



**NRPC APPROVED MINUTES  
NRPC TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
12/08/10**

**Members Present:**

John Cashell, Town of Hudson  
Mark Sousa, Nashua Transit  
Louise Woodworth, Nashua Transit  
Wayne Husband, Nashua Traffic  
Steve Dookran, City of Nashua DPW

Kathy Hersh, City of Nashua  
Kyle Fox, Town of Merrimack  
Jeff Gowan, Town of Pelham  
John St. Pierre - Town of Amherst  
Bill Parker, Town of Milford

**Staff Present**

Tim Roache, MPO Coordinator  
Kerrie Diers, Executive Director  
Julie Chizmas, Transportation Planner

Karen M. Baker, Administrative Assistant  
Steve Wagner, Regional Planner

**Others Present**

Lori Lorman, Nashua Transit  
Roger Houston, City of Nashua

Mark Dixon, FHWA  
Gary Webster, Town of Hudson

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Tim Roache opened the meeting at 12:11 with introductions

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 10TH 2010 MEETING**

Roache referred to the minutes of November 10, 2010 included in the agenda packet as Attachment 1 and asked for a motion to approve. Sousa moved to approve the November 10, 2010 minutes with a second from Cashell. Roache informed that he was not at the last meeting and therefore did not call it to order. Sousa motioned to accept the minutes as amended with a second from Parker. All were in favor and the motion passed.

**NASHUA TRANSIT SYSTEMS PRESENTATION: NEW ROUTES**

Sousa explained how they try to make adjustments to their bus service in the City where necessary and this would likely be one of the last changes for a while. He commended what he called his "A-Team" for their recommendations and time consuming work that goes on months before determining what would be the best fit for a new route. Mark commented on the *Ridership Predication Model for NTS* that Steve Schaffer presented at the last TTAC meeting and how one of the predicted routes of the model was pretty much where NTS's new route runs and with no prior collaboration between NTS and NRPC. Sousa then passed the floor to Lori Lorman who provided a Power Point presentation on the entire bus route system of the Nashua Transit System. Lorman started off saying how important it is to know the traffic patterns when designing new routes. She summarized all routes pointing out which routes where changed, slightly modified, not modified and added. Below are some of the highlights:

- Increased service within the existing routes.
- Increased service to Will Street and Davidson Landing.

**NEW 1/2 Hour Headways.**

- 1/2 Hour service to the Senior Center
- 1/2 Hour service to Main St and East Dunstable Road
- 1/2 Hour service to Westgate Village

**Service covering areas of the city not previously covered.**

- Harris Rd, Conant Road, Captains Corner and Main Dunstable Rd
- Majority of Ledge Street
- Exit 8 Park & Ride
- Innovative Way Industrial Park

- Armory St and Bridge St
- Additional bus for Mall runs when necessary

Additionally, these improvements allow for riders to reach destinations faster and with greater efficiency with no financial impact compared with current transit service which puts the NTS in a better positioned for future growth.

Sousa added that NTS is also an important source for jobs with riders being able to utilize the bus as a means of transportation to get to work. Also that with the new changes to the fixed route system, NTS was able to cover almost every end of the City.

Webster said he would like to see a route that stopped at the elderly housing just over the bridge in Hudson down the road. Sousa said he had approached Hudson in the past but nothing was able to get pushed through. He added that he was currently working with Merrimack to get bus service to the new outlet mall and felt that communities need to look at the service on a regional level. Hersh commented that the match seems to be an issue with some of the other towns. Sousa commented that there is money there and that the match for the City is roughly 400,000 with 63% of it federally funded. Cashell commented on the Hudson/Litchfield news article asking for public input on getting bus service into the area and how there was already an opposition started against it. Cashell also referred to the NRPC Ridership Prediction Model that outlined a route that would run through Hudson.

#### **FE EVERETT TURNPIKE TOLLING FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Roache summarized the reason for the tolling study informing the group that HB 2010 which was signed into law by the Governor Lynch on June 28, 2010, required that the NH Department of Transportation (NH DOT) study the best location of the southbound and northbound mainline open road toll lanes on the F.E. Everett Turnpike. The bill directs the study to include potential locations to be tolled, recommended toll rates, the feasibility of eliminating one or more tolls at the exit ramps in Merrimack, and the necessity and feasibility of widening the 2-lane segments of the turnpike to 3 lanes in each direction. Additionally, Wilbur Smith Associates was retained by the NH DOT Bureau of Turnpikes to evaluate the potential negative toll revenue impact that the Manchester Airport Access Road (MAAR) could have on the Everett Turnpike. Roache proceeded with a Power Point presentation outlining the details and results of the study. Listed below are the key points from the presentation.

