

COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2023

A meeting of the Committee on Infrastructure was held Wednesday, September 27, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

The roll call was taken with 5 members of the Committee on Infrastructure present:

Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr., Chair
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderman Tyler Gouveia
Alderman Ernest A. Jette

Members not in Attendance:

Also in Attendance: Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman Patricia Klee
Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director
Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director
Amy DeRoche, OED Coordinator
John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS

Without objection, Chairman O'Brien accepted the communication that was received after the agenda was prepared.

From: Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director
Re: Commuter Rail Discussion

There being no objection, Chairman O'Brien accepted the communication and placed it on file.

DISCUSSION

Chairman O'Brien

Discussions tonight. Before we get into that, there's a couple of housecleaning items I'd like to bring up. Tonight there was supposed to be a meeting on the Public Works building. Unfortunately, there seemed to have been a question on the posting and everything and to do it right we agreed to postpone the meeting. Nothing's mission critical. Actually quite frankly, we're wrapping up the project and it's quite healthy and quite pleased with the way things are going. But to do it correctly, we'll reschedule to another date.

Our agenda this evening was pretty clean. We didn't have anything and I could have called no meeting tonight but I know the dedication of this Committee always looking for that extra work or something to do and to stay informed. I did ask have a conversation with the Administrative Services Director, Mr. Cummings, and he has agreed to bring us up to date on several projects. So I think this is a wonderful opportunity to educate ourselves, get an understanding of them, as also to the public. So without further ado, I welcome Administrative Services Director Cummings. Good evening Sir.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If we could, I'd like to Amy DeRoche, John Vancor, and Matt Sullivan to join me as they'll be playing a critical role in the conversations.

Chairman O'Brien

Absolutely. Please come in, please grab an extra seat somewhere.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

So again, good evening Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director. As Chairman O'Brien alluded to in his opening remarks, I thought it would be a good opportunity to take the time this evening as you have a light agenda to accomplish hopefully two goals on my front: one to provide relative status updates on various projects that may be of interest to this Committee but then also have a discussion about next steps, thoughts, ideas, concerns, and hopefully have a discussion about a couple of projects that are coming down the pike where your input and feedback will be extremely valuable in helping us further develop these projects as they come to hopefully fruition.

Chairman O'Brien

Mr. Cummings would you prefer are you going to handle it line subject by subject and then that could be open to discussion per that particular subject and when the board is satisfied, or the Committee is satisfied, we'll move on.

Then the second question. As you're making your presentation, would you entertain questions from the committee or do you want to wait to the end of your presentation?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Yes, thank you Mr. Chairman. I'd like to keep this rather informal and casual so questions as we go and hopefully have more of a dialogue than anything else. The first two of the three discussions that I plan to have this evening are somewhat interrelated but everything we kind of do when it comes to infrastructure, it goes hand in glove and there's always these interconnections that are in play. So you know I feel there'll be some overlap this evening between the three various discussions but I can tell you explicitly between discussion one and discussion two there will be.

Discussion one if I may make the segue right into it is going to be on providing you all with an update on the Riverfront Project and specifically talking about what you should anticipate seeing going under construction over the next year. To be able to do that, we have some right of way and road design projects that will need to occur to effectuate the riverfront and then also just the general redevelopment of our infrastructure in the downtown. That's the second item.

Then the third item will be a discussion on passenger rail just providing you with an overall update. If there's time this evening to have discussion about other subject matters that are of interest to you, of course I'm available but these were three very specific topics that it had been a little while since we've come before you to provide you an update on and I thought it was important for us to do that.

So to my right, I have John Vancor of Hayner Swanson. He's the Project Manager for the City on the implementation of the downtown riverfront and Amy DeRoche, Economic Development Project Manager, who is also assisting with the implementation. So I'm going to hand it off to them for this PowerPoint presentation. Again if we can Mr. Chairman with your indulgence, if we could keep this informal and ask questions as we go.

Chairman O'Brien

Absolutely. The board got it and I think they do. We're all set and welcome Mr. Vancor to the chamber and Ms. DeRoche good to see you again.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

I said to my right. I should have said to my left. I apologize. So if we could hand it off to Mr. Vancor.

Chairman O'Brien

Yes please, Mr. Vancor.

- Update on Riverfront project and specifically an update on what's going under construction over the next year

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

Thank you very much. So primarily we're here to give you an update on the design, development of Bicentennial and Renaissance Park - part of the overall Riverfront Project and I'd like to start by making a personal comment related to Renaissance Park. I'm particularly gratified to be part of the City's team on this project. Twenty-two years ago the last time Renaissance Park was reconstructed, I was on the team for that project as well. So I was part of the group that decided where and how to cite the statue that's there - the mill woman with her child. I know how much people cared about it. What a large group of people it was that had insight and the importance of the backdrop and a location. So I am personally, I'm very gratified to be part of this project to do a dramatic expansion of that park at the same time respecting and repairing that statue.

So we'll start by talking about Bicentennial Park. One of the keys in everything we've done from preliminary design to where we are now which is in the final stages of final design, in total the City has taken a fresh look at the entire project. One of the goals in this fresh look was to improve access for people of all abilities to improve the ADA access. Basically with the idea that complying with ADA isn't enough. We want to do the best we can to open the opportunities this recreation project to people of all abilities. Bicentennial Park I bring that up now because Bicentennial Park is a great example to use to talk about these kinds of improvements. If we went out the Bicentennial Park now and walked from Main Street to the westerly end of the park, it's a very steep path. It's challenging from an ADA compliance perspective and even more so to make it, as I say, optimizing accessibility.

We think we've got a design. In order to flatten the slope, basically we need to make the length of the path longer. The challenge in doing that is to end up with a path that people will actually want to walk - that little extra distance. It'll seem natural. It won't seem like they're walking out of their way and I think the design that we have does that. You can see the path there and you can see the gathering location adjacent to the river.

Now we're developing this on our team. We've been working closely with a team of landscape architects from Weston and Sampson led by Cassie Bethany. I really want to call them out because it's been extraordinary working with them. They have listened closely to the City's project team. They listen, they collaborate, and they create, and they've been instrumental in developing what I think is a really effective path, effective green space here on Bicentennial Park. I think we've got a great design that we're working towards. So here we have a renderings of Bicentennial Park. You can see that same walking path. You can see the gathering space and you can also in the distance you can see the boardwalk at the very end of the park. The boardwalk is going to go adjacent to the 4 Water Street Building. Here, too, we're fortunate we have the firm of HL Turner working with us.

HL Turner is the company that designed the boardwalk adjacent to Peddler's Daughter and so this boardwalk will be detailed, designed to be compatible to be a match for that boardwalk and Peddler's Daughter. Here's another view of Bicentennial Park. You can see that gathering location. You can see the backdrop. An important part of all of our designs the backdrop emphasizing the view down the river towards Clocktower towards the Millyard.

Next one. So now we're going to Renaissance Park. To get here, we would have used that boardwalk. To do it today, we would have had to go downstairs at the end of Bicentennial Park. We would have had to go into an alley and go around the 4 Water Street Building but the boardwalk which is on the right side of this plan gives us an opportunity to go directly to the park. There's a lot of improvements here and the reason we can do these improvements is the existing parking spaces that are located adjacent to the Water Street retaining wall. Those are going to be the proposal is to relocate those parking spaces primarily onto Water Street itself. It gives us all this room to do so much more with this park. You can see the little square right in the center of the park. That's the statue. That's where it is today. That's where it will be when we're done. We're not relocating the statue.

One of the other key focal points is to the left of that statue. You can see the shape that is our performing arts stage. We've looked at a number of alternatives for citing this stage and we're really happy with this one. Working with, again, Weston and Sampson. They've done a study to make sure even though it's generally facing to the west, we don't have to worry about the sunset getting in the audience's eyes. So we've got that stage there. Part of that stage when we get to the rendering, you'll see that we've got a structure over. We've got a roof over that stage. Park McDowell is an architect and an artist who's worked with us on that. You'll see when we get to the renderings that he's developed a design that works really well. That stage shares the same drought backdrop as the statue. It's Clocktower. It's the Millyard behind and so we're happy with that.

Before we go on to the renderings, I just wanted to point out there's pavers in front of the stage. You can't quite see it. There's a Fleur-de-lis that's going to be set in the middle of those pavers. That's a detail that's over by the statue. We're not going to be able to keep that which was an inherent part of the original design but we're moving it here in front of the stage in a very high focus location. To the right of that, we have terrace seating for the audience. We have a grassy area where people could put blankets watch a show. Then on the other side of the terrace seating in that oval area, we have a

relatively flat lawn space. So this is a rare opportunity downtown. Lawn uses - someone could toss a Frisbee, someone could toss a ball, or could again put a blanket on the grass and enjoy that.

I talked before about accessibility and improvements for access. We're proposing to remove the stairs that go down to the park now and we're going to replace them with ramps both to the left and to right again to accentuate accessibility for all.

Alderman Jette

Could I ask a question?

Chairman O'Brien

Yes Alderman Jette.

Alderman Jette

If you could go back to the previous slide. So if you could help me. So where's the stage? Is it that brown thing there?

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

It's to the left side - the trapezoidal shaped roof structure there.

Alderman Jette

Okay and you said that's facing west?

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

It's facing to the east but the backdrop to the audience, the audience will be looking to the west. So our fear there is that we don't want the audience to have the afternoon sun in their eyes.

Alderman Jette

Okay. Now I understand. Thank you.

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

Sure.

Alderman Thibeault

I have a question Chairman.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Thibeault.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So on both parks, I didn't see lighting. I assume that's just not in the picture. Will there be some small lights and stuff?

John Vancor, Hayner Swanson

Yes.

Alderman Thibeault

Okay. Awesome. Thank you.

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

Okay. So here's a rendering and we're looking you can see Clocktower behind the lawn area. We can sort of see where the performing arts stage is. So this is the general layout. Let's go to the next one. This is actually...

Chairman O'Brien

Excuse me Mr. Vancor. We did have one more question from Alderman Klee and I hate to interrupt you but.

Alderman Klee

Yeah just two quick questions. I think I was a little confused when you were talking about the statue - the mother and child. That is going to stay where it is and where does the stage in conjunction with that? I'm sorry even with my glasses, I really can't see that.

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

I think one of our renderings might show it better.

Alderman Klee

Over there? I think I'll get most of it. Okay. And you said the Fleur-de-lis that's there now that's going?

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

In order to get the path adjacent to the statue, we're going to have to pave right up against it. We didn't want to lose that as a park element and so we're bringing it forward into the pavers in front of the stage.

Alderman Klee

Oh so we're not really moving it. We're just relocating it?

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

We're gonna relocate it. It's still going to have a very common - I remember that from 22 years ago.

Alderman Klee

Yup, okay.

Chairman O'Brien

Excuse me. Director Cummings do you have the pointer besides the mouse? That might help others orientate a little better.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

All right. So thank you. So that's the stage and right in front of it was the statue right there and then show where the Fleur-de-lis is. Right there. That's right there.

Alderman Klee

Okay. Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Dowd.

