

**APPROVED – MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
December 21, 2022**

Held in-person and via Zoom, an in-person quorum was present

Members Present:

Jason Hennessey, Amherst
Will Ludt, Amherst
Danielle Pray, Amherst
Tamara Sorell, Brookline
Bob Larmouth, Hollis
Venu Rao, Hollis
James Battis, Hudson (Treasurer)
Kara Roy, Hudson
Ralph Boehm, Litchfield
Kim Queenan, Litchfield (Vice Chair) (via Zoom)

Tim Tenhave, Merrimack (Chair)
Chris Costantino, Milford (via Zoom)
Janet Langdell, Milford
Tim Berry, Mont Vernon
Camille Correa, City of Nashua
Jeff Gowan, Pelham
Dave Hennessey, Pelham
Peter Howd, Wilton (via Zoom)
William Rose, NH DOT (via Zoom)

Staff Present:

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director
Vince Noga, Transp./Planning Analyst
Camille Pattison, Assistant Director

Matt Waitkins, MPO Coordinator
Kristin Wardner, Administrative Assistant

1. Welcome and Introductions

Tim Tenhave opened the meeting at 7:09 p.m. with introductions.

2. Privilege of the Floor

No members of the public were present to speak.

3. Approval of Minutes – September 21, 2022

Jim Battis motioned, with a second from Jason Hennessey,

THAT the minutes of September 21, 2022, be approved as presented and placed on file. A roll call vote was conducted. William Rose, Bob Larmouth, Tamara Sorell, Kara Roy, Dave Hennessey, and Jeff Gowan abstained.

The motion **carried**.

4. Nominations to Nashua Regional Planning Commission Foundation Board

Jay Minkarah stated that the Commission wishes to nominate Camille Correa to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission Foundation Board as a Commissioner-at-large. The Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) arm of NRPC that was created about a year ago to pursue grants from organizations that only give grants to 501(c)(3)s and not municipal or state entities and to receive tax-deductible donations. It hasn't been active. There is a 7-member Board of Directors to include the officers of the Commission,

2 Commissioners-at-large, and 2 citizens-at-large. There is currently a vacancy for the citizen position. Correa explained her relevant background.

Jeff Gowan motioned, with a second from Danielle Pray,

THAT Camille Correa be appointed to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission Foundation Board. A roll call vote was conducted. Camille Correa abstained.

The motion **carried**.

5. Presentation – Vince Noga, Transportation Planner, NRPC Traffic Counting Program

Minkarah introduced Vince Noga, who gave a presentation on the 2022 NRPC Traffic Counting Program. He explained the process and said that traffic counts are done as an annual requirement for NH DOT and when locally requested. He explained the 2 types of counts: volume and classification, and said that the count data is sent to NH DOT and also posted on the NRPC Traffic Count Viewer: nashuarpc.org/traffic_counts. He described the equipment used for counting and explained that safety is a major consideration and showed some specific examples. In 2022, NH DOT increased the number of class counts to 30% of total counts, up from 10%. In response to Tim Berry, Noga explained they are able to use a laptop to collect data in the field. He talked about the AI-100 camera traffic counter which uses artificial intelligence to collect data and reviewed the benefits. NRPC has borrowed and tested the camera a few times. Berry asked about AI counter's accuracy for vehicle classification. Noga stated it has high accuracy, he doesn't know the exact threshold. In response to Janet Langdell, Matt Waitkins stated the cost of each unit is \$9,000 compared to \$1,500 for the standard counter.

Bob Larmouth asked about the current process. Noga explained the tubes are attached on each side of the road with clips, the tubes are then attached to the counter box and the counter secured to a structure (i.e., telephone pole or signpost). The time it takes varies but not normally longer than half hour.

Berry asked who pays NRPC to do the traffic counts. Minkarah explained the Unified Work Program (UPWP) covers the program; the UPWP is an agreement between NRPC and NH DOT on how allocated federal transportation dollars are spent. Local counts are charged to the UPWP contract under Local Planning Assistance.

Will Ludt asked about trend reports for specific locations. Noga explained there isn't one report with that information but the Traffic Count Viewer you can see the data for all previous counts at a specific location. Minkarah said communities should let NRPC know if they would like any local counts done so they can be added to the 2023 counting schedule. Dave Hennessey asked if NRPC is purchasing the new AI counters. Minkarah said the plan is to add 2 in the upcoming year and then gradually roll more out each year. Gowan asked about using police detail. Waitkins stated it had been looked at in the past, but it is cost prohibitive and there are often 3-hour minimums.

