

Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy
Turnpike Exit 8A Sub-Area Workshop – Round 1
Meeting Notes
January 30, 2009



Monroe Twp. Municipal Building-Courtroom
1 Municipal Plaza, Monroe

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

Jeannette Tugya, George Ververides, Herb Gishlick, Barry Ableman, Morteza Ansari, Mike Grant, Mirah Becker, Ed Cohen, Craig Marshall, Tony Gambilonghi, Bernie Long, Brenda Deans, Zoe Neaderland, Bill Beetle, Mathew Lawson, John Riggs, Ryan Scerbo, Jeffrey Graydon.

Congestion Problem Areas

Participants brainstormed locations in the subarea where congestion is worst.

- Turnpike exit 8A – Route 32
 - Truck traffic connection across CR 535 to 130
 - Truck stop(s) needed in addition to proposed expansion of truck parking at Molly Pitcher rest area
 - Note: Costco warehouse has 30 minute window for deliveries
- Relationship / integration between 8 and 8A
- Intersections throughout – left turns [note difficulty obtaining NJDEP approvals]
- Cranbury Rd under the Turnpike is too narrow

TDM Discussion

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

- Beware of diversion from tolling particular facilities; traffic will just go to un-tolled roads
- Equity is a concern with pricing
- Would need to be vehicle tracking-based (in-vehicle technology)
- Interdependencies abound
- Must concurrently have viable options / alternatives
- Issues are different in this Sub-area – more truck-based
- Subsidy, incentives are better
- Trip reduction ordinances

Access Management Discussion

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

- Rte 33 potential candidate for proactive access management planning

- Private sector is a critical partner [take a lesson from US 1 in South Brunswick. Original plans had been for grade-separated intersections. Need to work with private sector re timing of new development.]
 - Consider trip reduction ordinances, work with employers
 - Should be thinking about retrofitting 130. It is not a 'main street'
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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: Zoe Neaderland, DVRPC; Bill Beetle, Municipal Land Use Center at TCNJ; Mathew Lawson, Mercer County Planning Division; John Riggs, Monroe Township; Ryan Scerbo, New Jersey Turnpike Authority; Jeffrey Graydon, Cranbury Township.

Rail

- NO MOM line as currently proposed, including NEC rail station in South Brunswick

LRT / BRT

- Consider locally-oriented BRT/LRT service on MOM alignment
- Consider new BRT/LRT corridor parallel to Route 33/133/571

Bus/Shuttles

- Expand resident only park and ride lots at WaWa and the existing Suburban-Coach facility near CR614/615
- Construct new park and ride and bus-oriented development in the vicinity of Applegarth and Perineville roads
- Expand shuttle bus opportunities, especially for commuters – New South Brunswick community shuttle service (earmark project); new service along Route 33/571 corridor to Princeton Junction train station; Monroe/Jamesburg service connecting to Route 1 BRT.

Road

- Turnpike widening between exits 6 and 8A
 - Reconstruct NJ Turnpike interchange at Exit 8
 - Consider introducing bus-only access ramps to NJ Turnpike at appropriate locations
 - Continue to improve CR522 corridor as alternative to Route 92
 - Construct "truck link" interchange between NJ Turnpike and Route 130 in the vicinity of Route 32
 - Continue to improve Applegarth Road corridor CR619 in Monroe Township
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B – Summary of Proposed Concepts – Transportation

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

Participants: Jeannette Tugya, Monroe Planning; George Ververides, Middlesex Co Planning; Herb Gishlick, Rider University; Barry Ableman, OSG; Morteza Ansari, KMM; Brenda Deans, Jamesburg.

Roads

- Turnpike Exit 9 needs improved (outside sub-area)
- NJTA plans to widen Turnpike between Exits 9 and 6
- Need to widen Route 522, including under the Turnpike
- NJTA plans flyover along Route 32 from Exit 8A
- Improve directional signage for trucks in 8A area
- NJTA plans to widen CR 614 over Turnpike
- NJTA plans to expand truck parking at Molly Pitcher rest area
- NJTA is working to re-design Exit 8, including direct connection with Route 133
- Consider grade separation along US 1
- Widen US 1
- US 130 study (in North Brunswick north of sub-area) is assessing possibly closing median openings, revising turning lanes, etc.
- US 130 issues: too many signals, congestion, safety issues, truck traffic. Consider grade separation? Conduct study of truck origins and destinations to use in truck routing.
- Need access management / growth management along Route 33
- Lack of east-west access is still an issue. Still need Route 92. Consider a new route between Route 522 and Route 33.

BRT

- Connect US 1 BRT with Route 18 BRT

Bus

- Consider possibilities for connecting new South Brunswick bus service with other areas
- County is currently conducting bus study to assess possible service expansions
- Increase bus service from Jamesburg
- Increase bus service in both directions along the Route 571 / Route 33 corridor
- Provide bus service from the Trenton area to the 8A area.

C – Summary of Proposed Concepts – Transportation

Small Group C: Group Facilitator Rob Williams, Scribe Lonnie Weiss

Participants: Mike Grant, NJTA; Mirah Becker, MCPD; Ed Cohen, Monroe; Craig Marshall, South Brunswick Twp.; Tony Gambilonghi, MCPD; Bernie Long, Jamesburg Zoning, Comm. Dev.

Rail

- Prioritize preserving existing RR rights of way
- Need bus service to get people to rail service
- Model: Expand on senior bus – individuals home pick up – to broader community, to get people who need to get to train station. S. Brunswick is about to do this, take people to exit 8A Park and Ride or New Brunswick Train Station.

- Monroe has private bus company – pick people up at senior communities who work in NYC and take them to NYC
 - Another example of a model to expand
 - Needs – busses, regular maintenance, drivers, random drug tests, access for big busses
- County is “opposed” to Monroe + Jamesburg MOM line (part time Monmouth Junction)
 - Concerns for additional rail
 - Crossings shut downtown
 - Lower property value
 - Fences for safety cut town in half
 - Nobody wants it near their property/county
- Light rail
 - Less impact than commuter rail (this was not discussed as much)

Bus

- People like getting on Turnpike at 8A – direct line to NYC
- People don’t like Route 9 ride
- Park and Ride
 - Thompson Park would be a good location
 - Then shift to bus routes
 - Applegarth park and ride in progress/development
- BRT
 - No place for it in this area
 - Route 1 would be OK
 - BRT as extra lane on Turnpike
 - Exits 9 through 6: turnpike widening design is for extra trucks and car lanes

Roads

- Widen 535
- Widen Cranbury Rd (+/-) – South River Road, esp under the NJTP, and grade separate with Route 32
- Route 32 improvements from Turnpike- Route 130
- Tier 1, 10 year project
 - Separate project
 - Grade separated – over 535
 - New at grade interchange at 130 connecting at Friendship Rd.

Land Use Discussion

- Does our alternative scenario reflect land use or zoning?
- How does the scenario relate to the State Plan?
- There will be some changes to the Planning Areas.
- Monre will provide us their new COAH plan

Summary Discussion

Participants offered these issues:

- Agency coordination

- COAH issues related to Smart Growth – need to coordinate among COAH, OSG, and NJDOT
- DEP permitting decisions – need to coordinate with NJDEP. They need adequate sewer service areas to accommodate new housing
- WQM planning changes have resulted in loss of sewer service areas.
- Project timelines too long. Note the many US 1 studies. Let's get things done! We need immediate projects, short-term improvements!
- DVRPC case studies have been received generally favorably
- Number of signals along US 130 has been increasing in recent years. Towns may be interested in “downgrading” the road, but this may not be possible. Need to do better with Route 33.