Alderman Dowd

I was gonna wait for probably later slides but I see these beautiful grass banks. We spend a lot of time and effort getting rid of invasive species. Have any of them reappeared and if they have how are we taking care of them?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

So I'm going to take the liberty of saying that that's a little artistic liberty license. I want to be clear that is not what you're going to see at the end product. As I've learned through this project is what's called "riprap". That is going to be along the side there and that would not change. Part of the reason why we're doing what we're doing is because we don't really want to affect the river bank at all. From a State permitting perspective and from an environmental perspective, we really want to stay away from affecting the riverbank and this design accomplishes that goal and that's one of the reasons why we're pursuing it.

Alderman Dowd

But is there still any regrowth of invasive species?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

So to the second question, there is no. We are actively managing and staying on top of it. We are on a routine schedule for continuous spraying and we are making a concerted effort and priority because we can't have those invasives grow back.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay I have Alderman Lopez and then Alderman Klee in the queue.

Alderman Lopez

In the graphic up there it kind of shows an even level between the park and Water Street. Are you guys adding a lot of dirt to the park or are you lowering Water Street?

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

We're actually - there's quite a bit of grade that we're raising against the retaining wall on Water Street. A key part of that is we have those stairs that come down from Water Street now. So on either side of that, we're going to have an accessible ramp that we construct against the retaining wall. So basically, we will be bringing in a lot of fill in to have that gradual ramp that comes down to grade.

Alderman Lopez

But it might make the area less floodable. So we'd like that.

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

Yeah actually we've done an analysis from the river perspective on the floodplain. We're not impacting the floodplain at all. We've done considerable - HL Turner has done considerable modeling and evaluation of that so we don't think that there isn't a modelled impact to the floodplain at all.

Alderman Lopez

Okay.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

I hope this isn't out of context but so is this part of the TIF?

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

Yes.

Alderman Klee

So you're invasive like what you're doing over Jackson Falls it's all part of that contract? Is that what you're looking at?

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

Correct.

Alderman Klee

Perfect, thank you. That's all I wanted.

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

So here's another rendering. Now we're looking towards the performing art stage. You can see the roof that I referred to before the backdrop that we think is pretty nice to see Clocktower and the Millyard behind. You can see on the left side, you can see the retaining wall - the Water Street retaining wall. There's opportunities for a new mural there as we complete the construction that will be grading against the wall but there will still be an area in this portion of the project. People are sitting on the terrace seating, the grass in front of it, and then the pavers. Here from the side of the performing arts shell or stage, again, you can see looking out towards where the audience will be. Again, you can see the Water Street profile there. We think the way this is laid out it'll reduce the visual impact of Water Street adjacent to us and with a mural, we can get a benefit from that.

So overall, we also wanted to give you an update on where we are with the construction schedule. There's a number of elements of the project that we expect will be out to construction be constructed next year. Presently I'm going to start on the upper left and a new ADA ramp. A contractor has been selected. There'll be starting up soon but starting up for that, there's a long lead time on a lot of their supplies to build a ramp from the Cotton Transfer Bridge down to the path. So that will be under construction in 2024.

As we go around, the next one is substation screening. We're working with Eversource. Again, Park McDowells worked with us. Designed an artistic structure to help break up the view of that substation. Our expectation is through the fall we'll be working with Eversource, iron out the details with them so that we can get that under contract and under construction next year.

Then pedestrian boardwalks. You have a boardwalk from that area that goes up to the northerly bank and then a boardwalk along the northerly bank to where it ties in at Main Street. Again, final design is being completed by HL Turner and that will be advertising over the winter. There's a - I think we previously announced we had all the permits in hand but part of that fresh look to improve the accessibility led to a change in the design of the boardwalk right about where the cursor is now. We have a flatter path for the boardwalk. It'll be, I think, a very significant improvement but it does change the impacts within the river and so next week, we'll be submitting documentation to DES. We've had an initial meeting with them. We expect this to pass through to get their concurrence and approval but it's gonna take them a few months to review that and give it the okay. So we expect we'll be advertising for construction the boardwalks sometime probably February, sometime in the winter for construction in 2024.

Coming around the Bicentennial Park is going to be put out for construction in a contract along with Parc De Renaissance together. That's in final design right now. It's kind of down to there was a comment about lighting. It's kind of down to the final detailing of the lighting, and the landscaping, and a few other issues, and otherwise we will wrap up the design this fall, advertise for construction in the winter, and we expect an early spring startup for the park projects.

Then coming along to Pine Street Extension. Next year we'll be having constructed a new crosswalk at approximate location shown. If you've been in the area, you probably know that people cross in that area as opposed to where the crosswalks are presently. So we've got quite a bit of work that we will have under construction next year.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. I do - the Chair has a question to Mr. Cummings, you know, Administrative Services. Wonderful project.

Everything's going on but it's a true infrastructure question. We have like an interceptor for storm waters in that particular area. You know there's another parking lot that's up on Mechanic Street that kind of feeds into. So all these plans have been brought up that the existing infrastructure is all set. I hate to see us build something and then we have to tear it up because of old pipe or whatever is the reason. We are in communications with them and that's basically it.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. Alderman Jette.

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So on one of the slides where you show the stage, it looked to me like the stage - yes that slide there. It looks like it's not elevated is my perception correct?

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

You're correct. The decision - we went back and forth on that and the feeling was that for all the times it's not a performance, that's additional space people could be using. They could be sitting. It could be a shady structure and we felt that for times when there's not a performance, it would feel more like part of the park that could be used.

Alderman Jette

Okay.

Chairman O'Brien

We have Alderman Gouveia with Alderman Lopez in the queue.

Alderman Gouveia

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just looking at the overall project as a whole, who's in charge of the maintenance here? Is this something we contract out for or are we doing this in-house?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

No great question. If I may Mr. Chairman, it is all anticipated and as of to date, then third-party contract. That was actually something that Alderman Dowd instilled in me when we first started the conversation of using TIF and TIF funds and not wanting to overburden our Public Works Department. So the plan will be for it to be maintained by a third party.

Alderman Gouveia

Excellent. Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

Two things. The structure - the retaining wall are there going to be repairs to that because as you were talking about the murals that remember that there's sections where there's some deep cracking and a lot of water running down that.

And then secondly, the roof of the staging area. Is that far enough away from the edge that people won't try to like jump onto it?

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

So the first question. There has been some evaluation on the walls and that's ongoing. That's part of a separate effort related to the bridge. It's a great question. It's one that we haven't fully completed our evaluation of.

For your question, it's hard to tell from this angle to your second question. That might be a little easier.

Alderman Lopez

Yeah, I can see it better now.

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

Yeah the back wall, there's actually a gap of about 10 feet between that back wall and the retaining wall - the Water Street retaining wall. So the concern that someone might be up on Water Street and want to get out onto the roof, we put an offset to avoid that very concern.

Alderman Lopez

Okay because there are skaters that come down that little rampy area next to Alderman Jette's office and they seem fearless.

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

Oh they're gonna all be up onto that roof.

Alderman Lopez

They'll try. I'm more worried about the failure.

Chairman O'Brien

Let's not give everybody a bad idea here, okay.

Alderman Klee

Put up a sign.

Alderman Lopez

Don't do what you're thinking.

Alderman Klee

Ignore Alderman Lopez.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Thibeault.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So I think the slides you guys have shown look beautiful. I'm just glad Director Cummings you're not using New Market Tax Credit. But, you know, this area is very important to me because of the mills and the Nashua history and stuff. So I think it looks great. I can't wait to see it all show up. I saw the 2024 construction. When would we have the plans to wrap up all of this? Would we finish in '24 or?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

No. I would defer to Mr. Vancor on the timeline but I think it's a two-year construction cycle.

John Vancor, Project Manager, Hayner Swanson

Yeah it's definitely into a second year whether we can shave a few months off of at the end of 2025 or not. I think one of the things that remains for us to do is to really look hard now that the plans are near final to look at staging when we put it out to bid. We want to look to see if it makes sense to identify key milestones like the area around the stage wanting an early completion of that so there could possibly be some use of that while remaining work on other parts of the park continue. We just haven't had that discussion yet but that in the normal design process is really what we'll be doing now.

Alderman Thibeault

Great. Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Gouveia.

Alderman Gouveia

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a follow up back to my first question. Is there an estimated amount of what it is going to be yearly to renovate once this is all fully open and functional?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Maintained.

Alderman Gouveia

Yeah to be maintained.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

So current budget and this is kind of what we're working toward is, you know, around \$250,000 annually to maintain. That is a big part of what we're thinking about because, and I was going this kind of segways right into a talking point I want to bring up, is we're designing to a budget. So we have a certain amount of money that we can spend and we have the debt service available to pay for it through the TIF but we need to factor in operations and maintenance annual costs in that. We won't know the true costs until we obviously put this out to bid but, you know, we are very much keeping that in the forefront of our mind.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

Thank you. Again, this is great looking. I just recently did the mills tour that the Mayor and so on had arranged for their anniversary and so on. So a little bit of this was discussed but was also discussed is one of my favorite subjects, the loss of parking within that area and the changing of the direction of the road and everything. Are we actually going to lose any - I know there's gonna be more parking up on Water Street and so on. Would there be any true loss of parking or will it just be moved is my first question.

The second question is part of this is also to change the direction of Water Street and make it just a single one-way, correct? Is that what the overall?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

If I may, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman O'Brien

Absolutely.

Tim Cummins, Administrative Services Director

So that's actually a great segway to kind of talk about item number two on my list here which is – sorry. Bear with me.

Chairman O'Brien

Mr. Cummings can we hold that thought for a second if you don't mind? The Chair does have one question before we get into number two. The question is more for the public. Could you take a brief moment and explain the TIF? We are in a political season. People are wondering what we're doing with tax dollars and everything else like that. So the major funding for this where is it coming from with the TIF? I think it's a wonderful opportunity at this meeting to explain to the public and exactly how we're doing here in grants and everything else like that so please.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Thank you, yes Mr. Chairman. So a little ancient history. We started embarking on a riverfront redevelopment if you will back in the early 2000s. We started the Riverwalk actually on the other side of the river with the Kathy Hersh path that you may be aware of which is over by Jackson Falls. So we did that through a "TIF". Then I would say went quiet for a while in this area. Then back in 2015 timeframe, we studied this area in really trying to bring a new thought process to the riverfront. What we've seen other very successful cities do is reimage or reimagine their waterfront area, their river as we change from an industrial use of your river to more of a residential use or an enjoyment of a mixed of uses in your downtown as a redevelopment strategy and natural asset that would be a valued proposition for us. We developed a master plan in 2015 relative to this area and it had this idea of an expansion of a Riverwalk as well as accomplishing a few other goals: economic development, environmental stewardship. We had four or five guiding principles and it talked about some amenities that could occur down in the riverfront area that would enhance everyone's enjoyment of the waterway.