A pdf of the presentation is available here:

https://cms5.revize.com/revize/nrpc/agenda_detail_T30_R385.php

6. MPO Policy Committee

a. 2023 Highway Performance Safety Targets. Adoption of the proposed 2023 Highway Performance Safety Targets

Waitkins presented on the Highway Safety Performance (PM1) Targets. He explained that the 2016 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) final rule (23 CFR Part 924) on the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) required State DOTs and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to set targets for Safety Performance (PM1). The NRPC MPO initially adopted statewide targets for 2018 and transitioned to adopting regional targets in 2019. The targets are re-set each year and must be approved by the MPO by the end of February. He reviewed the 5 safety performance measures: Number of Fatalities, Rate of Fatalities, Number of Serious Injuries, Rate of Serious Injuries, Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Non-Motorized Serious Injuries; and stated the data sources used are the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), the State Motor Vehicle Crash Database, and the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS).

The FHWA vision is for zero fatalities on our nation's roadways, and it is the policy of the NRPC MPO to prevent traffic related deaths and significant injuries. The NRPC MPO policy is to set future year targets using the most recent five-year moving average in cases where the trend would show a higher number/rate accidents; if the trend is lower than the moving average, then the trend is the target. He reviewed the Number of Fatalities in detail. Venu Rao observed that the rate seems low for the NRPC region.

Waitkins explained the recommended target for the Number of Fatalities is 10; The recommended target for Rate of Fatalities is 0.593 fatalities per 100 million VMT; The recommended target for Number of Serious Injuries is 46; The recommended target for the Rate of Serious Injuries is 2.753 serious injuries per 100 million VMT; and the recommended target for the Number of Non-Motorized Fatal and Serious Injuries is 5.8. He pointed out that the 2023 trends are well below the 5-year moving average in 2020.

Jason Hennessey asked if there were penalties for not meeting a target. Waitkins explained there were not however the MPO's performance is assessed as part of ongoing process reviews. State DOT can be penalized by not being allowed to flex Highway Safety Performance Program (HSIP) funding, although NHDOT doesn't typically flex those funds. Langdell asked where the 5-year moving average criteria came from. Waitkins did not know but will find out.

Waitkins reviewed NRPC efforts to improve roadway safety: Road safety audits, Corridor studies, Ten Year Plan project selection process (safety is the highest weighted selection criteria), and Safe Streets & Roads for All Grant program (a joint application with NH MPOs to develop corridor safety plans).

Waitkins stated that the TTAC voted at their December 14th meeting to recommend that the Safety Performance Targets be adopted. He confirmed to that the target is a projection of the trend line analysis.

Jim Battis motioned, with a second from Tim Berry,

THAT the Nashua Regional Planning Commission and Metropolitan Planning Organization adopt the 2023 Highway Safety Performance Targets (PM1) as presented.

The motion **carried.**

b. CMAQ Project Solicitation

Waitkins reviewed that NH DOT is currently holding a round of FY2025-2028 CMAQ Funding. As part of the process, letters of intent for the following projects were submitted to NH DOT:

- Amherst – side path on Amherst Street (NH122)
- Litchfield – sidewalk on Pinecrest Road
- Milford – sidewalks on Nashua Street and Ponemah Hill Road
- Nashua – road/intersection projects to improve traffic flow (2 separate LOIs)
- Nashua – EV charging infrastructure
- NRPC – Transit – Expand NTS service along NH101A to Milford. Langdell explained this is a joint project with the Town of Milford and NTS.

Minkarah explained that the letter of intent was the first step in the process and NH DOT has vetted all the projects and deemed them eligible. Applications are due January 6th; the MPO will then rank the projects before submitting priorities to DOT. The projects would be announced later this summer and funding will be available in FY2025. William Rose confirmed that the projects would be included in the DOT's Ten Year Plan (TYP) submittal to GACIT in the summer. Minkarah that the cost of the projects submitted is about twice the CMAQ funding available. In response to Langdell, Rose stated most letters received from private businesses were for alternative fuel projects (i.e., EV charging equipment). Berry asked about public hearings for the TYP in discussion; Rose clarified that DOT provides staff support for the public hearings that are hosted by the Executive Councilors and those will start next October/November. Rose confirmed that there is a 80/20 split for project funding.

c. Transportation Project Updates

Waitkins explained that NRPC is currently updating the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which lists projects for the next 4 years. There will be a special MPO meeting required February 15th to adopt the TIP, which is a federally required document. Minkarah reminded that you cannot spend federal transportation dollars on projects not in the TIP.

