

Memorandum

TO: Meeting Attendees
FROM: Amy Sokalski
DATE: February 11, 2005
SUBJECT: Northerly Crossings Corridor
Congestion Mitigation Study
Interagency Advisory Committee
(IAC) Meeting #3

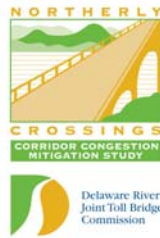
DATE AND TIME: Friday, February 4, 2005
10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

LOCATION: Clarion Hotel
1220 W. Main Street
Stroudsburg, PA

PURPOSE: Northerly Crossings Corridor Congestion Mitigation Study Interagency Advisory
Committee Meeting #3

IN ATTENDANCE (27 TOTAL):

Michael Cane	Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission – Project Manager
Linda Spalinski	Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission
Bryan Hill	Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission
James Yeager	Michael Baker Jr., Inc. – Project Manager
Mark Alisesky	Michael Baker Jr., Inc.
Amy Sokalski	Michael Baker Jr., Inc.
Richard Cochrane	PENNDOT 4-0
David Lamereaux	PA Dept. of Environmental Protection
Joe Lombardi	NJ Transit
Michael Mrozinski	Pike County Planning
John Woodling	Monroe County Planning Commission
Bob Hay	Monroe County Railroad Authority
Doyle Nelson	National Park Service
John Donahue	National Park Service
David Dech	Warren County Planning
Peter Vaughan	Warren County Planning
Madelyn Rumowicz	NJDOT
Bob Miller	NJDOT
Jack Kugler	NJDOT
Howard Immordino	NJDOT
Laine Rankin	NJDOT
Don Lerch	PENNDOT 5-0
Andrea Tingey	NJHPO-DEP



Michelle Hughes
Joe Gurinko
Tom Drabic
Tanya Emam

NJHPO-DEP
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Sussex County Planning Division
FHWA

Below is a summary of key issues discussed during Interagency Advisory Committee Meeting #3 for the Northerly Crossings Corridor Congestion Mitigation Study.

- ◆ Welcome/Introductory Remarks: *DRJTBC*
- ◆ Meeting Agenda/Study Purpose: *James Yeager*
- ◆ Forecasting Future Travel Demand: *James Yeager*
 - Mike Mrozinski asked what data were used to determine the annual growth rates. James Yeager responded that growth rates were developed based upon travel forecasts from a number of modeling tools including the NJ Transit Lackawanna Cut-Off model. The NJ Transit model used updated demographic data and forecasts as a basis for growth. Mr. Mrozinski stated that population in Pike County is expected to grow at a rate higher than 2%.
 - Joe Lombardi stated that NJ Transit would like to meet with the project team to discuss the results of the travel forecasts.
 - Richard Cochrane said that although Tech Memo #3 states that the queue from the proposed Route 206/SR 209 traffic signal is not expected to back up onto the Milford-Montague Bridge, traffic currently queues back to the toll plaza during peak summer weekends due to the traffic signal in the town of Milford.
 - Mr. Cochrane asked if the Milford-Montague Bridge system preservation project will widen the sidewalk on the bridge to better accommodate bicycles. Michael Cane responded that the scope of the project has not yet been finalized and that modifications to the sidewalk will be investigated. Mr. Cane also stated that bicycle riders are currently required to walk bikes across the bridge. It is not expected that this restriction will change.
 - John Donahue added that when the bike trail is completed, bicycle traffic on the Milford-Montague Bridge will most likely increase.
 - Laine Rankin asked if the project team investigated VMS signs to divert traffic to SR 611 from I-80. Mr. Yeager responded that Concept 8 was developed to analyze the use of SR 611 as congestion mitigation for I-80. However, diverting traffic to SR 611 on a regular basis may not be the best option because of the existing roadway condition and the alignment of SR 611 through Delaware Water Gap Borough to the north. This option may be more appropriate when incidents occur on I-80.
 - Don Lerch added that PENNDOT technically does not direct traffic to use an alternate route, but can advise motorists that an alternate route is available.
- ◆ Future No Build Analyses and Concept Development: *James Yeager, Amy Sokalski*
 - Ms. Rankin noted that ITS options were not really addressed in Tech Memo #3. Mr. Yeager responded that Concept #8 proposes improvements to SR 611 and the use of ITS/VMS signs to advise motorists of an alternate route during times of significant congestion.