Recognizing that the City had limited funds to be able to implement this in 2017-2018 timeframe, there was the idea of expanding the tax increment financing area that was originally created in and around the Jackson Falls area that really focused on the Veterans Memorial Parkway Bridge crossing to what we did refer to affectionately the PanAm Railroad crossing on the other side of the river. That was essentially Phase III I believe off the top of my head of the master plan which was a four phased project. We wanted to basically use the tax dollars that were captured in Lofts 34 with their redevelopment and rededicated back to the area that the taxes were generated in and so that's why we expanded the TIF District. So we accumulate somewhere around \$1 million to \$1.5 million depending on the year of tax dollars that have to be spent within this TIF District and that is what's led us to the bond authorization of, you know, around off the top of my head \$22 million to be able to finance the implementation of the master plan and which is why this project is able to be able to be implemented not through your general bonding process but through the TIF funds that were set aside. So anyway, so hopefully that captures it and happy to take any questions about TIFs in particular if anyone has any.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

Are there sunset dates and timeouts for the TIF?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Yes.

Alderman Lopez

Particularly, I'm sure the public would not like to see money being captured only to benefit an area and a special outsource DPW and then the rest of the City is stuck with like our regular outstanding services but, you know, if we're going to be doing these developments, there should be a point where we stop developing and start sharing.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

So a TIF District statutorily can be in place for up to 40 years. That's rather a long length of time but it was done very wisely because you want to be able to cover the cost of bonds. So you need to give confidence to the financial markets that there would be a source of funds to repay the loan and so a TIF can be statutorily authorized up to 40 years and then it could be reauthorized if the community so desired but you have to take some sort of action by that 40th year. Now I'm

not suggesting that this TIF be in existence for that entire 40 years. I'm just being very technical in my answer. The current bond that authorization only contemplated a 20-year type of repayment schedule and I would suggest that that would be the minimum type of commitment that this community should make to be able to proceed in good stead.

Chairman O'Brien

Further questions on TIFs or anything? Okay. I didn't give you a good segway like Alderman Klee did but if you can into numbers.

- Update on reversal of Water Street and West Pearl Street and Walnut Street Oval straightening out

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

So that's great Mr. Chairman. So part of the conversation I wanted to have tonight is the idea of reversing Water Street. So to implement or execute the vision that we've been talking about over the last few years, you saw Water Street needing to be made one-way and reversed and that's to accommodate parking on Water Street. I would never say that there isn't going to be a loss of parking. I think, you know, I would be disingenuous to say we are going to keep all the parking there but we are trying to do everything feasibly possible to maintain as much parking as we can. To do that, we need to create on-street parking on Water Street and so to do that, we need to make Water Street one-way. Everything that I'm saying right now is not new. This is something that we have been discussing at least since 2016 but we're getting to a point now where we're at a level of design and we want to go to construction. We are going to need legislation authorizing this.

So one of the reasons why I wanted to have this conversation this evening is because I anticipate legislation coming before you over the next couple of months on this very specific topic. I just thought it would be good for us to talk about it in conjunction with a couple other activities that are going on right now which is the squaring off of the Walnut Street Oval or sometimes referred to as the "court house oval". This is, again, nothing new. A conversation that we have been discussing at least since the mid-2000's and then even before that I'm aware of because the idea is to connect the Broad Street Parkway down on through to Main Street as like the last phase of the of the Broad Street Parkway project. It contemplated the idea of squaring off this urban renewal project where there was a courthouse built in an oval and the idea is to square this off and reinstitute the street grid if you will.

So this kind of shows at a very high level like what we're talking about in terms of reintroducing the street grid. This is a very high-level concept that was developed back in like 2015-2016 that really just talks about trying to square this off. Another concept kind of did the same thing, again, is the year of introducing something right here and right here. Again, just to try to square this off. What I'm showing you I'm gonna be explicitly clear. These are concepts. These are not designs by any stretch. This is just to kind of help give you a visual cue of what we're going to be looking to talk about over the next few months. New Hampshire DOT has authorized some money for this project. We have started the scoping exercise to implement the squaring off of the Walnut Street Oval. So public outreach is going to begin in earnest for this conversation. We are under some time pressure because in addition to the New Hampshire DOT monies that were set aside, we got some congressionally directed funding as well on top of that. So with that being said, we know we need to move this project forward.

So there's an open house, I believe, scheduled or town hall type meeting scheduled for November 9th at 6:00 pm. here in City Hall where we will start to take public input on the ideas on this concept and on this project specifically. Again, another concept I could show you done by Hayner Swanson, a wonderful engineering firm that just talks about how you could square this off in a way that makes it a little bit more pedestrian friendly. It then also brings about the conversation about reversing West Pearl Street. So the idea is to bring the traffic from the highway down Broad Street Parkway, Pine Street, Pine Street Extension, Central Street, Central Street to West Pearl Street, West Pearl Street right to Main Street. So we are going to need to have legislation sometime in the near future not as quickly as Water Street by any stretch but if we are going to start designing in this fashion we need to make sure everyone is aware of the fact that we're going to need to reverse West Pearl Street. Again, nothing new here. This is stuff we've talked about since, again, in earnest since mid-2000's but even before that.

To have a good comfort level that we were acting in good stead with these independent roadway projects, our City Engineer very wisely, very astutely pulled me and a couple other folks aside and imparted some good wisdom which is we need to all look at this holistically. We can't do these one offs. So we, you know, with his direction did a downtown circulation study. We did one back in 2015 or thereabouts and we have since updated it. We'll be coming before you over again the next few months probably sometime before the calendar year ends to give you an overall update on the downtown circulation so everyone has confidence that if we were to do one solitary action, we would not be negatively impacting somewhere else. So again, I wanted to kind of flag that put that all on your radar.

To date the data that we've seen and all the conversations we've had with VHB the engineer that is conducting this study leads us to believe we are all acting in good stead to make some very good public policy decisions. But nonetheless, I wanted to flag this for you and I ultimately want to come back before you again sometime in the next month or two to have that more complex detailed downtown circulation conversation and then you could, you know, implement as you see fit. But nonetheless, the Water Street and the West Pearl Street roadway projects are going to be top of mind or front on the burner. So I felt it was the least I could do to revisit this conversation with you all and make you well aware of it.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. We have a question from Alderman Klee and then seeing Alderman Dowd but Chair does have a question. I know it's early in the process but on the Water Street is NFR an active participant because depending upon which way we decide of the travel that is an entry point so for the tree streets for the Amherst Street Station.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

So if I may, Mr. Chair?

Chairman O'Brien

Absolutely.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

The Fire Department has been intimately involved in this conversation from day one and actually the direction chosen for Water Street was actually at their recommendation or suggestion so we can accommodate their needs.

Chairman O'Brien

Outstanding. Good. Good. All right. Let me see Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you. You know how I feel about the West Pearl. I've wanted that flipped upside down for a long time, especially since we've been talking about the Performing Arts Center.

But my question actually is gonna go back to Water Street. You said that they chose the direction of it. So is the direction to go from Main Street or from Main Street, right? Perfect, great. Would this also - so the return of it would be like Factory Street when I like to think of one-way going one way or the other way so that would be good.

As you pointed out if we can change the direction of West Pearl coming off the Broad Street Parkway, we can actually keep people off of Main Street and still let them hit the both garages - both the High Street and the Elm Street without ever having to hit Main Street. Even if they come off Factory Street, they can still go around that oval, or square, whatever you want to call it and still hit the two with not having to focus in on Main Street, correct?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Correct.

Alderman Klee

Which is something that we've talked about for a long time to take off the pressure off of Main Street and redirect in the back end. I'm only saying this more for the public's ears because this has been a big issue is to get the stress off of Main Street but still allow the shopping and foot traffic on Main Street.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Yes Alderman Klee. You're absolutely correct. This downtown circulation is not just about Main Street but it's actually taking into consideration the ancillary inside streets just as much as the conversation of the major corridor which is obviously is Main Street. The downtown circulation study talks about opening up Spring Street so Spring Street could be two-way and studies that and makes a very affirmative recommendation that we look at implementing that. So I say that

just to hit home the point that there are going to be a lot of mini or micro recommendations that all interplay with one another that we may or may not choose to elect to pursue. We will have that conversation with you. I guess the reason why I wanted to have this conversation explicitly tonight is the time sensitive ones are going to be Water Street absolutely because we can't go under construction with the design that we're talking about right now unless there's a comfort level with Water Street.

West Pearl Street not as time sensitive but you know, is definitely coming down the pike with the time pressures that I've talked to you about relative to the squaring off of the oval.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. We have Alderman Dowd next with Alderman Comeau in the queue.

Alderman Dowd

Just a couple of things. One - we've done this massive change. People are resistant to change so and we can't have this all decided here in this chamber. We probably need Ward meetings as you try to introduce this and work with the general public to get a consensus on the change. If we do it all at once, I can see this from my 30 years of logistics. It's gonna be a logistics nightmare to all of a sudden switch everything overnight. We already have people come into Nashua and get lost when they get to the Oval. If we start changing things, even the Nashua people will get lost. So it's something to think about.

The other thing is School Street is going to be starting their rentals in October I believe. Have we looked at the traffic issues on those streets?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Yes.

Alderman Dowd

Okay.

Chairman O'Brien

And to that point, we have next is going to be Alderman Comeau and then Alderman Lopez but the Chair would like to take note. It's been past tradition of the Infrastructure Committee to actually meet twice a month, you know, if need be but the workload has been somewhat light. So now it looks like we're gonna have some pending projects so be prepared. I may actually call for a meeting of twice a month. We do have those little pesky stop signs we have to deal with but, you know, those are equally important as well. I'm willing to do it and I hope that everybody is to really get these projects ready for the spring and everything. So Alderman Comeau.

Alderman Comeau

Oh yes, thank you. So Director Cummings I know we've talked about this a number of times. You know, I'm a supporter of the project but I'm curious. I know you said that these are just conceptual designs. Obviously, nothing's final or anything but on most of them, they involve significant changes to the inside of the oval. Does Pennichuck have any plans to relocate or I know they just finished a lot of construction there. Is that building going to remain as is?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Yes, great question. So a lot of what you were seeing was pre-Pennichuck actually going in there. That was back when the building was empty. Again, this is not a new issue. This is something we've been talking about since the mid-2000's and we've had some of these design concepts developed prior to the courthouse actually being filled. So I'm not exactly sure when this one was developed but I'm pretty sure that this one that you're looking at right here was developed probably back in the 2014-2015 timeframe. So, you know, this was really the way I wanted to approach this conversation and helping to tease out with visual cues what this area could look like. That's all this is right now is to just kind of show you, hey this area is in play, it's changing, and hopefully over the next few months we will take that community input, and we will take that feedback, and we will actually develop a design. What we know is we have construction dollars allocated and we will actually develop a construction project over the next few years.

What you're seeing here is not going to come about anytime soon. It's going to come about in a few years from now and you'll ultimately see this come to fruition. Something that will accomplish goals that I've heard this community talk about making something pedestrian friendly, helping make things a complete street type concept with, you know, multimodal type transportation, trying to connect people from the Broad Street Parkway to Main Street. These are the goals I've heard you talk about and we will start to look at designs that implement some of these values.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

Since the designs are kind of older and we've had things like the "one-way do not enter" signs put in over by the bus station and such. When you have the Performing Arts Center getting out are you going to send 600 people down Garden Street or?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

I'm sorry. Say that again Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

So the Performing Arts Center if they have a show and there's like 600 people and the people who are parked there can't go out through the bus station or anything, then do they go out through Garden Street because they can't go - I mean if West Pearl is going the wrong way. You're either dumping a bunch of cars onto Main Street or people are trying to go home and they're gonna want to leave that area. The two streets that are right adjacent to the exit other than West Pearl are very small.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Well you'd be on Walnut. I'm sorry you'd be on Elm Street and you'd make a left or you'd make a right I guess.

