



MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
September 1, 2004

Members Present:

John Eresian, Chair, Hollis	Pierce Rigrod, Milford
Martin Michaelis, Amherst	Vicky Arico, Mont Vernon
Helen Fenske, Brookline	Kathy Hersh, Vice Chair, Nashua
Susan Durham, Hollis	Jean-Guy Bergeron, Pelham
Richard Maddox, Hudson	Tom Collins, Pelham
Howard Dilworth, Jr., Treasurer, Hudson	Leo Thibeault, Pelham
Suellen Seabury Quinlan, Hudson	Brian McCarthy, Nashua
Nelson Disco, Merrimack	Ram Maddali, NH DOT
Karin Elmer, Merrimack	Becky Ohler, NH DOT
Richard Roulx, Merrimack	Brad Veer, Amherst

Others Present:

Carol Murray, Commissioner, NH DOT
Jeff Brillhart, NH DOT

Staff Present:

Steve Williams, Executive Director	Shirley Vance
Ryan Friedman	Matt Waitkins
Sam Lingeman	Steve Williams

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Privilege of the Floor

There were no members of the public in attendance who wished to speak.

Introduction of New Members

The Chair welcomed new Commissioner Susan Durham from Hollis.

Approval of Minutes - June 16, 2004

It was moved by Richard Roulx, seconded by Nelson Disco:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on June 16, 2004
be approved.

Vicky Arico noted that the second part of a motion on page 4 of the June minutes should have read "The original motion *as amended* then carried with Gary Daniels and Howard Dilworth, Jr. opposed.

It was then moved by Richard Roulx, seconded by Nelson Disco:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on June 16, 2004
be approved as amended.

The motion carried unanimously.



Chairman's Report

John Eresian reported that the Executive Committee had received a letter from a Commissioner regarding the June Commission meeting. The letter expressed concern about how they thought the mood was contentious and that it had not been a productive meeting. The Chairman asked those present to contact himself, any Executive Committee member or the Executive Director if they had any concerns regarding items on the upcoming agendas or any other issue. The Nashua Regional Planning Commission should be about working together to support the common good.

Public Hearing

The Chairman introduced Carol Murray, Commissioner of DOT, along with Jeff Brillhart and Ram Maddali who were present for the public hearing regarding the NRPC Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program and the Air Quality Conformity Analysis. He then opened the Public Hearing at 7:15 PM.

Steve Williams gave a PowerPoint presentation describing the key elements the three documents under consideration. These three documents:

- establish the transportation policy for the NRPC Region;
- describe what we will do to develop all transportation modes;
- are required to be internally consistent;
- must be fiscally constrained; and
- have been developed over the course of the last two years in a process involving NRPC, the municipalities, the surrounding MPOs, the NH DOT, the Executive Council, Governor and Legislature

The 2005-2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan:

- describes the region, it's people, it's transportation systems and the needs of the region;
- provides the overall justification for the transportation projects that are proposed;
- includes summary of adopted plans for roads/highways, transit, bicycle and pedestrian; and
- includes a description of the recommended transportation projects proposed in the region.

Major projects include:

- NH 101A improvements in Nashua, Merrimack, Hollis, Amherst and Milford as identified in the corridor master plan;
- Circumferential Highway in Hudson, Litchfield, Nashua and Merrimack;
- NH 101 corridor improvements in Bedford, Amherst, Milford and Wilton;
- Lowell-Nashua Commuter Rail Extension;
- Nashua Broad Street Parkway;
- FEE Turnpike widening to 6 lanes from Exit 11 in Merrimack north through Bedford; and
- US 3 Exit 36 southbound off ramp, preliminary engineering only.

The 2005-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) describes the manner in which projects are selected for funding. It contains two lists of proposed projects:

- 2005-2007 Federal Transportation Improvement Program: This is a federally required section that must list all projects that will be carried out with federal funds in the next three fiscal years. If a project is not listed correctly in this section, it cannot be built using federal funds.
- 2008-214 NH Ten Year Transportation Plan: This section is not federally mandated, but we include it to maintain consistency with the state.



2005-2007 Transportation Improvement Program Revisions.

The DOT gave us a list of changes they requested to the TIP. These changes came late enough that staff could not incorporate them into the document that was sent out or convene a Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) meeting to provide a recommendation. Most of these changes are minor:

- Changed cost estimates
- Some projects scheduled for 2004 did not move forward and they have been moved down to 2005
- Two projects just approved this spring were added
 - ♦ Merrimack Town Center sidewalks
 - ♦ Hudson Train Depot restoration
- Two changes to major projects:
 - ♦ Aspects of the Broad Street Parkway that were scheduled for FY 04 have been delayed until 2005
 - ♦ Due to the delays from the Supreme Court decision on the Commuter Rail project, the entire project has been delayed in the program by one year. This moved initial phases to 2005 and the operating assistance to 2008

These changes are provided so that the Commission can consider them as part of the action taken. If the changes are approved, they will be incorporated into the final adopted document.

Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the Nashua Region 2005-2025

Under the Clean Air Act, we are not allowed to plan for transportation system improvements that will worsen air quality. There is a mobile source emissions budget that has been established for our air basin that specifies the maximum amount of air pollutants allowed from motor vehicles. The NRPC is required (along with the surrounding MPOs) to analyze the amount of pollutants that will result from the transportation improvements we propose to show that the level of pollutants will not exceed that budget. We also do a special analysis of carbon monoxide for Nashua because it is in maintenance status for that pollutant. The Air Quality Conformity Analysis was conducted using the NRPC Travel Demand Model and emission factors provided by NH DES. It was conducted for 2007, 2010, 2017 and 2025. NH DES has provided comments on the draft document.

Actions for Consideration

The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) has recommended the adoption of all three documents. The staff is recommending that the Commission also approve the changes to the TIP requested by NH DOT and the comments on the Air Quality Analysis provided by NH DES.

There should be three actions:

- Approval of a motion to adopt the 2005-2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan
- Approval of a motion to adopt the 2005 to 2014 Transportation Improvement Program including the changes requested by NH DOT.
- Approval of a motion to adopt the Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the Nashua Region 2005-2025 including the comments provided by NH DES.

Becky Ohler, NH DES, added that there would be some further changes to the AQ Conformity Analysis. Some of the numbers on the tables need to be adjusted to reflect correct figures. Discussion followed regarding the adoption of these documents this evening without the actual changes incorporated. If we wait for another meeting to be scheduled, it will be past the deadlines and too late to submit.

Carol Murray, Commissioner of the NH DOT, spoke about the role that the regional planning commissions have in the State. They play a critical role in the process of transportation planning.



Discussion followed. Several Commissioners had questions for Commissioner Murray. If an emergency situation arises in the state regarding road safety, there are ways to deal with it without the project being included in the TIP. The Circumferential Highway and Exit 9 are very important regional issues. The rail project has been moved, but not abandoned. The City of Nashua has been innovative and creative regarding this project and it will happen. Due to lack of funding, the Legislature has said that there will be no new projects until 2016. But the Department of Transportation does have the opportunity to shift and move projects within the plan. The State has an aging transportation system that needs maintenance, along with capital improvements. We'll get there eventually, but the Commissioner asked that we don't give up on them.

Jeff Brillhart discussed the State's Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). He stated that there are a number of unknowns regarding major transportation projects in the state at this point. The commuter rail project has a projected budget of \$70 million but the source for the match has not yet been identified. The Airport Access Road is projected at \$62 million and is ready to proceed. But property for mitigation (about 800 acres) is still needed. I-93 is scheduled to begin construction in 2005, but there may be delays. There is no federal budget until November, or possibly next year. Overall, there will be less funding for NH. He added that the NRPC region has actually done fairly well.

Leo Thibeault stated that Pelham has received outstanding support from both NRPC and NH DOT.

Further discussion was held regarding adoption of these documents. All of the projects added have been available for public review. If approval comes later, it will stall projects until final approval. The Commissioner apologized for the delay in getting DOT's information to us. It does put the RPCs in a bind to get their documents approved. In response to concerns raised about document approval before changes were incorporated and it was noted that any additional concerns or comments can be raised during the State's STIP 30 day public hearing.

The Chairman appreciated all of the concerns expressed this evening. Kathy Hersh noted that she was comfortable supporting approval. The original documents all reflect the needs of our communities.

The Chairman then closed the Public Hearing at 8:30 PM.

Consideration of Public Hearing Items

It was moved by Leo Thibeault, seconded by Suellen Seabury Quinlan:

THAT the NRPC adopt the 2005-2025 Long-Range
Transportation Plan.

The motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Kathy Hersh, seconded by Richard Roulx:

THAT the NRPC adopt the 2005-2014 Transportation
Improvement Program including the changes requested by the NH DOT.

The motion carried with 2 opposed.

It was moved by Leo Thibeault, seconded by Suellen Seabury Quinlan:

THAT the NRPC adopt the Air Quality Conformity Analysis
for the Nashua Region 2005-2025 including the comments
provided by NH DES.

The motion carried unanimously.



It was requested that the revised documents be sent to the Commissioners. The Chairman thanked Commissioner Murray, Jeff Brillhart and Ram Maddali for coming tonight. Their efforts are very much appreciated.

Steve Williams discussed a meeting he had with Commissioner Murray and Jeff Brillhart regarding the Circumferential Highway Project. He stated that the plan at this point is to release the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the project that has been developed. Public meetings will then be held in Nashua, Litchfield, Hudson and Merrimack to get public comments. An amended project needs to be identified. The NRPC, the four municipalities (Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack and Nashua) and the NH DOT will begin work on an engineering alternatives analysis next year. That document will study alternatives and identify a revised project concept.

Land use, environmental planning and transportation reports were discussed.

Regional Roundtable

A Regional Roundtable was held.

It was then moved by, Richard Roulx, seconded by Kathy Hersh:

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 9:30 PM.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Williams, Official Recorder