



**APPROVED MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Executive Committee
February 19, 2020**

Members Present	Members Absent	Staff Present	Others Present
Karin Elmer, Chair Jim Battis, Vice Chair Susan Ruch, Treasurer Sarah Marchant Tamara Sorell Janet Langdell	Tim Tenhave	Jay Minkarah, Executive Director Sara Siskavich, Assistant Director Gregg Lantos, MPO Coordinator	Julie Chizmas

1. Call to Order

Elmer called the Executive Committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Business

a. Public Hearing: Approval of FY 2019 – 2022 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #3/Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update

With a motion from Ruch, seconded by Marchant, Elmer opened the public hearing at 6:02 by unanimous vote.

Lantos and Minkarah began the hearing by reviewing the proposed TIP amendment 3/MTP as detailed in the Executive Committee agenda packet. There is a major change in scope proposed for Project 10136D in Merrimack. The previous scope includes widening NH 101A between Boston Post Road and Continental to 3 east-bound lanes as well as intersection improvements; the proposed change eliminates the widening. Lantos reviewed the outcomes and recommendations of the February 12, 2020 Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) meeting as detailed in a memo from Lantos included in the packet. The TTAC recommendations to the MPO are summarized as follows:

- Recommend that the MPO draft a letter to the House of Representatives Public Works Committee requesting that the project be restored to its original scope including the additional eastbound lane between Boston Post Road and Continental Boulevard, stressing that all of the region’s communities approved the original project scope, that our communities need more

time to review the proposed changes with their constituents and that a single abutter should not have veto power over the project. The motion passed unanimously.

- Approve STIP Amendment 3 and amend the NRPC TIP accordingly, with the recommendation that action be taken to restore the original project scope for 10136D through the legislature.

Minkarah circulated a copy of an email dated February 19, 2020 from Bill Watson, NHDOT, with reactions and corrections to Lantos's memo on the TTAC meeting.

Marchant discussed her outreach to two members of the New Hampshire House Public Works and Highways Committee, Sue Newman and Marty Jack. They are interested in hearing community feedback. Marchant suggested this should be gathered by NRPC and provided by the March 15 crossover.

Julie Chizmas introduced herself as a resident of 9 Cobblestone Place, Merrimack. She was also a former transportation planner at the Nashua Regional Planning Commission. Ms. Chizmas has been following this project for a long time. She pointed out that its inception dates to the 2002 timeframe, so almost 20 years. Since then, the need for improvement along the 101A corridor has consistently ranked high in all NRPC's near and long-term transportation plans. She noted that, as 101A is the only major east-west corridor in the region, this project also bears the federal-designation of regionally-significant.

Julie reviewed traffic volume statistics used (42,000 vehicles/day, 3000 average during peak hour) to substantiate the need for a 3rd eastbound lane, the necessity of which was confirmed through the design process at NHDOT. Substantial public input heard in project hearings in 2015 and 2018 confirmed support for the project. Following the 2018 hearing, the NH DOT Report of the Commissioner for the project indicates that all abutter concerns, including the potential impact of ledge blasting on the abutter's data center, could be successfully mitigated.

Chizmas concluded her remarks by advocating that this proposed scope change be afforded the same amount of public process as was the full-build. The project was scope was modified, but the costs remained unmodified which meant the change went unnoticed and without discussion at the Milford and Nashua GACIT meetings. If the voice of one abutter can effectively cancel out the demonstrated need for this project, what precedent does it set for other projects, particularly the one in Nashua with 75 abutters over a 1.8-mile stretch?

Discussion followed regarding the audience needing to know about the situation, including the delegation, town administrators, the Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce and others appreciative of potential economic impacts of poor level-of-service in the corridor.

The potential ramifications of not passing the amendment or passing it with an exception for this project were also discussed, particularly the potential threat of jeopardizing CMAQ funds as well as the relative unlikelihood of having the 3rd lane restored in a future project. Lantos reminded the Executive Committee that the 10-year process has yet to play out, resulting in a new STIP, and the project could still be over-written.

Hearing no further comment, Battis motioned, seconded by Ruch to close the public hearing at 6:42. The motion carried unanimously.

Marchant made a motion, seconded by Battis, to approve the FY 2019-2022 S/TIP Amendment 3 from the NH Department of Transportation and amend the TIP accordingly, and to make a recommendation that action be taken to restore the original project scope for Merrimack Project 10136D through the legislative process. The motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.

Ruch moved, with a second from Battis, to recommend that NRPC draft appropriate letters and work with New Hampshire House and Senate legislative members, including the NH Public Works Committee, in seeking to restore the project to its original scope which includes the original eastbound lane between the intersections of Boston Post Road and Route 101A and Continental Boulevard and Route 101A, stressing the regional impact of project and extensive prior public process. The motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.

b. 2020 Safety Performance Targets

Lantos reviewed 2020 regional safety targets as described in the packet memo. He recalled prior discussions regarding the adoption of “targets” based on increasing trend lines, better described as “forecasts.” Across all measures there is a slight downturn in the trend compared to 2020; while good, it is difficult to discern whether this is a true dip or a reflection of changes in the source data.