Alderman Lopez

Yeah if you go right, you're going back on Main Street.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

You're going to be going back on Main Street and I would say you're only going to do that if you're going east, right? You're only going to do that if you're going to travel east but if you are going to be traveling you know west or north, I fully anticipate that you would you'd be going left out of the garage on Elm Street.

Alderman Lopez

Because you're making a bunch of one-way streets like Factory Street would be going back to Main Street. That looks great if you can get onto the right part of it but if not, you're gonna get stuck right in the middle of downtown. So just hoping you're considering that how traffic might if we don't come up with a solution, you're gonna spend a lot of cars through some narrow neighborhoods.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Understood and it's a point well taken. I think when we actually start to get into the real deeper conversation, you might hear more of a conversation of two-way traffic more than one-way.

Alderman Lopez

Okay.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

So, you know, but that's part of the conversation that we'd be looking to have.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. Alderman Jette.

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So it was great to hear that Engineer Hudson was advocating for a broader look. I hope the broader look includes the east side of Main Street as well. I think they're all - and when you start changing the one-way system, you know, I think it has repercussions on the east side. Right now the traffic - Factory is one-way going east onto Temple which goes east and then you've got West Pearl going west. I mean East Pearl going west onto West Pearl. If you change West Pearl and then change East Pearl, there's a...

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

I couldn't agree more Alderman Jette. I think we started this conversation by saying that this absolutely each thing has an element that affects another area of the City and we need to be cognizant of that. So yes, your point is well taken. We need to be very conscious of that. I'm going to answer your question by saying yes we're absolutely taking the east side of Main Street into consideration. I'm going to actually hand it off to Director Sullivan though. Hopefully he can talk into a little bit more detail about the boundaries.

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you Director Cummings and Mr. Chair if I may respond to Alderman Jette?

Chairman O'Brien

Absolutely.

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

When we do come forward with a presentation on the downtown circulation update, as I'll phrase it, you'll see several components to that. Above all else, the scope of the study area really is bounded on the north side by the bridge - the Main Street Bridge itself and our newly reconstructed CSX crossing of course. Then on the east side by Spruce Street, generally Pine Street to the west, and then really East and West Hollis Street to the south. While that boundary exists, I would communicate that it's a porous boundary in the sense that at the expense of those boundary, we're considering traffic counts and vehicle volumes that are moving through all of those areas.

So all of the results that are ultimately presented to you at a later meeting whether in October or November will contemplate not only the volumes that we observed within that study area but those that are entering it and we actually contemplated potential future developments, such as the School Street/High Street new residential building and even some down the road developments that we think might be in the pipeline within that downtown corridor area but also outside of it. So frankly, I would suggest that we took a very conservative approach and overestimated volumes both now and in the future but we hope to present that to you at that time in October or November.

Chairman O'Brien

Follow up?

Alderman Jette

Okay and if I could just - and maybe I think you alluded to the possibility of abandoning this one-way system and going back to a two-way system which could have some benefits of calming the traffic down and solving some of these problems.

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director/Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Agreed.

- Continuing the design to bring passenger rail to New Hampshire

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. We appear to be done with the Water and West Pearl Street? Good. We seem to be chugging right along and I appreciate everybody staying on track. So with that as a segway, let's open up to discussion on our next stop is the commuter rail.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Yes, passenger rail. I have a handout and I apologize.

Chairman O'Brien

Yes feel free to pass it out.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Thank you.

Without objection, Chairman O'Brien accepted the communication that was received after the agenda was prepared.

From: Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director
Re: Commuter Rail Discussion

There being no objection, Chairman O'Brien accepted the communication and placed it on file.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

All right. So Mr. Chairman again for the record, Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director, and with me to join me in this conversation is Director Matt Sullivan. He and I along with Jay Minkarah as some of you may know a Nashua resident also Executive Director of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission have been working over the last few months on the commuter rail/passenger rail issue. So what I wanted to do this evening is provide you with a status update as to what we've been working on over the last six or so months and sort of telegraph what we anticipate coming about down the pike over the next few months should you all be in agreement.

So just for setting up the table purposes and particularly for the viewers watching, six – nine months ago, the State in their wisdom made a decision to stop the contract that was underway relative to designing the project design phase of the expansion of passenger rail into New Hampshire. The Governor's Council elected not to extend a contract amendment that would give additional time for the contract to be finished up. So with that happening, that kind of put a pause in at least the state-wide level of conversation on this subject. When that pause occurred when that contract did not get continued or extended, the question then arose as to whether there was an appetite to continue the study of this project design phase at some other level of government whether that's the local, regional, County but nonetheless, what we knew is there wouldn't be necessarily "State participation".

The cities of Nashua and Manchester got together, and the Mayors, and some key senior staff talked about some ideas, and concepts, and all very much still very on the table in terms of continuing that study. That was paused if we were to do that design development phase project, it'd be a million(ish) dollars and we would need to fund that. That is obviously an ongoing conversation that we are absolutely not ruling out but we understand that here in Nashua that there's also possibly a Nashua first approach. So fast forwarding through the summertime, there was some internal conversations here in the City about the idea of well could Nashua see if they could take over this project design development phase but have it be a somewhat tweak to it where it was a Nashua first type of incremental step.

With that being said, we engaged with AECOM the consultant that was doing the state-wide study. We had some initial conversations with them over the summertime about figuring out what a scope of work would be to basically do an assessment. So what they came back to us with is basically a two phased approach of studying the feasibility of a Nashua first approach. Anything I should say we do here now does not rule out a potential larger, more wider implementation of the true capital corridor project. This would run, you know, in tandem or in parallel but it would not be to anyone's detriment in that regard.

So anyway with that being said, AECOM developed a scope of work in essentially two phases or two tasks. Task one would be about \$75,000 and that would be just initial conversations with the MBTA to understand what their appetite may be and whether we could actually feasibly or realistically implement a design development phase with the Nashua first approach.

So from there, we can make an assessment or a determination whether we want to continue on with what would definitely need to occur to have a full understanding of a Nashua first approach which is phase two is basically building out a business plan and understanding what the operational plan would be. That all and in would be about \$200,000 to \$225,000 thereabouts. The entire project would, you know, assessment would be \$300,000 and then we would have some good data to decide whether we wanted to proceed with continuing the state-wide level effort that occurred that got paused about six, nine months ago where we would have to look at redoing environmental documents. We would have to look at potentially applying for some federal grant funding but basically what we would do is if we proceeded with that tweaked or amended design development phase based off of this work that we did. We would be at 30% design or preliminary engineering which would then put us in a position to actually be able to talk about federal dollars that could be made available to us. That is a critical point that we need to get to, to be able to entertain the idea of actually implementing or executing based on some sort of federal match.

So what I'm proposing and what I'm putting before you is the idea of us pursuing and all we're doing is obligating ourselves to task one right now which would be about \$75,000 to have a conversation with the MBTA about a Nashua first approach.

If we like what we hear, we would then continue on and elect to pursue task two and that the total contract would be about \$300,000. Again, none of that would necessarily apply to the million(ish) dollars and I don't know what the new dollar would be once we tweaked this to have it be a Nashua first approach but I just want to be clear that this \$300,000 couldn't be credited towards that dollar amount. So we could then have that conversation about whether we actually want to pursue a Nashua first approach.

Now you may be asking yourself why would we elect to pursue a Nashua first approach. It appeared through the media that came out when this project got stopped that it was going to be very expensive and cost prohibitive. I don't know that to be true. I know it's certainly suggested to be the case but at the analysis that was provided to us by AECOM is that from Lowell to Nashua, we know that it is going to be approximately \$120 million - \$150 million, somewhere in that range. Under that study, it suggests that maybe the MBTA would be willing to pick up that cost. I'm assuming for this conversation that not to be true. It would mean that the onus of that would have to fall on to the, you know, onto the State of New Hampshire or the local level in this case the City of Nashua in some way.

What I believe to be true is right now we have unprecedented federal infrastructure monies available to you and the AECOM has suggested to us that it is not out of the realm of possibility and something that we should take seriously is a 50% match. So at a 50% match at between \$120 and \$150 million, you're talking about \$60(ish) million dollars. You're talking about \$80(ish) million dollars which is significant monies no doubt but is not out of the realm of feasible for the City of Nashua to undertake such a capital project. I would suggest to you, you could look at one of our good schools and see how much it costs us to build a new school and this would be something along those lines of a comparable cost but we don't even know whether that to be true until we actually start to do this design and this study.

One of the elements at hand is contemplating of a layover station. That layover station was always anticipated to be in Manchester. We may learn that we'll need to provide a layover station for the MBTA to be interested and if that's the case, we need to figure that out. We may hear conversation with the MBTA and they'll rule it out right away to say that we really want to get further than Nashua if we're actually to take this project on and that's absolutely fine and true. We don't know any of this to date. So that's why I felt it important to bring this conversation to you, make a recommendation to you for \$75,000. We do some additional work, have a conversation with the appropriate community partners, with the appropriate stakeholders, the MBTA in particular, have an understanding as to what their appetite may be. If there is an interest in continuing on, you have a business plan that would get developed and you'd have an understanding of what that operational model would be, and then we could have another further conversation of whether we want to continue this Nashua first approach.

So with that being said Mr. Chairman, I wanted to have this conversation with you this evening because I anticipate an escrow being asked for to be able to fund this study. I just didn't want to, you know, not have an opportunity to have this conversation before the escrow process was upon you. So with that being said Mr. Chairman, I would hand it off to Director Sullivan for any additional comments in case I left anything out but I thought I would just try to provide a quick overview as to where we're at right now.

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

Mr. Chair I'll be very brief. Director Cummings has left me quite speechless and with very little ground to cover. I would only use the time to quickly reiterate the fact that the timing of the Governor and Council decision to not renew the contract or extend the contract rather was particularly problematic based on the scope of work that remained within that study. Critically what I'm referring to is the fact that at that time, significant coordination or really much coordination had not taken place with the MBTA and FTA about the viability of actually completing the project.

So to come back to the scope of the work that's right in front of you this evening, I would suggest the \$75,000 being specifically contemplated as part of the sort of task one of this work is critical not only for the City of Nashua but for other potential communities in the region that might be interested in extension. So I would just recommend to this body that this \$75,000 in my opinion is a wise use of funds to at least explore what the possibilities of this project might look like. We're certainly not suggesting either Director Cummings nor I are suggesting that you know \$60 million of capital investment is the right thing for this Board and this community to do. We simply need to know what that cost would look like, what coordination steps might be needed to be taken, what funding opportunities might exist, and more importantly what infrastructure would actually be needed. We feel that this \$75,000 and the phase one work is particularly critical to doing that. Obviously, phase two work relative to the ridership scenarios and the different build out options is important but this sort of what we've referred to colloquially as a "no go or go" indication as part of coordination we think is very, very important. So I'd add only that to reiterate Director Cummings' comments and I think we'd be happy to answer any questions that this Committee has.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. Did you Alderman Jette, you as well? I'm going to put you in the queue.

