

ROUTE 18  
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

# COMMUNITY PARTNERING TEAM

CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

## COMMUNITY PARTNERING TEAM MEETING NO. 14 REPORT

DATE: March 13, 2002  
TIME: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
LOCATION: Conference Room, Middlesex County Planning Dept.  
Elks Building, City of New Brunswick, NJ  
ATTENDEES: Listed at the end of the report

### 1. PURPOSE OF MEETING

To present the completion of the EA process and the start of the next phase of the project; and to obtain CPT Design Development input and determine future task forces. (Agenda attached)

### 2. MEETING SUMMARY

Martine Culbertson welcomed everyone to the meeting and as a courtesy to the new members, she asked people to introduce themselves. She reviewed the agenda and goals for the meeting. For the CPT review, Martine explained the handouts, which includes the agenda, a revised list of members, and the address list to be placed in the CPT Handbook Section 1. The project information sheet with map which was distributed at the Public Hearing on June 26, 2001 was also distributed.

Paul Nowicki then presented the project status. He announced that the project has obtained the FONSI and can now move forward to the next phase in the project for detailed design development. The Initial Design milestone will commence which will accomplish sixty percent of the design. There are a number of steps required for drainage, utilities, right-of-way, and environmental permitting. For Final Design, the structures and architectural treatments must be developed. There is additional environmental work, geotechnical work, and archeological recovery efforts, and land acquisitions. The archeology will begin by end of the summer or early next spring with three months to collect data and artifacts.

Paul expressed the need for active CPT participation in the form of task forces to assist in the design development within the next few months. The project schedule is to have the next CPT meeting tentatively in June to present the results of the Task Force efforts. The next Public Information Center would tentatively be held in September to share with the general public the design status, noise walls and corridor aesthetics.

While discussing the project status, the following questions were raised:

Q – What were the comments at the Public Hearing?

A – The comments raised at the Public Hearing were addressed to the Federal Highway Administration(FHWA). The main issue was the possible closure of Newell Avenue and



Phelps Avenue. A meeting was held with the City to review the Newell Avenue and Phelps Avenue closure. The project will move forward as is in the Preferred Alternative and the City must decide if they wish to have these avenues closed at Route 18.

Q – Is the Route 18 southbound ramp to George Street going to be included?

A – No, the design is to have the three-way interchange. The additional ramp was not feasible due to the environmental impacts in that location.

Q – What about the traffic on Commercial Avenue?

A – At the meeting held with the City, NJDOT has agreed to look at the intersection of Neilson and Commercial and the intersection of George Street and Commercial to help improve the traffic flow with examination of the left turn and signalization.

Q – What is the cost of the project now?

A – It was originally \$ 22 million dollars for minor improvements and resurfacing. The project cost estimate is now \$102 million dollars.

Q – Is the money appropriated now?

A – The project is in the State's Transportation Improvement Program and will be modified as the funding is appropriated for fiscal year 2003. It is 100 % Federally funded and is scheduled for construction in 2004/2005. Only partial design funding is in the program. Cultural resource work is included under the design line item in the program. The Department of Transportation is currently trying to amend the program to secure the necessary design funding to complete the project.

Q – When is the Route 18 Extension Project in Piscataway to be constructed?

A – That project is scheduled to begin construction in June 2002 and to be completed in the fall of 2004.

Q – What will be the effect on Ryder's Lane because East Brunswick will be closing down the jughandle?

A – The project team will look at what the effect will be on traffic.

Q – Is the funding in place for the cultural resource efforts and the aesthetic treatments?

A – Funding is in place to perform the studies and develop the design. Costs will then be estimated for construction.

Q – Has consideration been given to funding for the bikeway program?

A – A bikeway study in the area of Route 27 is underway separate from this project. However as part of this project, the bikeway underpass is to be improved in order to provide bikeway connectivity. The area north of Route 27 is not part of this project.

Q – What is the project's timeframe?

A – The design phase is now through spring of 2004 with construction beginning in the summer of 2004 and completed within 24-30 months. The project team will be looking at ways to stage construction and manage traffic flow.

Martine then asked the CPT members to provide community issues or any issues for consideration in this new phase of design development. The comments are as follows:

