

CONGESTION BUSTER TASK FORCE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD JANUARY 22, 2002

NJDOT Multi-Purpose Room, Ewing, NJ

Attendees:

Task Force Members (or Delegates):

Chairman Jim Sinclair, NJBIA

Ken Afferton, Edwards & Kelcey

Janine Bauer, TSTC

Sandra Brillhart, Greater Mercer TMA

Mike Egenton, NJ Chamber of Commerce

Erica Ferry, Pharmacia

Joanne Jaeger, Sadat Associates, Inc.

Jennifer Jaroski, TSTC

Wm. Layton, Concrete & Aggregate Assoc.

Allan Lichtenstein, Rutgers-VTPI

Anita Perez, RideWise

Bill Ragozine, Cross County Connection TMA

Judy Schleicher, I-80 Task Force

Marianne Stock, NJ Transit

Invited Guests:

Sara Bluhm, NJBIA

Richard Kerr, NJ Transit

DOT Staff:

William Beetle

Noreen Cardinali

Talvin Davis

Monica Etz

Debra Firman

Ted Matthews

Bob Miller

Bill Piedra

Adnew Tessema

Tom Thatcher

Susan M. Weber

WELCOME and OPENING REMARKS

- The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Sinclair at 9:41 a.m. Brief introductions were made around the room.
- The Chairman reported that Assistant Commissioner Pippa Woods was leaving the Department of Transportation.
- Chairman Sinclair stated he attended a recent I-80 Mobility Task Force meeting. The meeting focused on implementation of their recommendations. It was reported that the headway on the #10 bus was reduced from 60 minutes to 30 minutes. Encouraging people to use mass transit seems to be one way to reduce congestion. Making changes in the transit system, however, does not happen without much coordination and lead preparation.
- Other issues discussed at the I-80 meeting included improved signage; better ways to provide information to the motoring public; truck safety and rest areas; incident management and

educating the public on commute options. Corporations with vanpool and other employee transportation programs were mentioned as examples of private sector involvement.

OLD BUSINESS

- Website update and comments were distributed. Most of the public comments received thus far speak of localized issues. An effort will be made to get subcommittee recommendations posted to the website to generate comments and reaction to broader congestion issues and their possible solutions.

NEW BUSINESS

Demand Management Strategies

Noreen Cardinali, NJDOT Mobility Measures Section, made a presentation on statewide Travel Demand Management (TDM) Services. Noreen discussed the goal of TDM activities and the role of various organizations involved in implementing TDM in New Jersey. Some of the current TDM oriented programs coordinated within NJDOT are:

- TMA Program
 - CommuterChoice/Smart Moves for Business/Employer Services Program
 - Work First New Jersey
 - Park & Ride Program
 - Bicycle/Pedestrian Program
 - Transit Village Initiatives
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- There are eight private, non-profit TMAs in New Jersey that provide commuter and client services, collect data and promote TDM in specific geographic areas. In addition, NJ Transit works with the TMAs and promotes demand management strategies.
 - An overview of TMA funding was presented: 75 – 80% of TMA operating expenses are covered by FHWA/NJDOT reimbursement; remaining funding is received from private clients.
 - TMA core program elements include Rideshare Information Services, Traffic Mitigation and Corridor Strategy/Corridor Concept Development.
 - TMAs may also provide optional CMAQ-eligible (federally funded) TDM activities; and receive additional special funding for activities such as Work First New Jersey Program and Employer Services Program.
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- A brief overview of the Employer Trip Reduction Program which was in place from 1992 to 1997 and the present Commuter Choice federal legislation was presented.
 - Three hundred businesses are currently enrolled in the Smart Moves for Business Program. Although the underlying state law for this program expanded state tax credits, very few employers take advantage of them.
 - Employer Services Program is a new NJDOT initiative and a core element of the Fiscal Year 2002 TMA program. This program, through outreach and advanced services contractors, seeks to expand the range and innovation of employer services provided by TMAs and increase effectiveness of employer outreach.

- The Work First New Jersey Program is a federal and State initiative to provide job access to former welfare recipients. TMAs help develop transportation services for WFNJ clients.
- The Park and Ride program seeks to support the increased demand for transit and ridesharing by providing safe and convenient places to park a vehicle and transfer. The Trust Fund Renewal Act of 2000 established a goal of establishing or expanding at least two park and ride facilities in each year through the 2004-2005 fiscal year.
- NJDOT's Bureau of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs seeks to establish a bike/pedestrian friendly environment in New Jersey. Their activities include scope and concept development studies as well as local planning assistance.
- The Transit Village Initiative is multi-agency State initiative which seeks to encourage compact, mixed-use development within a ¼ to ½ mile radius of passenger transportation facilities. Transit villages have been designated in six municipalities; three new applications are being considered.
- Screening research has been conducted on 37 new TDM strategies; implementation will be started on three strategies: safer routes to schools, pedestrian crosswalk enhancements/bike lane visibility and telecommute resource center.