Alderman Jette

Yes put me in it.

Chairman O'Brien

Mr. Cummings I'm glad that you - the Chair does have a couple of points I want to clean up. I'm glad that you mentioned the MBTA. A lot of people may be assuming that you're talking from the Massachusetts border to Lowell the continuation but from working on this project for about 16 years up at the Statehouse, the MBTA has full passenger authority in the State of New Hampshire. I don't know how that ever happened but it does happen. So they need to be an active participants with this as well. I'm kind of hoping maybe with this \$75,000 will open up the door for opportunity for discussion. But what I would really like to hit home on a fiscal matter, you know, this is to me somewhat short money on something that's very important to look at. But where is the \$75,000 going to actually come from, you know, as far as in our books and everything?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So first a little history on the passenger rights. So as you may or may not know, there are differing rights that you can own when it comes to railroads and the particular rights at hand that we're talking about are what's called "passenger rights". The MBTA through as I understand it settlement based on the Big Dig acquired the passenger rights for the expansion of passenger rail into the State of New Hampshire by PanAm back when there was some work done in Charlestown and the rail yard in and around that area. So that is why we need to specifically work with the MBTA on this very particular subject matter.

Relative to where this monies would come from and this this kind of gets into a broader conversation relative to the escrows, so we have some surplus monies based off of last year's budgeting. I would put before you it is entirely appropriate and a very wise use of monies to put towards capital projects or projects in general that have a beginning, and a middle, and an end through an escrow process. Otherwise, you would be hampering this community or any municipality's ability to actually implement projects. You would essentially - there's only two times a year essentially when you have an opportunity to initiate or execute on projects during your traditional spring budgeting season and then during your fall surplus escrowing process. So what I recommend because I would hate for us to lose another 6 - 9 months by just waiting to next spring's budget to use some available monies to us, particularly through excess economic development salary which is where this would be coming from, I had recommended that we put it into to the escrow and I believe it is actually before the Budget Review Committee.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. So this would start in approving \$75,000 in this Committee but then it would be transferred to the Budget Committee, correct?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

No, Mr. Chairman. No, no, no no. So this is an informal conversation that I wanted to put before you really in an effort to be transparent and provide an opportunity to have a conversation before it actually was taking up at Budget Review during legislation that is officially filed.

Chairman O'Brien

Outstanding. Good. All right. We have several people that would like to speak. We have Alderman Thibeault, Lopez, and Jette in the queue. So Alderman Thibeault.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you, Mr. Chair. So you know I have a couple of questions that are quick but I think the \$75,000 is a no brainer. We would be really - it would be a disservice to the City if we didn't at least take a look at this and like you said, that's short money or like Director Sullivan said short money. I think we have to do it. I think it's the right thing.

My two questions are one - the Mayor of Manchester Mayor Craig seems to be all for passenger rail. So my first question is why is Manchester not part of this? And then two when you said about federal monies, are you talking about those toll credits that are available, or is that something we can't get because we're not going with the State, or is that something we can still access?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

If I may Mr. Chairman?

Chairman O'Brien

Absolutely.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

I was not referring to toll credits at all. What I was referring to is just federal what is termed "grant monies". Its discretionary money through the federal agencies, federal transportation agencies in particular, where they provide you know dollars for capital projects. We know that there's been some transportation bond bills at the federal level that has authorized, you know, unprecedented amount of funding that is making its way through agencies where we would need to make an application. To be able to make application you have to be at a certain level of design.

Alderman Thibeault

Could we use those toll credits or no?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

I don't believe we could. That would be a State level and maybe in the future and that is a conversation to be had but this would be, you know, really a project driven not at the State level but at the local or regional level.

Relative to your question about Manchester, and I want to be clear on this point, this is not to the exclusion of Manchester. I think we absolutely would welcome Manchester to be part of the conversation. I refer to this as a Nashua first approach. This is not a Nashua only approach.

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

May I Mr. Chair?

Chairman O'Brien

Yes.

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

Just very briefly to add on to Director Cummings' comments of the second question. We certainly do not want to suggest the Mayor Craig is not supportive of commuter rail extension. That's not the objective of the scope of work. The conversation with the City of Manchester and the staff in Manchester is ongoing. That may sound cliché but it is true. It's an active conversation right now. I think what we're really trying to do is capture both the rightness of the work that's been done to date, and the momentum behind that work, and recognize that we likely have resources available to continue that work today. Manchester's conversation is ongoing about the availability of those resources but that may change at any point in time but we certainly think that it will be good and wise for us to have an understanding of what this Nashua first option might look like recognizing that there's a capital component to this project that may take even more time and involve more agencies and parties. So I think even if Manchester does ultimately come onboard which I think we're certainly hopeful that they will, this conversation has value and this study work does have value based in the capital cost that we know will be involved.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Yeah and if I may as a State Rep. to Alderman Thibeault, the toll credit concept is discussing the State as part of a possible funding mechanism. It's an idea. It's conceptual. There's nothing really etched in stone so that the people know it. That's why you pay a toll on the Everett Turnpike and all that money that gets collected is supposed to singularly just go to the turnpike. But where it builds up some escrow monies, we were looking at, perhaps maybe that could be a source of funding but that's if the State jumped in and to include Manchester would be the best. That doesn't mean that the door can't be open for negotiations on this end of the project. It has to come through Nashua no matter what, where it goes. That's where Nashua gets the term "gate city" because we were the gateway to New Hampshire via the railroad. So we're kind of following - we were kind of closed minded in 1968, when they stopped commuter rail very short time later. Now we're trying to get it back. Talk about short sightedness. Somebody saved a buck I guess but this is basically it.

We do have people so that would be you Alderman Jette. Yes. Excuse me, no Alderman Lopez. Don't get excited, I saw your hand.

Alderman Lopez

1968 was a short time for some people but a lifetime for others. But Director Cummings I just wanted to clarify. There was some social media commentary about how the Mayor was planning on spending millions of dollars to build a grand central station. The original article has disappeared. The conversation and the debate around it has continued which is one of the problems with social media is the original poster can retract the post and then, you know, what is there to look at?

I believe the original comment was just because Mayor Craig during her campaign made comments that were favorable to rail and Mayor Donchess expressed that generally agreed that it would have a lot of economic benefits. So following that, I had reached out to you and said like are there any plans, can we get some presentation, all that kind of stuff. So I think your presentation tonight is very well timed for that purpose. I think it's also important to point out that the \$78,000 that we would be spending here it's been referred to a couple of times in different ways but I would consider a rule out. When you're trying to diagnose, you also have to rule out things that it's not like if you have somebody who's super hyperactive and you know unusually manic, you don't want to start diagnosing them as psychotic if you didn't make sure they're not high, or like intoxicated, or any number of things that you should rule out.

So likewise if we're going to engage in any kind of future development along rail, we should rule out whether or not it's a bad idea from the start. So that Nashua first model at least getting us to the starting point of engaging the MBTA. In the handout that you gave, it also identified engaging the State of New Hampshire. We can't move forward without engaging those two entities. So spending the money to do that rules out whether this is a non-starter. If we can engage them positively and we can get some traction in terms of willingness to contribute monies bring the price down to a reasonable investment on the part of Nashua taxpayers, that's a benefit. But the second part is it also allows us to provide publicly available and factual information as opposed to rumors and social media posts that get a lot of traction and a lot of back and forth even though the original post is gone.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

And so to that point Mr. Chairman, that's one of the biggest reasons why I wanted to have this conversation. There's a lot of hyperbole out there and I just I feel it's important for us to have facts. It's you all that have to make the decision as the policymakers. I can make recommendations to you. I can provide options and advice but ultimately, I felt it important to bring this before you so you can make this decision. One I wholeheartedly recommend. I think it would be a disservice not to explore this conversation.

Alderman Lopez

And if I might just follow up to the Chair?

Chairman O'Brien

Yes. Follow up.

Alderman Lopez

One of the comments that I pointed out was that any plan any actual plan coming before the City would come before this Committee. A plan hasn't been presented in years since I think Boston Surface Rail at least and that was their plan. So that's what I think citizens should know is that any talk of planning or resources should come with how it was presented to the Aldermen not just the rumors that it might have been and everyone's responsible for going to look it up. As far as I know, the Infrastructure Committee hasn't actually had any plan other than right now which is more the idea to fund the study to develop the possibility of a plan or to determine if a plan is worth it.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. We have Alderman Jette with Alderman Klee in the queue.

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So I think, you know, I think that \$75,000 seems like a pretty low number and well worth it but having been the former Chairman of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission, the idea that you talk about a Nashua first and I understand that but there are a lot of towns that make up. You know we are part of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission and there are a lot of towns that make up I think it's 13. So \$75,000 sounds like a small number and for that reason, I'm wondering if we talk to our neighbors who would benefit from this as well as Nashua. When you're talking \$75,000 dividing that up by 13, comes up with some pretty low numbers. I don't want to make your job more difficult and I don't want to throw a wrench in the works here because I know you oftentimes have to operate on fairly short timelines but the idea of approaching our neighbors to see whether or not we could get them to share in this, you know, if we're talking small amounts of money, they may be more willing to do that and it may get them on board to the whole concept which if this is in fact feasible, a regional approach would be more attractive I think to the federal money that we're looking after. So I just throw that out as a concept suggestion.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

If I may Mr. Chairman? I think that's a great idea. I think it's a wonderful concept. I completely agree with you. I will say for the record, I don't think it would be fair to put this entire burden onto the Nashua taxpayer when it is a regional benefit. I'm not sure we will get that cooperation at the end of the day. I'm not sure that there will be that vision that Nashua has but we should not rule out the possibility of having that conversation. I twist a little bit about what you're saying and the fact that I wouldn't necessarily want to do it for this feasibility study per se but I think it absolutely needs to occur with developing an operational plan and a capital plan. So I would think that that would absolutely be part of the conversation for the development of those business plans and one I think that we could have and I would want to have.

I've thought about this long and hard myself as to whether - and I'm making this up - I don't have any guidance or any data yet to support this but in conversations with Director Sullivan when we were trying to scope this concept out thinking a few steps ahead, you know, is it that Nashua residents get charged X amount of dollars operationally and then non-Nashua residents get charged a Y amount of money to ride the train? Maybe. I don't know but I think that that is absolutely going to be a variable or an ingredient that gets added to the mix so we need to have that conversation.

Alderman Jette

Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Mr. President. First, I wanted to - one of the things I said that I went on the mill tour and one of the things that I had not realized was the original rail for New Hampshire was right here in Nashua. In 1838, the Nashua/Lowell railroad came into here. So we were the first rail into this State. So I'd love to see us bring that back. It's what brought us to become the mill that we are.

