

Transportation Steering Committee
Minutes
January 17th, 2007

Present: Henry Anderson, Ray Burton, Mary Deppe, Joseph Elgosin, Glenn English, Joel Godston, William Houle, Michael King, Greg Placy, David Price, Alan Rich, Jack Rose, Bruce Sloat, and Steve Young.

Glenn English called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. Joe Elgosin made a motion to accept the Minutes from June 21, 2006. Jack Rose seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed, and the minutes were approved.

Ten Year Plan

Mike King explained the NHDOT asked all of the RPC's to review the Ten Year Plan and all of the projects in their respective regions. Mike explained that he has met with DOT a number of times to discuss this. Also, Mike, Greg Placy, and Mary Deppe met in December and went through each project in the NCC region and discussed the project, the problem being solved, and if there are other potential ways to solve it. At this point, NHDOT would like the RPCS to go through their projects again and make some recommendations in an effort to reduce the cost of the Ten Year Plan. Mike suggested asking Bill Watson for advice during the full committee meeting.

Greg Placy explained that most projects in the North Country, with an exception of three, are on there because of the condition of the road. The three exceptions are projects involving congestion. Most of the projects are maintenance and alignment projects. If funding is provided, Greg's crew might be able to do some of the projects in a more cost effective way than if contractors were hired. Some of the work can be done with field design, and money would be saved by not having DOT create all of the preliminary design plans. It seems that for some of these projects, design-build would be the preferred alternative to designing and then going out to bid. Greg also explained that it is difficult for DOT to hire engineers now because of the pay rate and also because there are less students studying it.

At this point, no recommendations have been made regarding the Ten Year Plan.

There was some discussion about how a lot of these repairs wouldn't be needed if DOT had maintained the roads properly to begin with. Greg explained that the North Country gets its fair share of funding for maintenance, but the problem is that the cost of drainage and pavement has been increasing. There was also discussion about whether or not all of the RPC's are going to be looking for ways to reduce costs and if this process is going to be fair. Glenn English was concerned that it will be hard to reduce costs when some of the project costs are not reflecting real costs. Mike responded that the point of this request is not really to worry about the costs, but rather to think about different ways to solve the problem. It would be beneficial to be creative and recommend different solutions. Bill Houle stated that DOT needs to give the RPC's

consistent guidance so everyone knows what they're doing and this is done the same way.

Mike stated that each RPC has to submit recommendations to DOT by April 1st and that we should send out a letter to the communities explaining what we are doing. We will be setting up a meeting with NCC, the district engineers, and interested committee members to review the TYP and come up with recommendations.

Other Business

Ray Burton handed out copies of magazine articles about transportation. He also explained the GACIT will be starting on half of a two year cycle to work on the TYP. They are required to hold at least one hearing in each district, but Ray usually holds nine or ten since the North Country region is so large. Once the meetings have been held, GACIT submits recommendations to the Governor, who then submits his recommendations to the General Court, where it becomes a bill, and then a plan. Currently, the TYP has about \$2.1 billion worth of projects.

Ray explained that there have been talks of increasing the gas tax by 1/2 cent. It is currently just an LSR. Ray explained that one cent generates about \$8 million every year. Glenn stated that it is on record that this committee supports a gas tax increase.

Joe Elgosin expressed his concerns about vehicles that use alternative fuels are not paying a gas tax into the system. They are using the roads, but not paying for them. Ray explained that it will be discussed at the next GACIT hearing at the State House on February 7th and that the committee is welcome to sit in. Also at that meeting, Commissioner Murray will give a briefing on the status of TYP, TE, and CMAQ.

Ray also discussed that Fish and Game is in deep financial trouble due to the \$2 million loss in revenue this year. He suggested that NCC invite the new Congressmen to visit the Transportation Committee as well as other NCC committees.

Joe Elgosin made a motion to adjourn. Bruce Sloat seconded, all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 2:55.

Please note the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 21st, 2007

Minutes Approved: 3/21/07