Sandra Brillhart, Greater Mercer TMA, gave a presentation on current TMA programs and services. TMA activities seek to increase vehicle occupancy, eliminate trips and encourage travel mode and time shifts. TMA customers include commuters, employers and all levels of government. Sandra stated that the Greater Mercer TMA is now working with 40 companies; during the time of ETR mandate, the TMA was working with 70 to 85 of the approximately 265 affected Mercer County employers.

- Rideshare Information Services, the main component of the NJDOT Core Program, includes rideshare matching, emergency ride home service, empty seat vanpool subsidies and promotion of commuter alternatives.
- One can register for ridematching over the Internet; New Jersey has a higher than national average of employees who are long-term rideshare participants.
- TMAs administer a traffic alert network to inform employers of non-recurrent congestion, caused by accidents, incidents and construction. Mitigation efforts may include shuttles.
- TMA's corridor study work includes conducting park and ride needs assessments, bike/pedestrian accessibility studies and assessment of transit needs.
- Other programs run by TMAs include: electric station cars, bicycle programs and employer services. Fee for service work includes shuttle service administration for area corporations.
- Sandra noted that employers do not think of transportation as their responsibility. When asked if doubling TMA funding would double the number of rideshare participants and alternate commuters, it was noted that TMA productivity would increase if contact and work programs with employers increased.

Richard Kerr, NJ Transit, spoke about NJ Transit's role in Travel Demand Management and its work with the TMAs. Rich stated that TMAs help promote public transit through their local presence. He sees much potential in congestion relief through off-peak travel and providing local services.

- NJ Transit's BusinessPass and TransitChek Programs are ticket sales programs that help build transit usage into the business culture and can serve as an employee benefit.
- The Ozone Action Partnership seeks to increase public awareness of how transportation choices can affect air quality. Activities coordinated with the TMAs include ozone alert day notifications and "Try Transit" promotions.
- The Vanpool Sponsorship Program offers a flexible commuter alternative in low-density areas. NJ Transit presently sponsors 190 vanpools through monthly subsidies. Rich stated that doubling the money spent on this program would not double the number of users since there is a limited vanpool market and destinations have been reduced through office consolidation.
- Community and local shuttles deliver commuters from home or work sites to train stations and bus stops. TMAs manage the contract process with shuttle operators.
- Other demand management activities NJ Transit is involved with include bike lockers, bike racks on buses and trains, and bus stop signs and shelters.

Park and Ride

Chairman Sinclair stated that the park and ride system, with the flexibility it offers, could help the Task Force meet its mandated goals. He called for a special brainstorming session to examine park and ride issues and asked Erica Ferry to organize the session.

Subcommittee Reports

- Time did not allow for subcommittee reports.
- Mike Egenton, chairperson of the Legislative Subcommittee, said his committee welcomes legislative recommendations from the other subcommittees, but noted that given the political reality and budget issues facing New Jersey, some initiatives may not be doable.

ORGANIZATIONAL ITEMS

- Chairman Sinclair stated the Task Force may hold public hearings in March in lieu of a general meeting. The Task Force will have the benefit of input from the new Transportation Commissioner.
- Chairman Sinclair asked that the secretary prepare an attendance record. It is attached as a separate page to these minutes.
- The next meeting is scheduled for February 19th at 1:00 p.m., NJDOT Multi-Purpose Room. Land use and growth management will be the subject of the February meeting.
- The meeting adjourned at 12:42 p.m.

CONGESTION BUSTER TASK FORCE MEETING ATTENDANCE

<u>Task Force Member (or delegate)</u>	<u>Meetings Attended</u>
Jim Sinclair	All
Janine Bauer (Jaroski)	July, August, October, Nov., Dec., Jan.
Sandra Brillhart	All
Lt. Col. Cartwright	June, July, August, November
Jack Claffey	June, July, August, October, Nov., Dec.
Michael Egenton	June, August, Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan.
Erica Ferry	June, July, December, January
Joanne Jaeger	June, July, August, December, January
Gerry Keenan	July, August, October, December
Stephanie Kudrowitz (Afferton)	July, August, Oct., Nov., Dec., January
William Layton	August, December, January
Barry Lem	June, July, November, December
J.P. Miele (Drinkwater)	June, July, August, October, Nov., Dec.
Anita Perez	June, July, August, Oct., Dec., January
William Ragozine	All
James Redeker (Stock)	June, July, October, January
Mike Reeves	June, July, August, October, December
Martin Robins (Lichtenstein)	All
Judith Schleicher	June, July, August, Oct., Dec., January
Gail Toth	August, November
Joel Weiner (Meghdir)	June, July, August, October, November
Pippa Woods	June, July, August, October, November

Inactive Members

Susan Maglione	
Pam Maiolo	
Jose Sosa	
Dominic D'Agosta	
Peter Unanue	June