But now putting that aside, I'm glad that Alderman Jette brought up the working with the other communities and so on. I also like the idea because I had written it down of potentially, you know, when we get to that point maybe if the burden does fall more on our taxpayers that there's a benefit to it. Kind of like the EZ Pass was when it first came if you got it from your State and so on. But the thing that I want to comment, and this is probably a diss towards other communities, having been in the State House and having seen rail tossed around like a political football, it's always been someone else take care of the burden and so on. So I would love us do the \$75,000 to kind of get that ball rolling and then to try to get the other communities buy in with a plan that if you buy in, you're going to pay the same as the Nashua residents. Kind of almost put that forward to incentivize them because otherwise what I found was the north didn't give a darn about the south and they had as much if not more voting power than we had down here and that's why things die. So I would like to almost put an incentive plan in if we all work together, this is what your benefit is going to be. I just I think that's really important but as we stand now just talking about the \$75,000, I would be very foregoing forward with it so thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. Alderman Gouveia.

Alderman Gouveia

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. More of a statement here but I think I agree with what was said by our previous speakers. There needs to be some sort of incentive by the Nashua taxpayer, especially if they take on a majority of this burden. We're talking if we go through with this project from A to Z, and this is substantial, this is a lot of money that's going to be spent. As much as I love serving the region as a hub to get to Boston, they're not the ones paying for it we are. I think there has to be a very big part of the conversation is how we make this enticing? How do I go to my Ward and tell the residents that this is the right thing to do and here's what you're gonna get from it but, you know, everybody else in surrounding communities could also do this but they're just gonna let us pay the bill. They'll drive 15 minutes from Hudson and take the train and be in perfectly. I think it's those type of conversations that have to happen and I think it's a hard thing to monitor but I think to have a successful plan in place for rail in Nashua, I think, we need a good incentive for our Nashua taxpayers who at the end of the day will probably end up putting a big chunk of this bill if not all.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

I couldn't agree more Mr. Chairman with Alderman Gouveia's comments. I think that what we're looking to do is to bring in the experts and the consultants to the table so we can have this conversation. This very sophisticated conversation with some confidence that we're getting the right accurate information so decisions can be made. I think, you know, they will provide some of this background intelligence, maybe tell us a little bit how we could structure it in a way that is feasible. Places, you know, have done this previously and how it's been successful and then we can go from there. I mean I completely agree with one of the guiding principles that I think needs to be at the onset of this conversation is if we do a Nashua first approach, how do we make sure it's fair to the Nashua taxpayer? What that actually is at the end of the day, I don't know yet but if we can kind of state that affirmatively at the beginning and recognize that that is our value, I think we would be positioning ourselves very well for a conversation.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Comeau.

Alderman Comeau

Thank you, Mr. Chair. So Director Cummings as part of this study is one of the things they're going to be looking at potential ridership? I actually ride the Lowell line fairly often and it's not like people are fighting for seats on those except for maybe a couple of times a week. Certainly not the way that you're going to fight your way onto a green line after a Red Sox game but when we talk about this being cost effective in my mind it's not just how much will it cost us to build the station, and the line, and everything but will we sell enough tickets for riders that it's going to make it worth our while in the first place? Is ridership something that we're going to look at with the scope of the study?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Yes, absolutely. So when I say the business plan or the operational model, that would be taking absolutely some ridership forecasting and implementing it into the mix so you have that data to be able to make a decision. That would come in task two though to be clear. So right now, task one to kind of break it all down is let's take the temperature of the MBTA. Then task two is let's develop the business plan and see if between the two there's a feasibility where we can, you know, make a go no go type of assessment.

Alderman Comeau

Thank you.

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

Mr. Chair, quickly if I may.

Chairman O'Brien

Yes you may.

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do want to point out that the coordination and task one is not simply with the MBTA. There are several other jurisdictions and entities involved here. New Hampshire Department of Transportation was mentioned but it's also critical to point out that our friends at CSX are an active stakeholder and owner in this case and have had some engagement with the prior work done at the State level but have not been engaged in some time and so there are critical stakeholder as is Mass DOT. So those parties are outlined in the task one scope of work in front of you but it's really that four-pronged outreach and coordination that's being done within task one and then a presentation of the results of that outreach to the City closing out that task one work.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. Alderman Thibeault.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I hope and I would think that every single Alderman and Alderwoman here in Nashua would be 100% for, you know, other people using it and we don't want to foot the whole bill. That's something that I think at some point we will have to have going, you know, as the project goes or doesn't go forward. I think - that's - I mean we've got to protect our own in that case, right?

But I think in some ways we're putting the cart before the horse, right? We want to see where we can get the \$75,000 get the study. So I assume right now you're going to the next step is you're taking this to the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee will decide if they'll talk about it, decide if we go forward with it, and then it comes to us as the Board of Aldermen to go forward there, and then you guys would start the finishing of the study or this first task study.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

The start of the study. We would start the study.

Alderman Thibeault

The start of the study. Okay. So you're not finishing what they were already working on. Your task one is the beginning of

a brand-new study on this?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Correct.

Alderman Thibeault

Okay and that will tell us the stuff that we'll need to know in the future for the next committee I guess. I don't know where we go after that but.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Well then you would have to make an assessment based on the whether it's feasible or not. Let's assume its not feasible, right? Let's assume that it's not feasible. Then you're going to need to make a decision as to whether we want to, you know, pursue the contract that did not get extended which the unfinished scope of work was somewhere in the order of magnitude of about a million dollars - a little less than that maybe. That would be environmental permitting and some grant applications at the federal level but you'd be at 30% design predicated with some assumptions. It's predicated on some assumptions. You'd have to, you know, basically then decide to continue with that project and to bring it to the next level of design. That would be executing the "capital corridor project" up to Manchester.

If it comes back and says this is feasible, then what would occur is we would need to develop a scope that would amend the project that did not continue and adapt it if you will taking the prior work and basically make it an incremental approach to the capital corridor study using a lot of work that was done prior and then adding in some new work based on this more incremental approach. That may not be a million dollars. That may be a million dollars. We will find that out when we get there and then we can elect to proceed.

Alderman Thibeault

Great, thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

I would just like to say my involvement up at the State level with this - one of the selling points. I had a Chairman of the Transportation Committee and he was all about flying cars and says you know they're gonna replace commuter rail. I'm thinking oh they're going to expand Logan? You know here's the rub. You want to go to Boston, what are you gonna do with your car? I don't care if it's electric, runs on gasoline, coal, steam, or you fly it down there what are you going to do with it? The rate of parking. So it's looking at the future. Why not give our citizens the opportunity to go down to Boston and earn the Boston working wage and then to come back with a paycheck and spend it right here in good old tax-free New Hampshire. It makes perfect sense to me and it's one of the things that I have been working on.

Now unfortunately with the State, yeah they got cows up north. They don't want to spend money on the police force because they talked to State Police to come in and help them out. Yet we in Nashua pay for the State Police force to give them protection. They don't have a fire department and actually what happens is we end up plowing their roads - State roads. I don't see plow trucks going on Route 130 in our City. So we take care of a lot of things but unfortunately to try to get this concept up in Concord to get it through has been a political battle that is too bad.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Mr. Chairman what I like to do is I like to think about the positives that come about through this project. One of the ones that comes back to mind every time I study this is the idea that we'll be removing single vehicular vehicles off of the Everett Turnpike and Route 3. The congestion that builds up that I think a lot of Nashua residents sit in when you get to Lowell trying to get onto Route 95. We'll be moving some of those single occupancy vehicles off of the roadway. The environmental stewardship through this type of project is going to be absolutely amazing and it's one of the things that I think gets lost from time to time that I think we should be cognizant of as we think about the positive attributes to potentially implementing such a project.

Chairman O'Brien

Well stated. I couldn't agree with you more but to keep it going, Alderman Klee. I'll let you do clean up.

Alderman Klee

Thank you. I don't know if it'll be clean up. A couple of comments and a question. I had asked Director Sullivan here when looking through the document about whether or not the discussions with CSX and so on have taken place or if this is the plan. I got a little bit of yes. So I know the tiny conversation at a very low level happened with CSX.

I know that in the conversation that we had about those that were on - the homeless on Temple Street as well as talking about the rail here going across Main Street. One of the comments in our conversation that CSX had kind of alluded to was that they're trying to upgrade and fix their tracks so that they can handle people in these trains which right now they can't do. So I just want to kind of put that out is that we can see that they're moving towards a positive direction too which gives me some encouragement and nice to know that they're part of this project as well.

The last page of your of your document where it talks about the job hours and labor classification, this is for the overall because it has a price tag of \$280,000. Is that that \$75,000+ the 225 and this is kind of the guesstimate of what the overall project would be not just that first step of 75,000? Is that what this is here?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

That's correct. So what you're seeing in the last page is, again, it's a guesstimate. It does not have a contingency built into it but it is basically task one or phase one is going to be about \$75,000 when you include miscellaneous expenses. Then task two is the remainder which, you know, brings you up to that \$280,000. Again having done this enough times now, we're dealing with design professionals and engineers. Things come up along the way where we're going to need to potentially spend some additional monies on anticipated. This doesn't have a contingency so if you were to add in another 10% onto the 280 or the 260, you know, we're talking about \$300,000.

Alderman Klee

Mr. Chair?

Chairman O'Brien

Follow up?

Alderman Klee

Yeah just a quick question. So the reason I brought this up was because of the dollar amount but to also it kind of outlines the tasks. I know it's within the documentation but when we talk about task two, the very first item is the ridership forecasting which was brought up earlier. So I just wanted to point out that that is built into the second portion of this of this task. So thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. Any further questions on the tentative commuter rail project? Okay seeing none.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Yeah Mr. Chairman I just wanted to thank you all. I am very thankful for this conversation.

Chairman O'Brien

Well I'm not letting you off the hook yet. You did say that if somebody wants to field an off-topic question, you would be available, correct?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Absolutely.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. So before you get the exit, does anybody have anything that want to bring up to Assistant Director Cummings or

Director Matt Sullivan? Yes, Alderman Thibeault.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you Mr. Chair. When will we get another presentation or another update on the parking garages because that's something that I know Alderman O'Brien has brought up several times and it's something that I feel is very important that we don't get to a point where it's too late to fix them in a reasonable time. The building costs are constantly going up and things like that. So I see some smiles.

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

We'll look at the time. No we have an update.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Director Sullivan and I participated in a parking interview ironically enough this afternoon where we are looking to bring on what's called "an owners project manager" to manage the construction project with the design professionals and the construction manager. I could say with some confidence that it's probably a November timeframe when we'll have an official report to give to you because we have interviews going on in October. I would anticipate, you know, after we finished the interview process, we'll be able to provide you a better, more comprehensive update in November and with an anticipation of us really kind of getting into the project sometime next spring. Remember, we are in the design right now and I can provide you an update as to where we are with design in November.

Alderman Thibeault

Great. Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Yeah positively we are actively working on it. There's been a couple of meetings. Once we get some more engineering reports come back with the solution but been very informative. Anybody else? Alderman Jette.