- Replacement of trees - analysis of amount in order to determine impacts
- Assist in Traffic Control - resource allocation, funding, coordination of state and local law enforcement
- Aesthetic lighting - will it require subtle lighting or have more lights at night
- Safety and security considerations for the design features
- Structures should be as graffiti-proof as possible (flyers and bulletins can be considered graffiti as well)
- Signs - need to be designed to minimize graffiti and maintenance
- Sidewalks and bikes - how close to traffic/aesthetics
- Gateway concepts encourage community feeling
- Lighting & streetscape elements
- Utilities - city water main/sewer pipe system improvements
- Access to old Police site for development
- Boyd Park impacts acceptable w/ enhancements at city docks
- Exxon at Commercial Avenue and George Street is unrelated (City's acquisition, not NJDOT)
- Carpenter Rd. concern for possible construction impacts of noise, debris, pollution
- Regional switching station for public utilities - New St. overpass
- Neighborhood traffic circulation flow discussions w/city
- Next step: Route 1/Route 18 problem statement status
- Maintenance issue with existing landscaping: City maintains now, but future plans for area along Newell/Phelps
- Crest Rd. closure - residential concern - gate to rear of Clifton for alternate exit
- Richmond St. - pedestrian access city side to Boyd Park and development of park site area
- Demolish police station site: accelerate right-of-way acquisition process if possible
- Commercial Ave, Neilsen & George intersection improvements for traffic flow of buses and pedestrian safety
- Police, Fire, and EMS coordination and access during construction
- Busing: school (elem. school buses) during construction, schedules and safety
- Public awareness, information to employers
- Identify architectural features
- Traffic operations before, during and after construction
- Traffic signals during construction
- Concern for entering and exiting neighborhood streets during construction (before removing the signal at Commercial)
- The project schedule must factor in the weather conditions during construction
- Dynamics of traffic at Paulus Blvd when traffic light is removed at Commercial Avenue
- City utilities to consider improvement, upgrade water main, need to coordinate
- Utilities coordination of timeline, scheduling and funding

- Staging of construction - also concern for locations for field office sites
- Other projects in area under construction - requires coordination
- Newell/Phelps Avenues closure coordinating with Tov Manor and a petition was signed by Phelps residents, however City would like input and discussions from Newell neighborhood (City issue to report back to CPT)
- Signage on Route 1 and Route 18 needs to be carefully considered
- Pedestrian access at bus stops
- Bus system with Rutgers during construction must inform schools and schedules
- Rutgers police and emergency services are to relocate to Commercial and George
- Enhanced signage on Rt. 18 corridor - aesthetics

The CPT then broke into four discussion groups during lunch. Each group discussed the issues listed and were asked to sort them by topic in order to identify the task forces needed to work on the issues. It was suggested that each group also indicate whether the issues relate to the design or to the construction phase. After lunch each group presented the information discussed. The comments are noted below from each group's presentation:

**Group #1**

- Corridor aesthetics - more refinement - historic -cultural
- Boyd Park
- Traffic operations/safety
- Construction issues – staging, noise
- Constant information on the environmental process
- Look ahead - community outreach awareness, traffic management plan

**Group #2**

- Safety of pedestrians to maintain in design and construction
- Given the CD, there is a need for turnaround guidance for local/express
- Cultural resources/artifacts important information, good communication
- Existing wall in Carpender neighborhood remain until coordination for new wall, timing
- Construction hours: allowable times/potential noise impact

**Group # 3**

- Traffic issues - signals, egress, safety, jurisdiction, buses
- Safety - bus/school/pedestrians/neighborhoods
- Betterment - utilities, access/movement, overpasses, bikes
- Develop information to inform community – for this and other projects
- Boyd Park

**Group # 4**

- Safety, security
- Design
- Landscape architecture
- Construction and maintenance

*(For additional notes from each group, see Report Attachment)*

To summarize, Martine asked members for comments on the possible task forces or team subsets or groups to be created and began a list of the individuals for each group. There will be Group Coordinators (3 representatives one from NJDOT, Project Support, and the community) responsible for meeting logistics, leadership and meeting minutes. The Coordinator from the community will be confirmed at the first meeting. Martine asked for

email addresses in order to expedite the schedule of meetings given the two month period to work on the issues.

### Preliminary List of CPT Groups

#### **Corridor Aesthetics Group**

Coordinators: Cindy Bloom-Cronin/Paul Nowicki

Members: Glenn Patterson, Todd Smircina, Helen Erdey, Linda Hunter, Paul Morrissett, Tom Kelso, Frank Wong, Anna Ashkenes, Brenda Hammer, Ed Tomazewski, Jeff Grob

#### **Boyd Park Enhancements Group**

Coordinators: Pam Garrett/Mike Morgan

Members: Tom Loughlin, Jim Campbell, Paul Morrissett, George Ververides, Frank Wong, Sarah Clarke, Pam Garrett, Mike Heenehan, Steve Hardegen, Anna Ashkenes, Cindy Cronin-Bloom, Brenda Hammer, Ed Tomazewski, Jeff Grob, Nick Tuffaro

#### **Design Development Group**

Coordinators: Bill Birch/Darryl Johnson

Members: Brian Deegan, Jim Campbell, Glenn Patterson, Morteza Ansari, George Ververides, Bob Spear, Rick Jaffe, Chris Barretts, Paul Nowicki

#### **Traffic Management Group**

Coordinators: Lee Steiner/Darryl Johnson

Members: Jim Campbell, Glenn Patterson, Mitch Karon, George Ververides, Bob Spear, Morteza Ansari, Douglas Joyce, Ken Herman, Tom Clark, Chris Barretts, Lee Steiner, Bill Kingsland, Darryl Johnson

#### **Public Communications/Awareness Group**

Coordinators: Bill Cochran/Martine Culbertson

Members: Tom Loughlin, Andy Gury, Glenn Patterson, Morteza Ansari, George Ververides, Frank Wong, Rick Lloyd, Paul Nowicki

The Steering Committee will make further recommendations and invitations for task force group membership. Martine then asked members for feedback and closing comments:

