



Nashua Region Complete Streets Advisory Committee Meeting AGENDA

Tuesday, June 4, 2024 12PM – 1PM

In Person:

NRPC Office Large Conference Room
30 Temple Street, Suite 310
Nashua, NH 03060

Zoom Access:

<https://nashuarpc.zoom.us/j/88070001451?pwd=ZkpUc3lObFdSTWFHVFBXbEJKZGpTZz09>

Call-in #: 1 929 205 6099

Meeting ID: 880 7000 1451

Passcode: 882039

1. Introductions
2. Review March 5, 2024 meeting notes
3. Bike and Ped Data Collection
4. [Ten Year Plan Project Solicitation](#)
5. MPO Complete Streets Policy Draft
6. Statewide, Regional, Local updates
7. Other Business

Please use the upper parking lot at 30 Temple St (see map on next page).
A bike rack is located near the visitor door and an NTS bus stop is on Temple St.





Nashua Region Complete Streets Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes - DRAFT
3/5/2024
NRPC Conference Room

Attendees:

Levent Akinci, City of Nashua Nelson Disco, Town of Merrimack Marina Vaz, Conservation Law Foundation (via Zoom)	Tyrel Borowitz, NRPC Ned Connell, NRPC Emma Rearick, NRPC Matt Waitkins, NRPC
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Call to Order and Introductions

E. Rearick called the meeting to order at 12:10pm and attendees introduced themselves.

Bike and Ped Data Collection Program – Interactive Map Demonstration

T. Borowitz showed the new bike and pedestrian count viewer map on the screen

(<https://nashuarpc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/1ca13ac2b72b49d8987cbeba6da476a8>)

He demonstrated some of the features of the map, including looking at count locations, historic data, and trends, and pointed out that Amherst now has two permanent counters along Amherst St. N. Disco asked about audience, and why haven't there been any counts in Merrimack. T. Borowitz explained it is town staff, interested public, conservation commissions, etc. who may be planning projects or looking at how many people are using sidewalks or trails. Anyone can request a count and NRPC will see if it is possible with the counting equipment that we have. The movable counters must be attached to a pole or tree, facing away from any vehicle traffic and towards pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Last year he set up a count in Watson Park in Merrimack, but it captured car traffic in addition to bike/ped traffic. He will be trying different locations this year. L. Akinci asked if the counters can differentiate between a bike and a scooter, because the city will be deploying Bird scooters again this year. T. Borowitz explained that when the tubes are used with the counters, they identify bicycles based on wheelbase length and they can't specifically identify scooters. If anyone would like to request a count, they can fill out a form on the NRPC website or contact T. Borowitz.

NH Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment

E. Rearick briefly summarized the NH Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, noting that the state had released it in November 2023 and it was just presented at the February NRPC TTAC meeting. She pointed out that it explains how bike/ped data counts are necessary to calculate bike/ped crash rates. It also shows that crashes in rural areas are more likely to be fatal or severe due to high vehicle speeds and lack of bike/ped accommodations. It is a good document to reference and helps justify why improvements may be necessary.

MPO Complete Streets Policy

E. Rearick explained how NRPC staff have pivoted from creating complete streets guidelines to drafting a complete streets policy for the Nashua MPO. NRPC functions as the Nashua MPO. It is important to look internally to the organization to see what can be done as an organization. The MPO helps coordinate and review certain transportation projects, including those proposed for the state Ten Year Plan, Transportation Alternatives (TA) funding, and Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. The

MPO does not look at all the projects in all thirteen communities, it does not build roads, etc. so it will look and function differently than a municipal complete streets policy. Adopting a policy could help the MPO evaluate and rank the projects they do look at. E. Rearick said she has been using guidelines from Smart Growth America and looking at policies that they have identified as good policies. She then shared the first two sections of the draft, the vision and definition sections for feedback. She will also email it out for feedback.

FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Amendment 4

M. Waitkins provided context on the three main transportation planning documents the MPO maintains, including: the Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (long range plan); the NH Ten Year Plan, which includes all projects that use either federal or state funding; and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is the first four years of the Ten Year Plan. The planning process is long and can be complicated, and sometimes it takes hearing it a few times to make sense.

