

**Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy
Princeton Sub-Area Workshop – Round 1
Meeting Notes
January 21, 2009**



**Princeton Senior Resource Center
Suzanne Patterson Building
1 Monument Drive, Princeton**

Purposes

This was one of four meetings designed to re-launch the Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy initiative at the subarea level. The meeting served to reiterate the study purpose and objectives in the current context; elicit participant input on transportation investment preferences; review the land use concept scenario; and look ahead to next steps in the process.

Stakeholder Participants

Donna Lewis, Ernie Miller, Gary Leach, Lee Solow, Paul Cohn, Les Varga, Pat Ward, Teri Jover, Kristin Appleget, Tom Clark, Jack Kanarek, Walter Schmidlin, John Brandbergh, Francis Guzik, Pam Hersh, Marvin Reed, Matt Lawson, Curt Emmich, Basil Giletto, Anton Lahnston, Mildred Trotman, Marty Rosen, Jennifer Feltus.

Congestion Problem Areas

Participants brainstormed locations in the subarea where congestion is worst.

- US 1
- East-west corridors, including CR 571
- Plainsboro Rd near site of new Princeton Medical Center
- US 206 and Route 27
- Clarksville Road and Meadow Road
- Alexander Rd, Washington Rd, and Harrison St, especially including their intersections with US 1
- Route 27 through Kingston, including intersection with Mapleton Rd
- Dey Road (trucks)
- US 206 and Princeton Pike
- Quaker Bridge / Province Line Rd
- US 1 & I-95 / 295

TDM Discussion

Participants were asked how supportive they are of these measures. Their comments:

- Why not make transit less expensive?
- Tolls may simply cause traffic to shift to other roads, as trucks do from Turnpike
- Where would the revenue from tolls go?
- Princeton University has considered some type of congestion pricing but has equity concerns over possible regressivity, particularly for longer-distance commuters
- Princeton Medical Center is sensitive to pricing issues regarding its patients.
- Note the difference between employer-based and region-wide efforts

- Consider lack of local workforce housing
- Concern over impact on local businesses, particularly retailers. A congestion pricing plan may lead shoppers to go elsewhere
- Congestion pricing is the wrong issue – let's focus on transit alternatives
- Do not like the punitive aspect of congestion pricing
- Could there be a time-based element to congestion pricing

Access Management Discussion

Participants were asked how supportive they are of these measures. Their comments:

- Plainsboro has done well with access management
- Concerned about the possible impact of access management on residential neighborhoods adjacent to county roads
- Redevelopment plans along CR 571 include access management / rear parking
- Consider access management everywhere, including residential neighborhoods

Small Group Discussions – Transportation

Participants worked in small groups, facilitated and scribed by team members. They discussed and marked up maps with ideas for improvements in various transportation modes that might add capacity and reduce congestion in critical places in the subarea.

A – Summary of Proposed Concepts – Transportation

Small Group A: Group Facilitator Jon Carnegie, Scribe Danielle Graves

Participants: Donna Lewis, Mercer County; Bernie Miller, Mayor, Princeton Township; Gary Leach, NJDOT; Lee Solow, Princeton Regional Planning Board; Teri Jover, NJ Future; Jennifer Feltis, NJ DEP; Tom Clark, NJ Transit.

Rail

- Extend Dinky Line
- Allow reverse commute
- Upgrade to BRT/LRT
- More frequent service
- One-seat ride
- Provide parking at station – centralized parking

Road Improvements

- Clarksville & Quakerbridge Rd.
- Quakerbridge & Village Rd.
- Quakerbridge Rd. bridge over NE Corridor
- Rt. 206 & Rt. 27
- Canal Point Blvd. connection (missing link south to Nassau Park/Mercer Mall)
- Princeton Bypass/Extend CR 522 west (improve E-W connections)
- East-West access to Hospital
- Pedestrian crossings over Rt. 1

B – Summary of Proposed Concepts – Transportation

Small Group B: Group Facilitator Jim Hess, Scribe Marge Quinn

Participants: Marvin Reed, Princeton Regional Planning Board; Matt Lawson, Mercer County; Basil Giletto, Mercer Chamber of Commerce; Anton Lahnston, Princeton Borough; Mildred Trotman, Princeton Borough; Francis Guzik, West Windsor Township; Pam Hersh, Princeton Health Care System.