Currently the Bedford Plaza

- Processes 47,600 vpd (17.4M transactions in FY10)
- \$1 toll rate structure raises \$16.1M per year (13.8% of the total for Turnpike System)

Currently from Merrimack Ramp Plazas

- Process 22,000 vpd (7.7M transaction in FY10)
- 50¢ toll rate structure raises \$3.2M per year)
- Controls / Limits diversion off the Turnpike

Currently motorists to and from south of Manchester Airport Access Road (MAAR)

- Pay a toll at Bedford Plaza
- Motorists to and from the north access the Airport via Brown Avenue and pay no toll.

When the MAAR opens with free access to the Airport from the north and south, Traffic & Revenue Estimates project 6.8M vehicles will avoid the Bedford & Merrimack tolls & use the MAAR equating to a loss of revenue of \$5.8M per year. (4.5% loss of system wide revenue). This loss of revenue will hamper the ability to address future unmet capital needs. Additionally, the future long-term plan to widen FE

Everett Turnpike to three lanes between Nashua and Bedford is likely to be impacted due to the fact that there is currently no funding source identified and it is not in the Turnpike Capital Plan or Ten Year Plan

Following the release of the Executive Summary of the Tolling Feasibility Study, the City of Nashua Board of Aldermen passed Resolution R-10-73 on 11/10/2010 opposing any tollbooths on the FEET in the City of Nashua and the Town of Merrimack Town Council drafted letter to NHDOT on 11/19/2010 opposing the Turnpike Toll study stating the study is narrowly focused, self-serving, fatally flawed and without merit.

Roache informed the group that Chris Waszczuk, NH DOT Bureau of Turnpikes Administrator would be at the full Commission meeting on December 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm to present this topic.

Tim concluded his presentation and informed the group that no recommendation from the TTAC would be necessary until the full study is done. He asked if there were any questions. Fox expressed his eagerness for recommendations from the TTAC and Commission. Roache said that he would wait until he received the final report from the NHDOT asking for recommendation TTAC and the Commission. Husband asked if the gas tax was a dead issue. Roache said there was consensus for the gas tax, but when Governor Lynch campaigned to be Governor, one of his promises was not to raise the gas tax. Roache added that there is argument out there that it is not a sustainable source. Dookran asked why the tolls were not initially considered when they approved the airport access road. Roache said federal funds were used and then a boost from the stimulus. Dookran asked why they were grouping the widening and the loss of revenue due to the airport access road together. Roache thought it was due to the need in the region. Hersh asked if the study was going to make special recommendations. Roache was unsure and suggested she ask Chris Waszczuk at the full Commission meeting.

#### **MPO PROSPECTUS AND PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA UPDATE**

Roache informed the group of Chizmas's efforts on the NRPC MPO Prospectus which was included in the agenda packet which he explained was a framework for the transportation planning process in the region. He asked the group to please take a look at it and submit any comments or thoughts to him by the 1<sup>st</sup> week of January. His hope was to get draft copies of some of the appendices to the group over the next few weeks.

Roache referred to Appendix B – Project Selection Criteria reminding the group that NRPC had not solicited for new projects in a while and that this was true across the board with all of the 4 MPO's. He referred to the collaboration on the CLF plan that never gained any traction. He said that he would like to have something cleaner and simpler and added that the 4 MPO Directors would be discussing the process as well and the goal would be to have a method in place and have set priorities for the region. He emphasized the need to have a system in place to use for the communities to be able to weigh in on. Cashell felt this was a good idea.

Roache felt the Prospectus was in pretty good shape and but the Project Selection Criteria still needed some work as well as the Public Participation portion and the MOU portion. He reminded the group that the next planning cycle would be starting anytime now.

#### **STAFF AND PROJECT UPDATES**

Webster informed the group that the Hudson Sidewalk Project finished its 1st phase and was hoping to get the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase started.

Gowan informed the group about his meeting with Don Lyford regarding the Pelham roundabout. He added that the final design was done and he was hoping for construction to start in 2012.

Sousa motioned to adjourn with a second from Cashell. The meeting adjourned at **1:13pm**.