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So since we're talking about things that have been on the back burner for a while, what about the parking study itself? The parking study is complete. We've had a report. What about implementing any changes that came about as a result of that study?

Chairman O'Brien

Do you want to field that Director?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Happy to Mr. Chairman. So what we are working on right now is actually the development of a business plan or a business model to take the very first recommendation that was made that would move the parking service that is provided here in Nashua into an enterprise type model where the expenses and the revenue would be covered not borne by the Nashua taxpayer. Right now Andy Hill our consultant with Desmond is working actively on developing that business model, has met extensively with actually CFO Griffin over the last four weeks or so, and will be developing this pro forma for us which I hope to bring before us sometime before the calendar year because I would like to suggest to your point that we come to some sort of decision on that before the budget next spring.

Alderman Jette

Okay, thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Jette and I'm sure you remember, when we started this sojourn of the parking study and overnight parking like I said, there's no quick fix to this but it's actively on the front burner still. There are meetings and working with Jill Stansfield

of the Parking Department and like you say, Mr. Hill and everything. So we're heading to the goal. It's being done in phases so it's working out pretty good I have to say, you know, and identifying some of the problems that were brought up in some of the areas, and discuss some of the towing issues, and everything else. So everything new stuff keeps coming in so we are handling it so it is good. Anybody else? Seeing none. Now I'll give it to you for clean up there.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate tonight's conversation. I'll note that it was relatively positive with everyone. I didn't really hear too much negativity. If I misunderstand some of that feedback from you all, please correct me let me know along the way but I think this was a good continuing conversation of subjects that we've been discussing along the way absent any direction. Otherwise, I'll just continue moving along as I've previously discussed with you. So I wanted to just take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to be here tonight to present.

I want to just kind of wrap up by saying I only talked about three topics tonight and then we obviously started to get into the parking garages. There's a couple other projects I could come before you and speak on that I'd love to provide you an update on: Elm Street Middle School, Court Street, Court Street Theater. These are kind of just some items that are hanging out there as well that are important for you to know that I would love to provide you all a status update on. I'd be happy to come before you at another meeting at some point to provide some of those updates as well. So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman O'Brien

Yeah and I would shore it with permission of the Committee which I think I could have here. If the dockets light, not heavy, maybe we can take the individual subject matters.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

NIMCO is another one.

Chairman O'Brien

To bring it up. So seeing if there's an interest with that, I'll work with you on that for scheduling. We'd like to have you.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman O'Brien

The Committee would like to thank you Mr. Sullivan and your crew here for coming this evening and informing us. It was, I think, it's good for us in the Committee, great for the public so thank you so much.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Thank you.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS - None

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE

- L Deerwood Drive – Lot H-103

GENERAL DISCUSSION - None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Representative Marty Jack

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I'm Representative Marty Jack, 83 Cadigan Way. I'm on the Public Works and Highways Committee. I thought it would take the opportunity explain what a toll credit is. Toll credits are not money. They arise when the turnpike system does work on the turnpike. It goes back to the fact that the turnpike system predates the interstate system and part of the turnpike system has interstate numbering. So some of the time when we do work on the turnpike, it creates a - if we spend \$1 on the turnpike, it creates \$1 in toll credit. The only thing a toll credit can be used for typically on a highway project it will be 80% federal, 20% State. So a toll credit can be used to supply the 20% match even though it is not money. Then you have to supply the full cost of the product in the federal funds.

When we did the project (inaudible) phase, I added a special provision in the toll credit statute that the toll credits could be used to match the project development phase which was federal transit dollars. That is not normally the case and that was a special exception. I am shocked to hear that no one has any idea what the Commonwealth of Massachusetts thinks of the Nashua only option. This was things do change so I wouldn't oppose spending the money now but a few years ago, we did know the answer to that. Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Very good. Thank you. Anybody else in the audience want to come up? Yes Assistant Director Cummings.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to clarify what the previous speaker just said. I think it's pretty fair to say that there is at least through the New Hampshire DOT a good understanding to the MBTA's appetite relative to the capital corridor plan or project that is what the current project was before Governor's Council. I don't believe we have a good solid footing or understanding relative to a Nashua first approach. I think having additional further conversations with the MBTA to understand the suitability of this is really the genesis for this particular conversation, that particular study at hand right now. Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Very good. Anybody else for public comment? Seeing no one.

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN - None

ADJOURNMENT**MOTION BY ALDERMAN COMEAU TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared closed at 8:55 p.m.

Alderman Alex Comeau, Committee Clerk

EXHIBIT B

Nashua-Manchester (Capitol Corridor) Next Steps Proposed Scope with Go/No-Go Gates – August 3, 2023

Background

Nashua and Manchester, NH are two of the largest urbanized areas in New England currently without direct commuter rail or passenger rail service. Extending rail service into southern NH via the MBTA Lowell Commuter Rail Line has been the subject of two major planning and engineering studies over the past ten years led by the NHDOT. In both prior studies the proposed service would utilize the existing MBTA owned rail line from Lowell to the NH state line and continue into southern NH using the CSX owned freight rail line.

- 2013-2014: Alternatives Analysis (AA), Service Level EA, and Conceptual Engineering
- 2021-2022: Updated AA, Project Level EA, 30% Preliminary Engineering, Financial Plan

2013-2014

The study identified and evaluated a wide range of service alternatives ranging from MBTA Commuter Rail extensions to Nashua only, or to both Nashua and Manchester, as well as an Amtrak intercity rail alternative with service to Nashua, Manchester, and Concord, NH. The study ended without officially naming a single preferred alternative. However, it did present summary findings showing that the alternative with best overall balance of capital cost, ridership and revenue, and economic development potential was referred to the *Manchester Regional Commuter Rail Alternative*. That alternative proposed four stations in southern NH at South Nashua, Crown Street Nashua, Bedford/MHT, and downtown Manchester. The service plan provided frequent daily service to the Nashua stations with less frequent service north of Crown Street. A FONSI was received from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for the service level EA, which included the Intercity 8 alternative reaching Concord, NH that would have been served by Amtrak. For the Commuter Rail alternatives, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has authority, and they did not act on the EA nor issue a FONSI. Project documents from this phase of the study reside on the NHDOT website at this link.

<https://www.nh.gov/dot/org/aerorailtransit/railandtransit/corridor-rail-transit.htm>

At the end of this study phase issues not fully resolved included the location of the South Nashua station, the location of the layover facility, and obtaining a FONSI from FTA on the service level EA. It was anticipated that these issues would be resolved in a follow-on phase of work known as Project Development, along with more detailed definition of the proposed stations, track and signals, capital and O&M costs, and development of a detailed funding strategy.

2021-2022

The scope of this effort included updating the alternatives analysis (AA) to identify specific preferred location and layout of all four proposed stations, as well as the location and configuration of the layover facility in Manchester for the Manchester Regional Commuter Rail Alternative. It also developed an updated operating plan/proposed schedule that would provide high frequency service to all four stations, which resulted in additional projected ridership for the Bedford/MHT and Manchester stations compared to what was forecast based on the 2014 operating plan, and the associated increase in required infrastructure to support the more robust service plan. Ridership forecasts were prepared using the proposed service plan in tandem with the



official demographic forecasts to year 2040 from the relevant MPOs in the corridor. Engineering design was advanced to the 30% level (preliminary engineering) consistent with FTA guidelines for entering Project Development. Detailed estimates were prepared for capital costs as well as operating & maintenance (O&M) costs. Costs were developed in current year dollars and were also forecast to mid-point of construction year. A draft federal Environmental Assessment (EA) document was prepared using the annotated outline approved by FTA Region 1. Finally, a detailed Financial Plan was prepared identifying funding from federal, state, local, and private sources based on the assumption that the project would qualify and apply for an FTA Capital Investment Grant under what is referred to as the FTA “New Starts” program.

In December 2022, the team/NHDOT requested an extension of the January 31, 2023 end of contract time, with no change in contract budget, to complete the EA and FONSI, initiate the FTA CIG process, and complete other remaining tasks. The NHDOT request was denied by the NH Executive Council. Consequently, all deliverables completed under the contract as of January 31, 2023 were submitted to NHDOT by the project team. Project documents prepared under this phase of work reside on the NHDOT website at this link.

<https://www.nh.gov/dot/projects/nashuamanchester40818/index.htm>

At the end of this study phase the issues not fully resolved were finalizing the EA and obtaining a FONSI, and the coordination steps with FTA that would have followed, such as requesting entry into Project Development and preparing the various documents needed to initiate the FTA CIG process. A complete draft of the EA document was submitted to NHDOT in January 2023, which resides on the NHDOT website, and the remaining steps for the EA include client/proponent review of the draft document, submittal of draft document to FTA Region 1 for review and coordination, responding to FTA comments, issuing the EA for public comment, developing responses to public comments, and coordinating with FTA during development of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Additionally, the next steps would need to include re-engaging with MassDOT/MBTA, CSX, and other state and local stakeholders.

Assumptions

Restarting and completing a major multi-state, multi-jurisdictional project such as the Capitol Corridor that ended its most recent phase of work so close to the finish line would be challenging under the best of circumstances. To do so under a new project proponent framework is even more challenging, particularly if the definition of the project were to change significantly from what was evaluated and documented in the 2021-2022 work. The scope of work assumes the following:

- NHDOT is currently not in the position to continue leading the work as project proponent.
- NHDOT has notified FTA Region 1 of this and as a result the project is now “Paused”.
- FTA has indicated that it understands NHDOT’s situation, and it does not adversely impact the FTA’s view of the project.
- Although the project can remain on pause indefinitely, the technical work completed in the most recent phase would in most cases only be good for about 3 years.
- Certain types of analysis, such as cultural resources, might need to be updated even sooner, if for example certain buildings that were less than 50 years old in 2022 become more than 50 years old this year or next.
- If the project definition does not change it is likely that the draft EA and other technical work already completed could be finalized and advanced in coordination with FTA and others.



- However, if the definition of the project service plan, station locations, layover facility, or other key features were to significantly change it is likely that all or most of the analysis prepared in 2021-2022 would need to be refreshed or re-done, with a major increase in cost and schedule for professional services compared to advancing the project as currently defined.
- If a new public entity (municipal or otherwise) takes on the role of project proponent, the FTA will expect that entity to have the ability to lead a viable Financial Plan. This does not mean that the proponent needs to provide all the non-federal funding itself, but it would be expected to develop the plan and obtain commitments from the various other public and private sources.

Project Definition

Based on input received from the City of Nashua during the Teams call on June 15, 2023 the city wants to explore advancing a Nashua-only extension of the Lowell Line commuter rail service into southern New Hampshire with one or two stations (South Nashua Station alone or in tandem with a Nashua Crown Street Station), which is attractive because of the significantly lower capital costs compared to the full extension to Manchester with four stations. This could be achieved either as a redefined stand-alone project or as the first phase Minimum Operating Segment (MOS) of the larger project defined in the NHDOT 2021-2022 work.

Scope

It was requested that a scope be developed for professional services associated with advancing a Nashua-only project as defined above, and that the scope be organized around steps that would occur generally in chronological order, with Go/No-Go decision "gates" at the end of each step where it is understood that the City of Nashua will elect to either continue with the work or not. Advancing the project involves three sequential steps.