TIP Amendment 4 is the fourth amendment to the current TIP. As projects get built, delayed, enter different phases etc., the plan needs to be adjusted with amendments. TIP Amendment 4 includes adding a couple of Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) projects, projects that demonstrably improve air quality, often by moving motor vehicles off the road. Two CMAQ projects that are being added into the TIP with this amendment, that pertain to complete streets, include a pedestrian bridge in Wilton and a side path in Amherst. The projects had been chosen through the most recent CMAQ grant process and this amendment adding them into the TIP makes them official, which is good news.

M. Waitkins added that soon the MPO is entering into the next round of updating the Ten Year Plan, and that process will include communities proposing projects. It is a competitive process because the final list of projects is fiscally constrained, so the project list will be limited to what can be paid for. The projects are usually 80% federally funded and 20% funded by a local match from the town or city. The scoring and prioritization process is one that would be impacted by an MPO complete streets policy.

Statewide, Regional, Local Updates

Statewide:

E. Rearick reported that NHDOT has begun drafting a statewide complete streets policy. The NHDOT CSAC is providing feedback on that policy. We will see when or if they ask for broader feedback. As M. Waitkins mentioned, the Ten Year Plan process is going to happen this spring and summer, so it is a good time to prepare project ideas and proposals.

Regional:

N. Connell shared that the Nashua MPO has teamed up with the other three southern NH MPOs and hired a consultant to draft a Safe Streets for All Safety Plan. Once the consultant completes the safety plan, the Nashua region communities will be eligible to apply for federal Safe Streets for All infrastructure funding, which would be available earlier than funding from the Ten Year Plan. This future funding opportunity will be a good one for this group. The consultants will be conducting outreach as part of drafting the plan, so we will let you know about opportunities to get involved. The goal is to have the plan done by next January to be eligible for the next round of infrastructure funding in summer 2025.

Local:

Merrimack: N. Disco shared that two bridges across the F.E. Everett Turnpike will be replaced before the turnpike is widened. The Baboosic Lake Road bridge will include sidewalks on both sides, where there is currently a sidewalk on only one side, and the new Wire Road bridge will include a sidewalk on one side, where there are currently none.

Nashua: L. Akinci shared that Nashua is looking at their own complete streets policy. The Bird rental scooters will be coming soon, and they are currently looking at re-introducing a bike share program and how to mitigate issues from last time when bikes were strewn around in the canal and other places.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjourn:

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 1pm.

Next Meeting

To be determined, likely May or June.

Draft Notes (to be deleted):

The NH State Ped Bike Plan provides this guidance:

At the regional or local level, a Complete Streets policy/approach or implementation guide that builds on a state approach or policy directive should include the following elements to make it context appropriate:

- Diverse users: Benefits all users equitably, particularly vulnerable users and the most underinvested and underserved communities.
- Design: Coordinates and sets a timeframe for implementation.
- Land use and context sensitivity: Considers the surrounding community's current and expected land use and transportation needs.
- Performance measures: Establishes performance standards that are specific, equitable, and available to the public.
- Project selection criteria: Provides specific criteria to encourage funding prioritization for Complete Streets implementation.
- Implementation plan: Includes specific next steps for implementation of the policy.

Ten elements from the National Complete Streets Coalition that we should cover:

- Establishes Commitment and Vision
- Prioritizes underinvested and underserved communities
- Applies to all projects and phases
- Allows only clear exceptions
- Mandates coordination
- Adopts excellent design guidance
- Requires proactive land-use planning
- Measures progress
- Sets criteria for choosing projects
- Creates a plan for implementation

Nashua Regional Planning Commission
Metropolitan Planning Organization

Complete Streets Policy DRAFT

DATE



Introduction

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) is committed to advancing transportation planning, design and implementation that emphasizes safe streets for all users. NRPC serves as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the 13-community NRPC region. The MPO is the transportation policy-making organization for the region. Key responsibilities of the MPO are to develop and maintain a Long-Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The MTP is a comprehensive, multimodal “blueprint” for transportation systems and services aimed at meeting the mobility needs and improving the overall quality of life of people in the region through the next 25 years. The TIP is a four-year work program that lists all regionally significant and federally funded projects, as required by federal transportation legislation. Both the MTP and TIP are regularly amended to reflect changes in project timing, cost, or scope. In addition, NRPC is also responsible for prioritizing and recommending transportation project proposals for inclusion in the state’s Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TYP) and for funding through federal competitive grant programs including the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) and Transportation Alternatives programs.