Rail

- Anticipate increased service along NEC

LRT / BRT

- Convert Dinky and extend to Nassau St, and possibly along Nassau St.
- Connect Princeton Junction with new Princeton Medical Center site and Plainsboro Village Center
- Connect Princeton with new Princeton Medical Center site and Plainsboro Village Center

Bus

- Service connecting with downtown Princeton via Witherspoon St, Bunn Drive, and Great Road, et al.
- Service along Princeton Pike
- Service along CR 571 or other east-west corridors

Roads

- Address congestion at US 1 & I-95/295
- Road improvements in QB Mall area
- Connect Canal Pointe from Province Line Road to Harrison Street
- Repair Province Line Road bridge between Cherry Valley Road and Rosedale Rd
- Connect Alexander Road and Springdale Road
- Implement Penns Neck EIS improvements: Harrison St overpass and Vaughn Drive connector
- Add right turn lane from WB Harrison St to SB US 1
- Add right turn lane from WB Washington Rd to SB US 1
- Extend CR 522 to connect with CR 518 / US 206 north of Princeton

C – Summary of Proposed Concepts – Transportation

Small Group C: Group Facilitator Ranjit Walia, Scribe Rob Williams

Participants: Kristin Appleget, Princeton University; Pat Ward, West Windsor Township; Les Varga, Plainsboro Township; Paul Cohn, NJDOT; Marty Rosen, NJDEP; Curt Emmich, Forrestal Center; Jack Kanarek, NJ Transit; John Brandenburgh, Boston Properties/Carnegie Center; Walter Schmidlin, Sarnoff Corporation.

Rail

- New rail service would be difficult to achieve; focus on improvements to operations and service.
 - Increase frequency of Dinky service
 - More frequent stops, especially Alexander Road between Princeton and Princeton Junction
- Improve access to rail in Plainsboro
- Stations (Princeton, Princeton Junction, and potential hospital station) must be “multi-modal hubs” (strong sentiment)

- Rail improvements won't really affect Route 1 congestion because rail riders are not boarding during peak periods; they are a separate population (Jack Kanarek)

Bus

- Strong support for Rte 1 BRT
- The Rte 1 BRT would need an enhanced network of shuttle buses in the core area to maximize its potential.
- Frequency of service has to be increased and there have to be rational connections and coordination between various shuttles/loops
- Shuttles:
 - Coordinate existing and proposed shuttle and bus schedules with the train schedule
 - Increase frequency of service
 - W Windsor hopes to get grant for E/W shuttle
 - A hospital jitney should be created

Roads

- No new roads!
- Key improvements are the Penn's Neck EIS improvements
 - Vaughn Drive connector
 - Harrison St overpass
 - Rte 1 below grade cut
- Operational/Access management along 571
- More park-and-rides with van pool service to employment destinations

Bike/Ped

- Rte 1 and rail service as key barriers to circulation
 - Provide facilities and enhance safety at crossings
- Consider B/P in all improvements and redevelopment projects
- Enhance bicycle network with more facilities
- Overall accommodation is critical and needs to be formalized in policy
- Inter-municipal bicycle connections need to be coordinated
- Encourage bicycle circulation through improvements beyond infrastructure
 - Employers
 - Tax incentive for bicycle commuting
 - Showers
 - Bike racks
 - Develop other incentives
- Need focused education and outreach to encourage people to bicycle
- Ensure that bike racks are on all transit modes (including shuttles)
- Need bike storage at employment sites

Policy

- Each transportation mode cannot be considered separately but all must be considered as an interconnected system
- Must have comprehensive connections between modes policy
- Access management key to improving congestion in the region. Highly supportive of such policies/interventions

Other

- East West connections are biggest problem. Can be addressed through combination of efforts outlined above.
- The group recommended having an overlay for the map with key employment destinations so that they could make more specific recommendations

Summary Discussion

Participants offered these thoughts in summary:

Key Concepts

- There is considerable consistency in the concepts proposed by break-out groups
- Need land use changes to support the proposed transit improvement concepts. Land use changes will be the key area of contention
- Princeton has various ongoing development projects and is ready for transit support
- Consider the impact of COAH – towns are now considering mixed-use development
- COAH does not allow a regional growth share approach in this study area

Linkages and Action

- How do stakeholders extend our work into their towns, in order to build support?
- How will we address shorter-term improvement needs?
- How will this project coordinate with other studies, including BRT study and upcoming county bus study?
- NJ TRANSIT anticipates providing a summary of short-term BRT system concepts within a few months
- The county bus study will focus on a longer-term vision

Logistics

- Please provide meeting summary materials
- We should try to schedule the next round of workshops as soon as possible
- Include large business owners in the stakeholder groups
- Discuss land use issues
- Find a better meeting room