently have projects that are planned to be completed in the future to address these issues. Waitkins began an overview of the bicycle level of stress (LTS) values throughout the CMP Network. He explained that LTS 1 and 2 are suitable/comfortable for most riders while LTS scores of 3 or 4 are the roads in which only more advanced riders will feel comfortable. The factors that are considered into these scores include vehicle traffic, number of lanes, paved shoulder width, bike lane present, traffic volumes, and vehicle speeds. Minkarah noted that this evaluation was done using posted speeds. Lantos discussed the NTS Capacity Utilization by route and referred to the table in the presentation. It can be found that generally most routes are not very congested during peak hours. Savage stated that bus routes 6/6A and 2/2A ridership has bounced back closer to pre-pandemic times. These routes also have the highest level of congestions and on time performance challenges. Savage also pointed out that there are 5 routes that are currently listed in the table that are not currently offered anymore. Many of the congestion mitigation strategies can be in projects currently in the TYP or MTP. One example is for the turnpike, which includes projects like the widening to continuous 3-lane section north of Exit 7, All Electronic Tolling at the Bedford Mainline Toll, the reconfiguration of the Exit 5e interchange, and evaluation for the need of a full interchange at Exit 12. Additionally, NH 101 includes the implementation of a safety program proposed by NHDOT and to investigate potential corridor segments for non-motorized path. Another example is for US 3, safety and capacity improvements to be made to Wire Rd intersection, improvements to facilitate bicycle and pedestrian access and seeking funding to extend NTS service along corridor. Lastly, NH 3A includes continued use and maintenance of the Hudson traffic signal management system, constructing a third southbound right turn lane from Wason Rd to Sagamore Bridge Rd, and to seek funding to extend NTS service along corridor. Similar projects can be found throughout the CMP Network. Husband asked Lantos if it were possible to submit projects strictly to collect data and create operation/phasing planning. Lantos responded that would be suitable for a CMAQ project. Husband also questioned whether the Exit 5E project was now included in the CMP. Lantos answered that since it has to do with a safety improvement to the exit it is in the CMP. Savage also noted that the route to Walmart is set for funding for the next 18 months – 2 years but will have to seek additional funding after that timeframe. Husbands also stated that funding from the East Spit Brook Rd developer is available to be used to address DW Highway signal management. Rummo stated that if there were any questions regarding CMAQ projects to reach out to her and she would look into them. Lantos stated that NRPC has already received comments from FHWA which were extensive. In response to this, the timeline for the MPO to approve this document will be pushed back from September to December.

#### **CAPITOL CORRIDOR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PHASE UPDATE**

Minkarah stated that this project is a direct result of the 2014 study for transit connections from Nashua to Boston. Currently, an extension of the MBTA Lowell service to Nashua is what is being evaluated. This extension would include a total of 34 trains per day to Nashua as well as 16 trains per day that would continue to Manchester. The project is currently in the project development phase, a 2-year process which began in January of this year. There are 4 potential stops which include a stop in South Nashua, at Crown St in Nashua, a stop in Bedford to allow shuttles to the airport, and a stop in downtown Manchester. The main objectives of this phase of the project are to provide alternative to congestion on I-93/Rt 3, improve bi-directional access to jobs and housing, and most

notably complete 30% of the design for the 30-mile extension which allows DOT to perform an environmental assessment and provide detailed and sustainable financial plan. Chizmas pointed out that an objective is to provide an alternative to congestion, even though most of the congestion mitigation is happening in Massachusetts, should this project be included in the CMP? Lantos stated that it is seen as a possible strategy for the long term but most of the traffic being alleviated is in Massachusetts. Husbands asked if private party funding would be acceptable or considered for this project? Minkarah stated that everything is on the table and reiterated that there are no existing buckets of money for funding so new buckets will have to be found for additional funding. Minkarah stated that there are 2 sites proposed for the South Nashua location which are the Pheasant Lane Mall and the Spit Brook Rd station. He also pointed out that the proposed Bedford location is just north of the Merrimack town line and that that would likely be the preferred station for residents of Merrimack. The project development phase should conclude around January 2023. Kohalmi asked if there would be a stop at the Manchester Airport to which Minkarah responded yes, the Bedford station would serve as the Manchester Airport station and would likely include a shuttle service from the station to the airport. Jack stated that the timeline shows that the decision on the locally preferred alternative for the Nashua station should be decided this month and asked if this was correct and who would make this decision. Minkarah stated that it would be a decision made by NHDOT along with support/input from stakeholders and that it should be decided within the month.

