

CONGESTION BUSTER TASK FORCE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD JUNE 19, 2002

NJDOT Training Center, Ewing, NJ

Attendees:

Task Force Members (or Delegates):

Chairman Jim Sinclair, NJBIA

Janine Bauer, TSTC

Jack Claffey, DVRPC

Dotty Drinkwater, CSNJ

Cliff Heath, NJAFA

Joanne Jaeger, Sadat Associates

Alan Lichtenstein, Rutgers-VTPI

Jerry Lutin, NJ Transit

SFC Dan Morocco, NJSP

Judith Schleicher, I-80 Mobility Task Force

Invited Guests:

Brad Lane, Michael Baker Corporation

Bob Kaiser, Michael Baker Corporation

DOT Staff:

Dennis Keck

William Beetle

Noreen Cardinali

Talvin Davis

Debra Firman

Roman Horodysky

Jim Lewis

Bob Miller

Judith Parrish

Tom Thatcher

Susan Weber

WELCOME and OPENING REMARKS

- The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Sinclair shortly after 1:00 p.m. Brief introductions were made around the room.
- The Chairman stated the work of the CBTF is nearing its end. He would like to have the Task Force approve a Final Report at the July meeting. Jim mentioned he recently talked about the Congestion Buster Task Force to the New Jersey Clean Air Council. The Council is interested in the CBTF's forthcoming recommendations and possible environmental tie in.
- Dennis Keck, Assistant Commissioner of Planning & Development, made some observations. He mentioned it is important to have forums like the CBTF to talk about an issue that affects many things, including the environment, daily life of residents, aging infrastructure and land use policy. Dennis said the reauthorization of Federal funds in two years is important as the Department tries to meet its demands.

OLD BUSINESS

- Chairman Sinclair called the group's attention to a meeting handout on increasing interest in carpools. He would like to incorporate a carpool recommendation in the CBTF report. Some

studies have shown that for every 1% reduction on solo driving, there is a 2% increase in capacity and a 3% reduction in travel delay.

- Jack Claffey suggested the Task Force look at the recent U.S. census data which shows that between 1990 and 2000, the number and percentage of people driving alone to work increased, while the number and percentage of carpoolers substantially decreased.
- The Chairman is seeking recommendations for best management practices to ease congestion by working with employers to increase commute alternatives. He asked the group to review, comment and add to the carpool suggestions. The Task Force should support carpooling, alternate work schedules, alternate workweeks and telecommuting.

NEW BUSINESS

Updated Analysis of Subcommittee Recommendations

- Judith Parrish, NJDOT Bureau of Technical Analysis, presented updated analysis of subcommittee recommendations. Representatives from the consulting firm of Michael Baker Corporation were available for questions. Updates/revisions are below:

GOODS MOVEMENT

- Establishment of a truck & bus only lane between Exits 8A-14 on the NJ Turnpike would *increase* delay for cars by 11.5 minutes. This is a good example of potentially unintended consequences of recommendation implementation.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

- Expanding off-peak value pricing incentives to *all* toll facilities in New Jersey was found to have a minimal impact upon peak hour trips. Doubling tolls could result in moving an additional 500 to 600 vehicles, or an increase of 10%, out of peak hour travel. It is unclear if these vehicles truly shifted out of the peak hour or merely chose another road or facility.

LAND USE

- Recommendations were re-packaged; national literature was reviewed in an effort to add quantification.
- The Land Use strategies are “long term” at best. They require strong incentives or mandated requirements to have significant impact.

TRANSIT & PASSENGER RAIL

- Analysis was revised and appropriate quantification was added based upon additional input received from NJ Transit.
- Increased park and ride spaces could reduce over 7,000 peak hour trips by 2005; over 9,000 vehicle trips could be reduced in the long-term (beyond 2010).
- Adequate funding could increase peak hour rail capacity by more than 11,000 seats in the long term. One half of these seats would be available to new riders (the other half would alleviate present overcrowding).

- Various strategies to increase transit capacity in congested corridors, such as purchase of additional buses, creation of high speed bus routes, construction of new rail tunnel to Penn Station NY, and increased frequency of existing service were also analyzed.

DEMAND MANAGEMENT

- Voluntary and mandatory telecommuting programs were analyzed. Voluntary implementation would save nearly 1,800 trips in the near term; a mandatory telecommuting program would eliminate nearly 9,000 peak hour trips.
- Demand management recommendations were packaged into four scenarios, both voluntary and mandatory, and were then analyzed.

REACHING THE GOAL

- Voluntary Demand Management, Transit and Traffic Management strategies will reach the trip reduction goal halfway.
- Adding financial **incentives** and **disincentives** provides additional vehicle trip reduction, but still does not meet the statutory goal.
- Mandatory strategies provide the biggest trip reduction, but are not likely to be implemented by State government.

Defining Roles, Responsibilities and Opportunities in Reducing Congestion

- In an effort to mesh recommendations together, Chairman Sinclair asked the group to think about who will be affected by the CBTF's congestion reduction strategies and what role business, employers, individuals and government will play in implementation. At the suggestion of the Task Force, the category of "business" was changed to "commerce" to distinguish it from employers.
- Chairman Sinclair will prepare a discussion of roles and responsibilities to be included in the CBTF final report.

"Missing Recommendations"

- A short discussion of missing recommendations ensued. Ideas to consider include:
 - Public education campaign - Use Motor Vehicle Services mailing to inform our target audience, the motoring public, of ridesharing tips and commute alternatives.
 - Support the Governor's idea to link databases to monitor and remove uninsured/unregistered vehicles from the road. Proper enforcement would be required for this initiative to have any impact upon congestion.
 - Mileage-based automobile insurance rates.
 - Gasoline tax increase or other "pay-at-the-pump" strategies.
 - Develop and ensure better coordination of recreational travel and events planning.

ORGANIZATIONAL ITEMS

- The CBTF secretary will re-circulate the "Criteria Chart for Making Final Recommendations." All are urged to complete and return.

- In addition to making Final recommendations and developing a commuter options plan, the CBTF is charged with identifying ten projects that can be quickly implemented to reduce traffic congestion or improve safety. Members were asked to provide the Chairman and Secretary with their “Top Three Projects.”
- Please review the draft report distributed at the May meeting. Chairman Sinclair wants to make sure all Task Force members are comfortable with what is presented in the report. Please advise him directly of any comments you may have. For production purposes, notify the CBTF secretary when making report changes.
- Next meeting date: Tuesday July 23, 1 p.m., NJDOT Multi-Purpose Room. At the meeting, another draft report will be circulated for Task Force approval.
- The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.