

# **CONGESTION BUSTER TASK FORCE**

## **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD MARCH 19, 2002 NJDOT Multi-Purpose Room, Ewing, NJ**

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### **Attendees:**

#### **Task Force Members (or Delegates):**

Chairman Jim Sinclair, NJBIA	Joanne Jaeger, Sadat Associates
Ken Afferton, Edwards & Kelcey	Allan Lichtenstein, Rutgers-VTPI
Sandra Brillhart, Greater Mercer TMA	Jerry Lutin, NJ Transit
Jack Claffey, DVRPC	Hamou Meghdir, NJTPA
Dotty Drinkwater, CSNJ	Bill Ragozine, Cross County Connection
Mike Egenton, NJ Chamber of Commerce	Martin Robins, Rutgers-VTPI
Erica Ferry, Pharmacia	Judith Schleicher, I-80 Mobility Task Force
Cliff Heath, NJAFA	Gail Toth, NJMTA

#### **Invited Guests:**

Brad Lane, Michael Baker	Bob Kaiser, Michael Baker
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#### **DOT Staff:**

William Beetle	Roman Horodysky	Adnew Tessema
Noreen Cardinali	Robert Miller	Tom Thatcher
Talvin Davis	Judith Parrish	Susan Weber
Debra Firman	Pat Snyder	

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## **WELCOME and OPENING REMARKS**

- The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Sinclair at 2:05 p.m. Brief introductions were made around the room.
- The Chairman presented his thoughts on the criteria that could be used to assess the recommendations made by the Task Force. Are the recommendations:
  - Politically doable – now, later or never
  - Fiscally doable – now, within five years or beyond five years
  - Actionable – certain, possibly; is authority needed

After discussion, the group added another criteria, Level of Impact, to use when evaluating the recommendations. If implemented, how many people will the recommendation affect? Does the recommendation reduce trips or travel time?

- Mention was made of removing uninsured and unregistered vehicles off New Jersey roads. There were approximately 6.9 million vehicles registered in New Jersey in Fiscal Year 2001. It is estimated that 6 – 7% of all registered vehicles may be uninsured. The Division of Motor Vehicle Services does not know how many unregistered vehicles are on the road. Senator Buono has introduced S1253 which directs MVS to add automobile insurance information to its database. While the intent of this bill is to reduce uninsured drivers and result in lower auto insurance premiums, the CBTF should consider supporting this bill as it may also result in fewer vehicles on the road.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- Tom Thatcher, NJDOT Bureau of Administrative Practice & Public Law Implementation, presented a proposed work plan for the Task Force Public Meetings.
  - The purpose of the meetings is to provide another mechanism for the public to provide comments and suggestions to the CBTF.
  - Format will be:
    - Two hour meeting
    - 10 minute introduction by Chairman Sinclair
    - Short reports by subcommittee chairperson or member
    - Testimony from the public to be recorded by court reporter
    - Question & Answer period – open dialogue not recorded by court reporter
  - Public meeting notice and written comment sheet were reviewed.
    - Language in meeting notice to be modified to include strategies, projects, programs and initiatives of a statewide, regional, corridor or local level.
  - At least one member of each subcommittee will be required for each public meeting.
  - Task Force members are asked to attend at least one meeting.
- Chairman Sinclair said he spoke briefly with the new Commissioner and his Chief of Staff about the Congestion Buster Task Force. He wants them to be aware of the upcoming public meetings and the work of the Task Force.
- Tom Thatcher also presented an outline of the final report and its key components:
 

• Executive summary	• Final Recommendations
• CBTF history	• Commuter Options Plan
• Discussion of peak hour trip baseline	• Web-based appendices
• Subcommittee Reports	• Length: no more than 50 pages

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Analysis of Recommendations**

- Robert Miller, NJDOT Bureau of Technical Analysis, briefly spoke about framing Task Force recommendations for quantitative analysis. To achieve common results for comparison purposes relative to the mandated 1999 cap, Bob made the following suggestions:
  - Narrow down the recommendations
  - Use consistent format; the worksheet distributed earlier is good to use

- Be specific how congestion will be reduced – in terms of peak hour trips or vehicle miles traveled, for example
- Provide a sense of the market – county, urban; employers, employees
- Consultant support – be aware that consultant may contact subcommittee chairperson directly to get more information about the proposed recommendation

### Synthesis of Recommendations

- Chairman Sinclair said a committee needs to look at all recommendations being put forth to put them together in a package that makes sense. He will reach out to Barry Lem to lead the Synthesis Committee. Task Force members who have not served as chairpersons of other committees will be asked to join this group. They hope to meet the second week of April.