### **GACIT 2023-2032 TYP OVERVIEW**

Lantos started by discussing the COVID-19 impacts to collected revenues from tolls and that it is estimated that there will be a \$9M per year revenue loss in the draft TYP years. On the federal level, Lantos points out that the reauthorization is in process and looks like the Senate EPW funding level will be about 22% higher and the House funding level will be about 50% higher. Additionally, significant increases in transit funding can be expected as well. Current state funding impacts include reductions to turnpike, betterment, and SB367 revenue. Currently, \$41M in federal stimulus funds is used to balance the highway fund and \$5M in general funds were added to Betterment in CY 2022. The next step in the TYP process is the second meeting which takes place on September 1<sup>st</sup> and it is at that time that the TYP will be released. Following the next meeting, there will be public hearings in September and October. In November, additional GACIT meetings and revisions will be made before sending it to the Governor for review and revisions. It can then be expected that the Governor's draft TYP transmittal to Legislature will take place in January 2022 with revisions continuing through May 2022. The final TYP will be adopted into law by June 2022. The proposed draft TYP strategies include a focus on maintenance and preservation of the existing network of roads and bridges, investments in core system programs and build on successes in road and bridge conditions statewide, and federal re-authorization (assume additional funds). Lantos stated that there is \$15.1M per year available for individual construction projects that expand active transportation opportunities which could include complete streets, multi-use paths, pedestrian/bike bridges, new sidewalks, expanded shoulders, etc. Minkarah pointed out that the active transportation funding relates to specific individual projects and that NHDOT is integrating multimodal transportation in all projects where applicable. The status of current TYP projects are that 75% are on track, 4% are advanced, 21% delayed, and 1% have been withdrawn. The current transit funding is equal to a total of \$312M (\$31.2M per year) which cannot be transferred to other uses. Chizmas stated that \$13.4 M in TAP funds is a pretty significant increase and if Lantos has heard anything more on this. Lantos responded that he had heard there would be an increase and that he's hopeful additional projects that were submitted will be funded.

### **NHDOT, NHDES, FHWA UPDATES**

**Municipal – Nashua** – Nashua DPW received STEP grant from FHWA and were awarded \$452,000 in funding to make safety improvements to mid-block crossings in the downtown Nashua area. Lantos asked Chizmas about traffic counts for current TAP project on Whitney and Lock St. She responded that they would need ATR and TMC counts at multiple locations for this project to help alleviate cost. Chizmas also stated that the contract is currently not in place yet and is being reviewed by Tom Jameison so they are waiting for the approval to move forward.

**NHDOT – No Updates**

**DES** – Upcoming funding round for the State Clean Diesel program will take place on or around October 1<sup>st</sup>. New FY 2021 contract will provide DES with \$850,000 for available funding but more information on this will be available as we get closer to October 1<sup>st</sup>. Lastly, DES has been appointed as the new state leading agency for the Volkswagon settlements.

**FHWA** – Tuesday’s vote from the Senate to approve the infrastructure bill. Once more information is available on what this means for New Hampshire Levine will provide more updates. Lastly, Levine thanked Lantos for the CMP demonstration and stated if he wanted to talk it over with FHWA subject matter experts to provide any more information/clarification on the comments that were made.

**ADJOURN**

*Chamberlain motioned with a second from Chizmas to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor.*

*The meeting adjourned at 1:32 pm.*