- Back together
- Email for team leader
- Good (check, check, check) - lunch fine
- Progress
- Council chambers - City Hall is a possible location for Task Force meetings
- Group is moving ahead
- Good shape
- Environmental process, first phase moving
- Todd offer to host Corridor Aesthetics Task Force meeting
- Level of importance is high
- Covered a lot
- See the big picture
- Community gets involved - keep it up – 6 meetings
- Traffic mgmt. in construction very important to the community
- CPT list be revised with emails
- Coordination of team leaders (MAC communication)
- Interesting, cultural and archeology moving on, enlightening
- Hard work, moving on
- Good to be back, moving forward
- Design stages are scheduled
- Prioritize issues for resolution

- Valuable input - time frame
- Monitor for funding/financing

To close, Bill Birch expressed the very high importance of maintaining the design schedule and that CPT participation and input must aid in meeting that schedule. Steve Lavelle noted that Martine should coordinate the communication between the task forces and with the Steering Committee so issues are addressed within this time period. Martine and Paul thanked the CPT members for their continued support and participation on behalf of the Department of Transportation. The CPT members will receive notice of the Task Force meetings to be scheduled and for the next CPT meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for June, 2002. The meeting was adjourned at noon.

### 3. ACTION ITEMS

- CPT Members review materials with their constituents and be ready to actively participate on the Task Forces over the next two month period. The first task force meetings will be held in April to meet the schedule.
- NJDOT and Gannett Fleming will continue the Design Development process steps and contact the City regarding utility improvements in the corridor and circulation at George Street
- Gannett Fleming will provide an updated project schedule for the CPT Handbook
- Martine Culbertson will provide CPT meeting report, assist with Task Force coordination and scheduling of the first meetings to be held in April. She will also contact members to be added to the Task Forces which were not in attendance at this CPT meeting.

### 4. NEXT CPT MEETING

Date: June 2002 (Task Forces to meet in April and May)  
 Time: 9:00 a.m. - Noon  
 Location: Middlesex County Planning Conference Room  
 Elks Building, City of New Brunswick

### 5. LIST OF ATTENDEES

ATTENDEES:	REPRESENTING:
<u>Members</u>	
Linda Hunter	University Mews Homeowners Assoc.
Tom Kelso	Dewey Heights Neighborhood
Rick Lloyd	Johnson & Johnson
Thomas Loughlin	City of New Brunswick, Administration
Todd Smircina	Carpender Road Area Neighborhood
George Ververides	Middlesex County Planning Dept.
Thomas Weingartner	City of New Brunswick, Engineering
Frank Wong	Rutgers, The State Univ. of NJ
<u>Alternates</u>	
Brian Deegan	City of New Brunswick, Engineering
Helen Erdey	Carpender Road Area Neighborhood
Tony Gambilonghi	Middlesex County Planning Dept.
Frederick Kish	NJTA

Invited Guests

Bob Belvin  
Sarah Clarke  
Lt. Gary Yurkovic  
Doug Joyce  
Susan Kittredge  
Ken Koschek  
Linda LaSut  
Charles Scott

New Brunswick Historical Association  
DEVCO  
City of New Brunswick, Police  
Township of East Brunswick  
Middlesex Cty. Cultural & Heritage Commission  
NJDEP, Office of Program Coordination  
NJTPA  
NJDEP, State Historic Preservation Office

Steering Committee

Steve Lavelle  
Bill Birch  
Bill Cochran  
Pam Garrett  
Paul Nowicki  
Darryl Johnson  
Mike Morgan  
Martine Culbertson

NJDOT, Division of Project Management  
NJDOT, Division of Project Management  
NJDOT, Community Relations  
NJDOT, Environmental Services  
Gannett Fleming, Inc.  
Gannett Fleming, Inc.  
Gannett Fleming, Inc.  
M. A. Culbertson, LLC

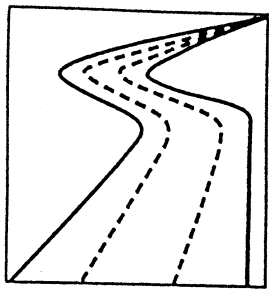
Project Support

Cindy Bloom-Cronin  
Brenda Hammer  
Rick Jaffe  
Steve Mikulak  
Phyllis St. Onge

NJDOT, Landscape & Urban Design  
NJDOT, Landscape & Urban Design  
NJDOT, Value Engineering  
NJDOT, Community Relations  
M. A. Culbertson, LLC

Report prepared by:

  
Martine Culbertson, CPT Facilitator



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CPT MEETING No. 14

AGENDA

March 13, 2002

Objective: To present the completion of the EA process and the start of the next phase of the project; to obtain CPT Design Development input and determine future Task Forces.

I. Welcome and Overview

- Project Accomplishments
- Agenda and Goals
- CPT Review

II. Project Status and Update

- Completion of the Environmental Assessment Process
- New Phase of the Project: Design Development

III. Project Schedule

IV. CPT Final Design Input

- Identify Needs
- Form Task Forces and Plan Meetings
- Group Discussions during Lunch

V. Summary and Close

- Action Items /Feedback
- Closing Comments