- Joe Gurinko stated that using SR 611 as a diversionary route presents a safety issue due to the existing roadway condition and alignment. Mr. Yeager asked if the LVPC would support its use as a diversionary route if the safety issues were addressed. Mr. Gurinko stated that this option should be discussed with Portland Borough to determine if frequent diversions to the Portland-Columbia Bridge would negatively impact the community.
- Mr. Donahue asked if the project team looked at opportunities for recreational access to the river. Mr. Yeager responded that recreational opportunities were not investigated as part of the study.
- Madelyn Rumowicz asked what hour was used for the AM Peak Hour. Mr. Yeager responded that the AM Peak Hour on I-80 eastbound was from 5:00am-6:00am during the summer.
- Ms. Rankin stated that growth management was not prominently mentioned as a complementary strategy in Tech Memo #3. She stated that growth management is a very important issue for NJDOT and should be further evaluated for this study.
- Mr. Yeager then asked the county representatives about the effect of the Highlands legislation on growth management. John Woodling stated that the counties cannot stop growth from happening, but the counties can look for opportunities to preserve open space and manage growth. Mr. Gurinko stated that he believes the Highlands legislation will encourage population growth in Pennsylvania.
- Mr. Woodling asked if traffic impacts of the two proposed casinos in Pennsylvania (one near the Pocono Raceway and one near Mount Airy) were taken into consideration. Mr. Yeager responded that potential casino trips were not specifically considered.
- Mr. Donahue stated that he was concerned that the scope of the environmental criteria was limited. He said that he does not think the criteria adequately address the impacts to the surrounding park areas and the impacts to park visitors.
- Mr. Donahue stated that closure of the Dingman's Ferry Bridge (for any reason) could possibly impact traffic on the I-80 and Milford-Montague Bridges. Mr. Hill replied that when the Dingman's Ferry Bridge is closed every September, traffic slightly increases at the Milford-Montague Bridge. There is little impact on the I-80 DWG Bridge.
- Ms. Rankin stated that NJDOT most likely would not support HOV lanes on I-80. Mr. Lerch added that PENNDOT also would not support HOV lanes.
- Mr. Gurinko suggested that ITS improvements be further evaluated as interim solutions, including ramp metering and freeway service patrols.
- Tanya Emam stated that the NJ Turnpike Authority is publishing a study related to variable priced tolls that may provide more detailed information on this topic.
- Bob Miller asked if a 4-lane moveable barrier concept was considered for the I-80 DWG bridge, with a 3-lane + 1-lane configuration during the peak hours. This concept could possibly be used as an interim solution. Mr. Yeager stated that the project team will investigate this concept.
- Ms. Rankin suggested that complementary strategies may be underestimated. The project team should investigate options such as adding buses to I-80.
- Mr. Lombardi stated that NJ Transit is currently evaluating express bus service in the corridor and could discuss their findings at a future meeting with the project team.

- Mr. Mrozinski asked if cash lanes versus E-ZPass lanes were investigated. Mr. Yeager responded that under existing conditions, queuing occurs in the Car Only E-ZPass/Cash lanes and not in the E-ZPass Only lanes. Mr. Hill confirmed this statement and added that during the commuter peak hours, 57% of motorists use E-ZPass. However, this percentage decreases significantly during the non-commuter/weekend peak hours.
- Doyle Nelson stated that a new DWG Visitors Center is planned at Kittatinny Point. The National Park Service will not support any concepts that negatively impact the Visitors Center or visitors to the park.
- ◆ Evaluation Criteria: *Mark Alisesky*
 - Mr. Alisesky presented the proposed evaluation criteria and requested feedback from the IAC members.
 - Mr. Gurinko suggested that construction cost be separated into two criteria: cost within DRJTBC jurisdiction and cost outside DRJTBC jurisdiction.
 - Mr. Nelson recommended that a criteria be added to the environmental section to account for visual impacts to recreational users.
 - Mr. Gurinko suggested that the bicycle/pedestrian criteria be moved to the Public/Community Impact category.
 - Ms. Tingey was concerned that there were too many environmental criteria and that they would not carry as much weight as other criteria.
 - Ms. Tingey suggested eliminating the 4(f) permitting criteria.
 - The group suggested that Environmental Justice should be moved under Public/Community Impact and that the additional studies/permits criteria should be moved under Feasibility.
 - Mr. Lerch stated that this methodology is appropriate to help eliminate concepts but probably is not the best way to develop a recommended concept. Mr. Yeager stated that the methodology will be used to group concepts and identify concepts which comparatively score High-Medium-Low.
 - The group recommended moving the construction cost criteria to the Implementation category.
 - Mr. Gurinko suggested that the concepts should first be evaluated based on the project needs statement (project goal and objective – to mitigate future congestion) so concepts that do not meet the project need can be eliminated.
 - The group suggested that the criteria related to IAC Support and NCF Support should be eliminated.

Action Items

- ◆ The project team stated that they will send the IAC a revised list of criteria to review.
- ◆ The team requested that IAC members provide formal comments on Technical Memorandum #3 by Friday, February 18.
- ◆ Project team will schedule a meeting with NJ Transit to discuss travel demand forecasts.

Next Steps

- ◆ NCF Meeting #3 – scheduled for Wednesday, March 9, 2005