Marchant moved to adopt the 2020 Safety Performance targets, seconded by Langdell. The motion carried unanimously.

c. Minutes: December 18th, 2019 and January 15th, 2020

Elmer accepted a motion from Ruch, seconded by Langdell, to accept the Executive Committee minutes of December 18th, 2019. The motion passed unanimously.

Elmer accepted a motion from Ruch, seconded by Battis, to accept the Executive Committee minutes of January 15th, 2020. The motion passed 5-0-1 with Langdell abstaining.

d. Dec-Jan and Jan-Feb Dashboards

Minkarah: The Bar Harbor balance is down reflecting a lot of bill payments this cycle. NHDOT receivables are in, but others are still outstanding; CDs continue to grow at a modest rate. There's an uptick in staff activity relative to December. Highlights include the Northern Boston UZA meeting of MPOs, Milford Planning Board meeting to discuss potential connectivity with Amherst, the Nashua Riverfront meeting and the Mayor's meeting with Hudson to discuss Rail, both at NRPC, delivery of land use planning handbooks, and staff participation in boards and committees. Web stats are showing typical variability, and there was no newsletter that went out in January. The working budget has been adjusted to reflect a few new small projects and a refund on workman's comp premiums. P&L and Balance Sheet show little change from last month. The bottom line position is we are just about where we want to be.

Ruch made a motion to accept the January-February Dashboard and Financials and place them on file for audit, seconded by Battis. The motion passed 6-0-0.

Marchant made a motion to accept the December-January Dashboard and Financials and place them on file for audit, seconded by Ruch. The motion passed 6-0-0.

e. NRPC Operating Policies Amendments

Ruch made the following observations on the red-lined draft:

- The terms operating policy, guidelines, manual are used interchangeably and inconsistently throughout.
- Page 1: Section I.B, request we strike the language, "and in the best interest of the commission."
- Page 3: Section C: "Treasurer signs checks." This should reference the more expansive section of the role later in the policy.
- Page 5: Section II.B Banking, update to include Bar Harbor and any others.
- Page 5: Section II.C Receipt of Cash, "daily basis." Is this accurate, or should the language allow for more leeway?
- Page 9 Documentation and Payment Procedures: strike "frequent" from "frequent abuse."
- Add general language on the handling and internal controls related to electronic payments
- Verify Bank of America is still our only credit card.

Considering these requested edits, Elmer moved to postpone adoption of the Operating Policy until the next Executive Committee meeting. With a second from Marchant, the motion passed 6-0-0.

f. Audit RFP

The was consensus expressed that the draft Audit RFP looked very good, subject to modification of some dates within the document. Elmer suggested we postpone the formation of the RFP sub-committee to a later date. Battis moved to approve the Draft Audit RFP, seconded by Ruch. The motion passed 6-0-0.

g. TMA Certification Review

Minkarah and Lantos briefly summarized the draft TMA Certification Review report. There were no corrective actions with respect to the makeup of the MPO Policy Board. Lantos is scheduled to meet with FHWA to clarify and refute some of the details of the report this week.

3. Old Business

a. Annual Forum

There was a brief update and discussion on the speaker lineup for the Forum. Confirmed speakers include representatives from EforAll, the Makelt Labs, and Milford Coho. Elmer suggested Amy Labelle be invited to make opening remarks.

b. TMA/MPO Governing Body Composition

Minkarah revisited a previous summary of MPO policy board alternative structures based on our NH counterpart MPOs and nearby TMAs outside of NH. Minkarah recommends a structure and meeting procedure like Rockingham Planning Commission. Elmer suggested we present to the Full Commission a redlined version of proposed bylaw changes with an explanatory memo in March, and then plan to take a vote at the June meeting. It was noted a super-majority is needed to amend the Commission by-laws.

c. NRPC 501(c)(3)

Minkarah reviewed the proposed Articles of Agreement and bylaws of a nonprofit, the sole purpose of which would be to support the RPC through a greater pool of funding opportunities. A separate but related step would be to file for the IRS tax exemption.

Discussion followed relative to the board makeup, their terms, the overlap between the officers of the 501 and the NRPC Executive Committee, and the logistics of NRPC staff also staffing the foundation. Langdell expressed that language between the bylaws and articles be brought into greater alignment. Ruch requested clarification on the reference to Trustees in the bylaws.

4. Transportation Updates

Lantos briefly described our new emphasis on freight planning, the outlook for the 2020 traffic count program, and the plan to create our own trip generation tables.

5. Other Business:

Ruch requested we email the Full Commission alerting them to Executive Committee vacancies and circulate a brief description of the job of an Executive Committee member.

Elmer circulated the NRPC Executive Director Evaluation Policy and indicated they will be initiating this review process.

A general discussion followed regarding current personnel needs at NRPC and potential strategies to meet those needs including co-ops and AmeriCorps.

At the request of Langdell, Minkarah reviewed the planned agenda for the upcoming March meeting which will include a presentation and potential adoption of the Locally-Coordinated plan. The proposed MPO structure will be on the agenda for discussion only.

6. Adjourn

With a motion from Ruch, seconded by Marchant, Elmer closed the meeting at 7:55 after a unanimous vote.

Next Meeting: March 18, 2020