This Complete Streets policy supports the National Planning Emphasis Area described below:

Complete Streets - Develop and operate streets and networks that prioritize safety, comfort, and access to destinations for people who use the street network, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, micro-mobility users, freight delivery services, and motorists.

The Complete Streets policy also specifically supports the following 2023-2050 MTP goal:

Emphasize a Complete Streets approach to project planning and design that accommodates the needs of all foreseeable users including bicyclists and pedestrians as appropriate based on street classification, traffic volumes, design speed, and land use.

Section 1. Vision

Roadways in the Nashua Region should be safe, comfortable, and accessible for people of all ages and abilities who travel by foot, bicycle, personal mobility device, public transportation, or automobile. Road design, implementation, operation, and maintenance should be context-sensitive and incorporate principles and practices that focus on the equitable movement of people to create a more vibrant, healthy, and connected region for everyone.

This vision is supported by the *Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Active Transportation Plan for the Greater Nashua Region*, the *FY2023-2050 Nashua Region Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)*, the *New Hampshire Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan*, the *New Hampshire Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment*, and other local plans

Section 2. Definition

A complete street is a roadway that is designed, built, and maintained in a way that prioritizes safety, comfort, and access for people of all ages and abilities. These streets accommodate the needs of all people, including, but not limited to, people walking, bicycling, using personal mobility

devices, riding transit and school buses, driving personal vehicles, and operating commercial and emergency vehicles. A rural complete street may be different from a town center complete street which may be different from an urban complete street.

Section 3. Scope

The Complete Streets Policy applies to all proposed transportation projects including, but not limited to, those submitted for funding during the Ten Year Plan, Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ), and Transportation Alternatives funding cycles, the TIP and projects proposed during the MTP update process.

This policy also encourages transportation project proposals to include temporary accommodations during periods of construction where appropriate. If opportunities arise for complete streets improvements to be incorporated into projects that have another primary purpose, the scale of the complete streets improvements should be appropriate to the scale of the project.

Section 4. Exceptions

Complete streets improvements may not be appropriate in some cases due to the context. The following list details situations when a project may be exempt from the Complete Streets Policy:

1. A roadway prohibits, by law, use by specified users. In this case, accommodations for those excluded users should be made for safely crossing or circumnavigating the roadway if feasible and practical.
2. A justifiable absence of current and future need exists and is not recommended in any existing planning documents.
3. A project of equivalent scope and schedule exists or is already programmed for funding within the next five years to provide connectivity for all users; or
4. The costs of providing accommodation are excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use over the life cycle of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Section 4. Review Process

The following steps are part of the general NRPC MPO project review process:

1. NRPC staff notify member communities and agencies of a project solicitation period.
2. NRPC staff perform an initial screening of project proposals and are available through the process to provide technical assistance related to compliance with the Complete Streets Policy.
3. Project sponsors will be asked to acknowledge that their project will comply with the NRPC Complete Streets Policy, and, if applicable, their municipal Complete Streets Policy. They should explain how their project will safely and comfortably accommodate vulnerable road users, which should include a description of the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities that will be included in the project. If the project does not provide any of these facilities, the project sponsor must explain why.
4. Projects that increase accessibility and safety for vulnerable roadway users will be ranked higher than similar projects that do not.

5. After a project has been selected for funding, NRPC will review any future changes in project scope through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) adoption and amendment processes to ensure that the requirements of the Complete Streets Policy are met. Due to the flexibility of the policy and the variety of approaches that a project sponsor may take to complete a street, NRPC staff will work with the project sponsor throughout the project development process to find an acceptable solution for all parties.