### Subcommittee Reports

- Gail Toth made a report on the **Goods Movement** subcommittee recommendations:
  - Support development of Comprehensive Freight Plan for the State
  - Conduct Feasibility Survey of expanding shipping and receiving hours of operation
    - Coordinate truck movements with customers during off-peak hours, including Saturdays
  - Provide Incentives for carriers to use NJ Turnpike
    - Reduce tolls via E-Z Pass volume discounts
    - Change current truck/bus/car corridor from Exits 8A to Exit 14 to truck and bus only corridor
    - Support NJ Turnpike plan to increase truck parking spaces in rest areas
  - Support several roadway projects that will reduce congestion and improve safety in congested areas with high truck volumes
    - “Portway” series of freight improvement projects is included
  - Experiment with truck only lanes on highly congested roadways
- Jerry Lutin made comments on the **Transit/Passenger Rail** subcommittee recommendations:
  - Increase funding for transit
    - Provide sufficient operating funds to maintain quality service on the core network
    - Implement capital reinvestment strategy that makes core network the highest capital priority
  - Create a seamless transit system that accommodates the many transit providers
    - Local shuttle systems connecting office parks and neighborhoods to transit
  - Increase transit capacity in congested corridors
    - Purchase additional rolling stock fleet and increase frequency of service in both peak and off-peak hours
    - Identify and create exclusive bus lanes on high volume routes during peak hours
    - Construct new passenger rail tunnel between Meadowlands and Penn Station, NY
  - Implement transit-friendly land use policies
  - Develop transit solutions for Pennsylvania to New Jersey commute

- Ken Afferton, Chairperson of the **Traffic Management** subcommittee, reported on changes or improvements that could be made operationally to the State's roadway network allowing more efficient trips and a reduction in travel time or delay:
  - Facilitate the rapid clearance of traffic incidents by legally requiring drivers to move vehicles to the side of the road if no major injury or vehicle damage is sustained
  - Implement, maintain, and/or expand off-peak value pricing toll incentive programs
  - Provide an information system to enable callers or web site visitors to obtain directions and real-time travel information for trips within New Jersey or to neighboring cities
  - Enact real-time traffic and alternative routing information systems to help divert demand away from congested roadways
  - Re-time traffic lights on congested State highways to be more responsive to current traffic conditions
  - Increase the present level of service of Emergency Service Patrols provided by NJDOT along selected Interstate highways
  - Establish and promote a program of either state or employer-sponsored shuttle services linking job sites to nearby train and bus stations, or to park and ride facilities
  - Alter start and end times of government employee workdays and schedule meetings outside of peak hours; expand to private sector in phase two
  - Implement Traffic Responsive Signals and Ramp Metering to manage traffic flow
  - Identify and support congestion-reducing (not sprawl) capital projects and improvements
- Sandra Brillhart reported that the **Demand Management** subcommittee focused their recommendations on incentives and ideas to encourage employees to change their travel behavior:
  - Develop and implement incentive programs for individuals who use commute alternatives or otherwise reduce driving
    - Discount Automobile insurance premiums
    - Tax credit or similar incentive for those demonstrating reduced odometer readings
  - Expand access to rideshare programs and services; and commuter benefits programs
  - Expand and strengthen Park and Ride Program
  - Promote and modify existing Travel Demand Management legislation
    - Create a "Parking Cash Out" pilot program
  - Collect origin and destination data from employers for transportation planning
- Bill Ragozine of the **Land Use subcommittee** distributed an updated version of the subcommittee report as presented at the February meeting. He stated he is waiting for input from subcommittee members on priority of recommendations.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL ITEMS**

- Three public meetings are scheduled for April 23 (Trenton), April 24 (Cherry Hill) and April 30 (Newark). Task Force members were asked to sign up their date(s) of attendance. Further information will be given to Task Force members as the meetings approach.
- The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.