7. General Updates

a. Revision of the Statement of Strategy

Minkarah stated the Statement of Strategy is out of date and needs to be updated. He then explained the process to update it will tentatively include a survey of stakeholders in February and stakeholder sessions with a facilitator from a private consulting firm in April (in-person and virtual). The intention is to provide regular updates to the full Commission with the idea of developing a new statement for adoption. Tenhave stated the document will guide the Commission with strategic goals and stated they are going to need participation from commissioners to bring it to their towns for their input. They are looking at September or December for adoption.

b. NRPC Regional Housing Needs Assessment

Minkarah stated the RHNA is still in process with not a lot to report. GACIT met today (12/21) and extended deadline to end of March 2023. He reminded that all nine of the RPCs are updating the plan simultaneously and is required under statute every 5 years. Adopting the RHNA will be an action item at the March meeting.

He stated that the NRPC website has a Housing page with information that will be updated as needed: https://www.nashuarpc.org/land_use/housing.php

8. Commissioners Roundtable

NH DOT – William Rose stated that DOT has named Bill Cass as the new commissioner; David Rodrigue has been conformed as the next Assistant Commissioner; and Alan Hanscom has been promoted to State Maintenance Engineer. The department is through 6 of the 9 project candidates of the TYP process. The DOT will be providing \$10mil to the nine RPCs for next UPWP. He stated the Statewide Corridor Study project has a new consultant working with the department to first define a corridor, then prioritize identified corridors in the state and then engage to develop more detailed corridor study for each. There is a current effort to hire a consultant to assist with developing an update to the long-range transportation plan and the new effort will be to better aligning the plan with the TYP process. The second piece of that is to update the state freight plan.

Litchfield – Kim Queenan stated the town’s CIP is completed and thanked NRPC. She stated that NRPC is also helping with updating its impact fees. There are 2 new developments with about 106 homes. Boehm stated that the state has many bills coming forward (800+).

Wilton – Peter Howd thanked NRPC for help with Wilton’s HOP grant application. It is budget season. They have a dam failing in town.

Milford – Langdell stated there are a couple of housing developments coming in (1 is 218-unit apartment building; and an old motel convert to multi-family housing). It is currently budget season. Conservation is busy to include improving rail trail (safety improvements on Armory Road).

Amherst – Will Ludt mentioned a webinar with NRPC on GIS mapping on January 24th. Pray explained although voters approved open space bond 2 years ago, nothing has been purchased. Planning Board approved 23-unit development. Had to shut down a failing bridge in town; it will be rebuilt in 2024 and a temporary bridge is being fabricated. A Planning Board case went to Supreme Court – remanded back to town. Ludt stated the town will be holding a public hearing soon for the master plan update.

Hollis – Larmouth stated the Conservation Commission acquired development rights to a large parcel (240 acres). Workforce housing construction ongoing in south end of town; he thinks it may be good to get a traffic count in that area.

Brookline – Tamara Sorell stated there is workforce housing in litigation currently and there is a proposed older person housing development before the Planning Board.

Merrimack – Tenhave stated that the town has summer camp jobs posted. They also have Public Works Director and 2 assistant director positions open. Housing developments have slowed down; there is a 100k sq. ft. warehouse being proposed.

Hudson – Kara Roy stated the Planning Board approved a conditional use permit for the Target warehouse project (formerly the Amazon project). The town received federal funding to repair Taylor Falls Bridge; she believes Nashua got matching funding also.

Mont Vernon – Tim Berry stated it is budget season in Mont Vernon.

Pelham – Dave Hennessey stated there is a 96-unit workforce housing project being planned. He said it is a tax sensitive town and are in the midst of paying for Middle School rehab project, so taxes went up. He is projecting that after April and May there will be a significant decline in construction and prices and supply will increase.

9. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Jim Battis with a second from Tim Berry, all in favor. The meeting ended at 8:54 p.m.

The next Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 15, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristin Wardner, Administrative Assistant