Section 5. Requirements

The following requirements apply to all proposed transportation projects:

1. Safety should be prioritized for the people who are most vulnerable on our roadways, including children, seniors, and people with additional accessibility needs. Safety improvements for vulnerable road users should not be compromised to achieve an improved level of service for less vulnerable users.
2. Designs should accommodate people of all ages and abilities using all foreseeable modes of transportation and should optimize the level of comfort and safety for the people who are most vulnerable on our roadways. Designs should be context-sensitive to the surrounding land uses and may look different for every project and road type.
3. When right-of-way space is limited and where vulnerable users are likely, allocating space to a mode that is not currently accommodated should be prioritized over providing additional space to a mode that is already accommodated.
4. If the proposed project is on a current fixed transit route, or is proposed to have a fixed transit route in the MTP or Nashua Transit System Comprehensive Plan, then the Nashua Transit System will be provided with an opportunity to comment to ensure that accommodation of transit vehicles and opportunities to access transit facilities are provided.
5. If the proposed project is adjacent to a municipal boundary, then NRPC will request comments from the governing body of the neighboring community to promote connectivity.

Section 7. Design

Project sponsors are encouraged to work with NRPC and NHDOT staff to determine the most appropriate design for a project. National best practice design guidance, standards, and recommendations should be referenced in the design and implementation of complete streets, including design guidelines from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and the National Association of City Transportation officials (NACTO). Design resources include, but are not limited to:

- Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks (FHWA)
- Urban Bikeway Design Guide (NACTO)
- AASHTO Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities
- AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities
- CROW Design Manual for Bicycle Traffic

Section 8. Performance Measures

The Complete Streets Policy is part of NRPC's planning process. The vision and goals of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Active Transportation Plan, and other regional plans informed the development of this policy and will also guide NRPC in review of project compliance with this policy.

The MPO can measure the success of this Complete Streets Policy and associated projects using the following performance measures, among others:

- Rate of crashes, injuries, and fatalities by mode
- Crosswalk and intersection improvements
- Linear feet of new pedestrian sidewalks/trails built
- Linear feet of new bike lanes/trails built
- Bicycle, pedestrian, and multimodal Levels of Service (LOS)
- Satisfaction of users of the transportation network

Section 9. Implementation

NRPC will, at a minimum, evaluate this policy every two years in alignment with the Ten Year Plan project selection process. The review will be completed in advance of the Ten Year Plan project selection process so that any changes in the Complete Streets Policy may be incorporated.

Projects submitted to the MPO for review and ranking during competitive funding processes starting on January 1, 2025 will be required to comply with this policy.

Projects submitted before 2025 should consider complying with this complete streets policy where possible. NRPC will notify its member municipalities and other interested parties of the new requirements and provide relevant guidance and resources to help them comply with this policy.

Section 10. Definitions

Complete Streets: A complete street is a roadway that is designed, built, and maintained in an way that prioritizes safety, comfort, and access for people of all ages and abilities. These streets accommodate the needs of all people, including, but not limited to, people walking, bicycling, using assistive devices, riding transit and school buses, driving personal vehicles, and operating commercial and emergency vehicles. A rural complete street may be different from a town center complete street which may be different from an urban complete street.

Context Sensitive Solutions: A collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders in providing a transportation facility that fits its setting. It is an approach that leads to preserving and enhancing scenic, aesthetic, historic, community, and environmental resources, while improving or maintaining safety, mobility, and infrastructure conditions.

Safe System Approach: A roadway design that emphasizes minimizing the risk of injury or fatality to road users; and that: takes into consideration the possibility and likelihood of human error; accommodates human injury tolerance by taking into consideration likely crash types, resulting impact forces, and the ability of the human body to withstand impact forces; and takes into consideration vulnerable road users. (23 U.S.C. 148(a)(9)).

Vulnerable Road User: A nonmotorist with a fatality analysis reporting system (FARS) person attribute code for pedestrian, bicyclist, other cyclist, and person on personal conveyance or an injured person that is, or is equivalent to, a pedestrian or pedalcyclist as defined in the ANSI D16.1-2007. (See 23 U.S.C. 148(a)(15) and 23 CFR 490.205). A vulnerable road user may include people walking, biking, or rolling. Please note that a vulnerable road user:

- Includes a highway worker on foot in a work zone, given they are considered a pedestrian.
- Does not include a motorcyclist.

DRAFT