

Imagine Nashua – Mobility and Transit Focus Discussion
 6/10/21 – 6 pm via Zoom

Attendees:

Staff & Consultants	Steering Committee Members	Public
Sarah Marchant Matt Sullivan Julie Chizmas	Amber Logue-Morgan Gene Porter Peter Schaefer	Betsy Houde Bill Schwartz Caroline Jay Minkarah, NRPC John Savage, First Transit Michael Pedersen, Nashua Planning Board Sally Newhall
Elizabeth Van der Els Taskina Tareen Andrea Baena		

Review Goals and Action Items

2.1 Redevelopment Opportunities

- East Hollis St:

Pete: Does this connect to the bridge?

Sarah: All improvements are part of integrated areas

Sally: How do we address crossings? Cross walks or other ways?

Julie: STEP countermeasures

Jay: Word is CSX wants to abandon Hillsborough Rail line. [SVRT](#) working to construct Rail with Trail along the line. If it happens great opportunity to connect to Crown St Site and then points west. Reference in the plan. Show as dashed line.

Gene: Train station, crosswalks, parking areas – need some kind of idea about number of trains a day. That might suggest we consider a parking garage and overpass if necessary to handle major commuter rail connection. Also, Rail Trail/Rail with Trail on NW branch – so seldom used that they hope this master plan would consider decommissioning that line in favor of truck service for those who use it.

Jay: Still in flux. Initially plans were for 30 trips a day to Nashua – high level of service similar to Lowell. North of Nashua, 16 round trips per day to Manchester. Plan is station would be an island similar to Lowell with a pedestrian overpass. Ridership figures being reviewed. MBTA making changes to their service and we need to coordinate with them.

Bill: Happy to hear that level of service but hard to believe. Opposed to overpass. Want people crossing at street. Parking demand TBD. Not a convenient connection to get to/from highway. Very hopeful. Worked on study in Manchester where service will end. Thinks plan is great. Re: existing conditions – the street network falls apart south of Harvard St. What beyond sidewalks will be done?

Pete: Spot for train station is next to the hill. You could have an elevator to bring people to street level. Close to Dr. Crisp School and already has a bus route along there. Another way to get people around. Be careful because it's a natural area. Last year or the year before the sidewalks were redone on the south side of E Hollis St.

John: Circulation for the buses is a challenge and traffic on the main corridor to Hudson creates a lot of challenges. Improvements to surface road circulation is key to being successful. Make using the bus attractive.

Sally: re: transportation hub, would you make the transit center here? From what John just said, probably not.

Sarah: As the rail timeline gets closer, we will modernize the old hub and spoke system. As rail comes on line it will be an important pivot point for the system to look through a different lens. We need a more modern system than the hub and spoke.

Sally: Will you expand to weekend service?

Sarah: The bus system does run on Saturdays but not Sundays. If you want Sunday service, please voice it – that helps us get there.

Caroline: Agrees, Sundays are important. *(Caroline attended the in-person meeting at the Library and recommended we try Sunday service as a pilot or limited to just in the summer)*

- Amherst St Corridor:

Bill: Loves the Amherst St idea but recommends we change the wording of the high-speed transit lanes. It makes him think of BRT but this is to reflect vehicle movement rather than transit. BRT unlikely to be feasible. How much would be public ROW and how much would be private? Looks like large ROW. What would fit in current ROW?

Amber: Re: limit of 4 stories – is max height due to airport?

John: What are thoughts and plans for bus accommodations? Both DW and Amherst are high risk for pedestrians and buses. Lots of bus rear-end accidents. Higher rates of speed. In many places, end up stopping in high speed traffic lane to drop off/pick up passengers.

Bill: Incorporate stops into developments, like Market Basket. What needs to change in the City to support this kind of transformation? Does the existing planning process work for this kind of development?

John: Re: going into developments – Amherst street layout is tough and it's isolated from rest of City. It takes an hour now between the Transit Center and Walmart. If they extend it any more to go into developments, then the route becomes too long and inconvenient.

Caroline: LA had bus only lanes to encourage people to take the bus and they had fewer issues with bus having to pull into lots and slowing the routes. Safer for pedestrians, too.

Jay: Hear John's point. Most critical safety issue for bikes and peds is speed. The most critical improvement would be lowering design speeds. Need to get actual speeds closer to posted speeds.

John: Unfortunate that there isn't an alternative for commuters. Always going to be traffic there.

Pete: Do we know how much traffic just passes thru vs stopping?

- DW Highway:

Bill: Love idea. Challenge of getting across DW on bikes. If you build a rail trail there will be demand so need to figure out a safe way to get people there.

Amber: Bridge to get people there. Better sidewalks.

2.2 Equitable and Connected Transportation Networks

Caroline: When will Rideshare options be back?

Bill: Rideshare to him means carpooling. We want a suite of mobility options.

Michael: Re: Former DOW site – the Nashua Planning Board is discussing that site. The plans are for a Costco with huge parking lot and gas station plus BJ's gas station. It's just going to be a magnet for automobiles. How will they get in and out? Puts more pressure on DW Hwy. This group is talking about alt modes and the plans are for cars cars and more cars.

Betsy: Add safe use of bikes and scooters.

Caroline: Do people get fined if they don't wear bicycle helmets? Maybe incentive people to wear them.

Betsy: Add to vision zero policy?

2.9 Carbon-free Transportation and Building Design

No comments

5.1 Land Use Integration

Betsy: Could there ever be watering stations where you can fill bottles along bike routes?

Bill: Lots of bike share systems are subsidized. People don't really want to pay, that's why it doesn't work.

John: Scooters in Nashua are recreational.

Michael: Scooters need no physical effort and that can be an impediment.

Betsy: How many adults know how to ride a bike? Does the Gate City Co-Op teach people to ride? It's a parent's job to teach kids but do parents know how to ride?

Michael: Are there any vehicle charging stations in here? Costco argues people aren't there long enough to charge a vehicle.

5.2 Reliability and Efficiency of Multimodal Operations

No Comments

5.3 Regional Connectivity

John: There's no mention of bus transit under this section and it's something NTS has been exploring with NRPC. Should be added.

Bill: The State did a transit plan not too long ago and it included an inventory of Park and Rides. That should be part of this discussion.

Sally: With trains, would express bus service phase out?

John: Acela did not have a major impact on C&J.

Bill: Same in S. Mass – they both end up operating, but you can't subsidize both.