

CONGESTION BUSTER TASK FORCE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 19, 2002 NJDOT Multi-Purpose Room, Ewing, NJ

Attendees:

Task Force Members (or Delegates):

Chairman Jim Sinclair, NJBIA
Sandra Brillhart, Greater Mercer TMA
Mike Egenton, NJ Chamber of Commerce
Jennifer Jaroski, TSTC
Wm. Layton, Concrete & Aggregate Assoc.
Barry Lem, L-3 Communications

Jerry Lutin, NJ Transit
J.P. Miele, NJTA, CSNJ
Hamou Meghdir, NJTPA
Bill Ragozine, Cross County Connection TMA
Martin Robins, Rutgers-VTPI

Invited Guests:

Sara Bluhm, NJBIA
Dotty Drinkwater, CSNJ
Allan Lichtenstein, Rutgers-VTPI

Larry Liggett, NJ Pinelands Commission
Larry Waetzman, Waetzman Planning Group

DOT Staff:

William Beetle
Noreen Cardinali
Debra Firman
Jim Lewis
Judith Parrish

Bill Piedra
John Powers
Pat Snyder
Adnew Tessema
Tom Thatcher

WELCOME and OPENING REMARKS

- The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Sinclair at 1:04 p.m. Brief introductions were made around the room.

OLD BUSINESS

- Tom Thatcher, NJDOT Bureau of Administrative Practice & Public Law Implementation, presented a proposed work plan for Task Force Public Meetings.
 - CBF Statutory mandate reviewed.
 - Tom stated from a practical standpoint, the CBTF must hold public meetings.
 - At least one member of each subcommittee will be required to attend each public meeting.
 - Potential dates, locations, format and methods of public notice were presented.

- Chairman Sinclair said the CBTF subcommittees are now coming forth with ideas for the public to respond to. At public meetings, the Task Force could ask the public if they support or not support CBTF ideas and seek additional recommendations to reduce congestion. After general discussion, the Task Force agreed to hold public meetings:
 - The Chairman hopes to brief the new Commissioner.
 - The Chairman asked NJDOT staff to prepare a statement of CBTF's mandated numerical goal prior to the public meetings.
 - Meetings will be held in April to allow subcommittees time to refine and synthesize their recommendations.
 - Three public meetings – one each in North, Central and South Jersey will be held. Possible locations include Cherry Hill, Trenton, Newark, Morristown and the offices of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority.
 - TMAs will be asked to actively seek corporate participation.
 - Meeting notice should include a provision for mail in of written comments.
- Website update and comments were distributed. The subcommittee page is up; recommendations and reports are posted on the site in PDF format.

NEW BUSINESS

Subcommittee Reports

- Sandra Brillhart reported that the **Demand Management** subcommittee would meet at the beginning of March to prioritize their recommendations. Rideshare promotion, vanpooling, telecommuting, parking strategies, insurance discounts, gathering of trip data and employer outreach remain the focus of this subcommittee's recommendations.
 - It was suggested that funding for demonstration projects could be one of the Task Force recommendations.
- Martin Robins made brief comments for the **Transit/Passenger Rail** subcommittee. The TransitChek program and parking cash-out hold great potential in reducing vehicle traffic. Considerations should include increasing capacity where needed; identifying and using available capacity; and improving frequency of reverse commute service.
- Dotty Drinkwater reported that the **Goods Movement** subcommittee spoke recently by conference call. Final recommendations may include expanded port terminal hours, creation of a single bus/truck lane on the turnpike, improved incident management and improved E-Z Pass administration.
- The **Traffic Management** subcommittee met in early February. They have identified seven projects that have capability to reduce congestion. Subcommittee members are reaching out to officials at NJDOT, FHWA and others to assess costs and project feasibility.

- Some ideas using E-Z Pass technology were mentioned for consideration. They include implementing a pricing policy on current non-toll roads and having vehicle registration and insurance information encoded into E-Z Pass sensors.

Land Use & Growth Management

Larry Liggett, NJ Pinelands Commission made a presentation on Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). The Pinelands Development Commission has had a TDR program for many years.

- TDR programs seek to preserve open space and foster compact, centered development.
- These complementary goals are achieved when the right to develop is removed from a “sending” property, where development is then permanently restricted, and sold for use on a “receiving” property, where the amount of development is then increased.
- Benefits of TDR include:
 - Provides market-based incentives for private property owners to support public policies.
 - More evenly distributes costs and benefits of zoning controls.
 - Less expensive than public land acquisition.
- The Pinelands Development Credit Program has been moderately successful. Approximately 17% of the total acres available have been permanently protected. Keys to a successful TDR program include clearly defined sending areas, locating development where growth indicators are strong, and keeping the allocation formula and program administration simple.
- Mr. Liggett noted there can be resistance to TDR at the local level because municipalities are caught in the “ratable chase.”
- TDR is presently used (through the Pinelands program) only in Burlington County. One of the Land Use subcommittee’s potential recommendations is to extend TDR to the remainder of the State.
- A possible change to TDR programs would allow nonresidential development in the receiving community. This could foster development of office and retail space in redevelopment and transit village areas.

Larry Waetzman, Waetzman Planning Group, spoke about transportation planning efforts at the local level. Mr. Waetzman’s discussion focused on the town of Cape May. Cape May’s Master Plan is being studied for possible revision to help alleviate seasonal and event-related congestion. Main points of the discussion included:

- One main thoroughfare into town at the end of the Garden State Parkway.
- No land available for bypasses or street widening.
- Pedestrian-friendly center of town.
- Possible solutions include:
 - Make the main thoroughfare and a parallel street, one-way streets into and out of town.
 - Establish bikeways to remove bicycles and surreys from roads.
 - Publicize back entrance into town through neighboring West Cape May.
 - Examine price incentives; offer satellite parking outside of town or near town edge for workers and visitors.
 - Create pedestrian-only zones during certain hours; provide parking permits to residents.

Bill Ragozine, Land Use & Growth Management Subcommittee Chairman, presented the subcommittee's draft report. The subcommittee reviewed current New Jersey land use practices and provided recommendations based on their conclusions. These recommendations were further expanded to examine how some practices could be improved upon or changed.

- Recommendations fall into three general areas with important points as follows:
- Local Level/Municipal Activities
 - Land Use controlled at local level through zoning and municipal Master Plans
 - Municipal planning boards need more assistance and training.
 - Master Plans are not required to be updated, just re-examined, every five (5) years.
 - Current process is not designed to support transportation demand management techniques that would encourage alternatives to the single occupant vehicle trips.
- County Level
 - Counties should be required to review municipal Master Plans in conjunction with all municipalities in the county.
 - Activities the county could become involved with include widespread implementation of ITS, development of park and ride facilities along county highways and coordinated incident management with State and local police.
- State Level
 - State laws can affect, change or force local land use actions.
 - Highway expansion is generally a short-term solution to congestion.
 - Encourage the use of TransitChek, parking cash-out and rideshare opportunities through legislation.
 - Work proactively with the NJ League of Municipalities to redraft Residential Site Improvement Standards to be more TDM focused.
- Top recommendations will be prioritized. A copy of the recent RITCSC report will be forwarded to Land Use subcommittee members for their use in completing their work.

ORGANIZATIONAL ITEMS

- The next meeting is scheduled for March 19 at 2:00 p.m., NJDOT Multi-Purpose Room.
- The Chairman asked each subcommittee to meet soon to finalize their recommendations. He asked that they prioritize their top five recommendations, keeping in mind short-term and long-term implementation timeframes. Final recommendations should be sent to the CBTF secretary no later than March 12.
- The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.