- **Step 1 Tasks:** Re-engage state & federal agencies and refresh key project metrics
- **Step 2 Tasks:** Update operating plan, financial plan, and complete environmental reviews
- **Step 3 Tasks:** FTA CIG process and enter Project Development

The scope described herein covers the work under the Step 1 Tasks only.

Step 1 – Task 1

Agency and Railroad Coordination

The project is not feasible without the cooperation and support of state agencies in NH and MA, as well as the owning railroads (MBTA in MA and CSX in NH). Outside of NHDOT, coordination with other relevant state and federal agencies has not occurred since mid to late 2022. Since that time there is a new state administration in MA. Direct coordination with CSX, the owner of the rail line in NH, has not occurred since before it acquired Pan Am Railways in June of 2022. At the federal level FTA Region 1 is the primary agency stakeholder and early coordination with them will also be essential.

An early-action task is to re-engage with the state and federal agencies and the railroad owners to brief them on project status and to confirm/test assumptions regarding their expectations and requirements relative to advancing the project. The scope of this task covers:



- 1.1 *Presentation Materials* - Develop PowerPoint presentation describing a Nashua-only MOS as a first phase of the previously defined Full-Build for use at agency and railroad coordination meetings. It is assumed the PPT will leverage existing materials and will require only minor modifications for use with each individual agency and railroad audience. It is assumed there will be two (2) meetings with the City of Nashua during development of the presentation materials.
- 1.2 *Weekly Check-In Calls with City of Nashua* – AECOM will set up recurring weekly check-in calls via Teams with the City of Nashua to provide status of work, resolve key issues, and update schedule.
- 1.3 *NHDOT Briefings* – Up to two (2) briefings with NHDOT Aeronautics and Rail Division to confirm new roles relative to the project, to brief them on the MOS strategy, and establish lines of communication.
- 1.4 *MassDOT Briefings* – Up to two (2) briefings with MassDOT senior leadership regarding the project during which it will be determined whether MassDOT is open to supporting the project and under what conditions, and whether they will support MBTA re-engaging with the project team to coordinate on commuter rail operations and design issues.
- 1.5 *MBTA Technical Coordination Meetings* –Up to four (4) meetings with MBTA commuter railroad operations group to brief them on the MOS concept and coordinate on associated technical issues such as the operating plan, the station configurations, and location and layout of the layover facility.
- 1.6 *FTA Region 1 Briefings and Coordination Meetings* – Up to two (2) meetings with FTA Region 1 to brief them on the MOS in context of the previously defined Full-Build and to confirm FTA expectations and requirements for the City of Nashua to assume the role of project proponent.
- 1.7 *CSX Briefings and Technical Coordination Meetings* – Up to two (2) meetings with CSX to brief them on project status and initiate technical coordination on matters of proposed operations and proposed infrastructure, e.g., second track, signals, stations, layover.

Provide summary notes of each meeting/briefing. Of the agency/railroad meetings listed above it is assumed that up to four (4) of the meetings will be held in person, with the remainder assumed to be virtual via Teams or Zoom.

Deliverables

- PowerPoint presentation summarizing the project as a Nashua-only MOS first phase of a Full-Build project as currently defined. Up to five minor revisions to target the presentation to the different target audiences.
- Summary notes of each briefing and meeting held.

Step 1 – Task 2

Refresh Key Project Metrics

Threshold questions that key state and federal agency stakeholder are most interested in are how many people will use the service, what will it cost, and how will it be paid for.



2.1 *Ridership* - Prior work showed strong potential ridership but was based on the Full-Build only, and the forecasts were developed using pre-pandemic modeling methods approved by FTA at that time, with post-pandemic scenarios developed to assess low, medium, and high long-term impacts on ridership. In Spring of 2023 FTA issued new guidance on development of ridership forecasts, which will need to be used for the Nashua-only MOS as well as to update the ridership for the Full-Build. The task includes updating the existing ridership model with updated counts and background ACS, MPO highway skim files/travel times, and approved demographics. The model will use a new post-pandemic base year in addition to the prior 2019 base year and blend the results per FTA guidance.

The ridership will be developed for up to five (5) alternatives consisting of the No Build alternative, the Full-Build alternative, a Nashua-only Minimum Operating Segment (MOS) with stations at South Nashua and Crown Street, a MOS with a single station at South Nashua, and one additional MOS option to be defined by the City of Nashua. All alternatives will be evaluated for a new horizon year of 2045. This scope develops current models based on FTA's Reporting Instructions and initial forecasts for the purposes of local evaluation and decision making. Additional work is likely to be required if the project advances into follow-on steps, such as the FTA CIG process and Project Development, and such work is not included in this scope.

2.2 *Capital Costs* – An estimate exists for capital costs developed in October 2022 for the Full-Build, which will be used as source data for developing a magnitude estimate for the Nashua-only MOS to inform this early Step 1 task. Capital costs will be escalated to current 2023 dollars. Additional capital costing work is likely to be required if the project advances into follow-on steps, such as the FTA CIG process and Project Development, and such work is not included in this scope.

2.3 *O&M Costs* - An estimate exists for O&M costs developed in October 2022 for the Full-Build, which will be used as source data for developing a magnitude estimate for the Nashua-only MOS to inform this early Step 1 task. O&M costs will be escalated to current 2023 dollars. Additional O&M costing work is likely to be required if the project advances into follow-on steps, such as the FTA CIG process and Project Development, and such work is not included in this scope.

2.4 *Funding Sources* - A Financial Plan was developed in 2022 for the Full-Build, which included the amount and sources of non-federal funding including municipal, state of MA, and state of NH. The Financial Plan will be updated to show the magnitude level of federal and non-federal funding needed for the Nashua-only MOS, including a breakdown by source. Additional financial planning work is likely to be required if the project advances into follow-on steps, such as the FTA CIG process and Project Development, and such additional work is not included in this scope.

Deliverables

- Technical memo summarizing the methodology and results of the ridership forecasting for the No-Build, the Full-Build, and the MOS alternatives.
- Technical memo summarizing magnitude capital and operating costs of the Nashua-only MOS Build alternative drawing upon existing information from the October 2022 Full-Build cost estimates.
- Technical memo outlining the magnitude sources and uses of funding for construction and operation of the Nashua-only MOS Build alternative drawing upon the January 2023 Financial Plan that was prepared for the Full-Build.



AECOM will submit each technical memo in draft and final form, assuming up to two rounds of review comments from the City of Nashua.

Schedule

The services are expected to take place on a schedule of a six (6) months from Notice to Proceed. The general schedule is outlined below.

- Month 1
 - Define MOS alternatives, prepare PPT and presentation materials
 - Schedule initial agency/railroad meetings
- Months 2 - 3
 - Conduct and document initial agency/railroad meetings
- Months 2 – 4
 - Update key metrics of ridership and cost
 - Update funding sources
 - Draft technical memos
- Months 4 – 6
 - Conduct and document second round of agency/railroad meetings
- Month 6
 - Finalize technical memos
 - Go/NoGo decision on advancing to Step 2

It is assumed that at the end of the Step 1 Tasks listed above there will be sufficient information developed to make an informed Go/No-Go decision on whether to proceed with the more detailed analysis and engineering required under Steps 2 and 3, and what the specific scope, schedule, and budget for those subsequent steps would need to be.

AECOM
Project: City of Nashua - Capitol Corridor Technical Support - Step 1 Services

DATE: 09/15/23

AECOM Technical Services, Inc.		JOB HOURS BY LABOR CLASSIFICATION												TOTAL HOURS	TOTAL LABOR COST
TASK DESCRIPTIONS	HOURLY BILLING RATES	Project Manager	Labor Total	Senior Planner Engineer	Labor Total	Senior Ridership Forecast	Labor Total	Senior Financial Advisor	Labor Total	Planner Engineer	Labor Total	Planner Analyst	Labor Total		
		\$275.00 /HR		\$200.00 /HR		\$285.00 /HR		\$350.00 /HR		\$140.00 /HR		\$120.00 /HR			
Task 1 - Agency and Railroad Coordination															
1.1 - Develop PowerPoint and presentation materials		16	\$4,400	12	\$2,400					24	\$ 3,360	40	\$ 4,800	92	\$14,960
1.2 - Weekly check-in calls AECOM/City of Nashua		24	\$6,600									48	\$ 5,760	72	\$12,360
1.3 - NHDOT Briefings (2)		8	\$2,200									12	\$ 1,440	20	\$3,640
1.4 - MassDOT Briefings (2)		8	\$2,200	8	\$1,600			8	\$2,800			12	\$ 1,440	36	\$8,040
1.5 - MBTA Technical Coordination Meetings (4)		16	\$4,400	16	\$3,200			8	\$2,800			24	\$ 2,880	64	\$13,280
1.6 - FTA Region 1 Meetings (2)		8	\$2,200			6	\$1,710	8	\$2,800			12	\$ 1,440	34	\$8,150
1.7 - CSX Briefings and Tech Coordination Mtgs (2)		8	\$2,200	8	\$1,600							12	\$ 1,440	28	\$5,240
													\$ -		
	Task 1 Subtotal	88	\$24,200	44	\$8,800	6	\$ 1,710	24	\$8,400	24	\$ 3,360	160	\$ 19,200	346	\$65,670
Task 2 - Refresh Key Project Metrics															
2.1 - Ridership Forecasting		24	\$6,600			67	\$19,095			438	\$ 61,320	133	\$ 15,960	662	\$102,975
2.2 - Magnitude Capital Costs		16	\$4,400	16	\$3,200			22	\$7,700	40	\$ 5,600	12	\$ 1,440	106	\$22,340
2.3 - Magnitude O&M Costs		16	\$4,400	16	\$3,200			22	\$7,700	40	\$ 5,600	12	\$ 1,440	106	\$22,340
2.4 - Identify Potential Funding Sources		24	\$6,600					60	\$21,000	180	\$ 25,200	16	\$ 1,920	280	\$54,720
													\$ -		
	Task 1.2 Subtotal	80	\$22,000	32	\$6,400	67	\$19,095	104	\$36,400	698	\$ 97,720	173	\$ 20,760	1154	\$202,375
	TOTAL	168	\$46,200	76	\$15,200	73	\$20,805	128	\$44,800	722	\$ 101,080	333	\$ 39,960	1500	\$268,045

Project Manager - Jay Doyle
 Sr. Planner/Engineer - Dave Derrig, Zack Grant, Julie Oakley
 Sr. Ridership - Pat Coleman
 Sr. Financial Advisor - Bob Peskun
 Planner/Engineer - Ed Plasencia, Kala Gurung, Andrew Walker, Laura Mento
 Planner/Analyst - Patnick Higgins, Chris Nielsen, Laura Luo
 Other staff of similar experience may need to be utilized in the labor classifications shown at various points in the project depending on need and availability

Expenses	
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$6,205
Local Mileage and Parking	\$500
Long distance travel (3 trps @ \$1,750/trp)	\$5,250
Subtotal	\$11,955
Contingency	
TOTAL	\$280,000