

Route 113 Corridor Committee

March 10, 2010

2:30 – 5:00 PM

Standish Municipal Center

Meeting Notes

Committee Members: Dave Knapp, Chair (Fryeburg); Eric Noble (Hiram); Marlene Livonia (Hiram); Ed Pierce (Hiram); Phil Pomerleau (Standish); Lou Stack, Vice Chair (Standish); Glen Reynolds (Baldwin).

Guests: Gordon Billington (Standish); John Phillips (Kezar Falls); Jack Sutton (Maine Rail Group); Steve Wood (Baldwin); Jeremy Young (Progressive Rail).

Staff: Tom Reinauer (SMRPC); Caroline Paras (GPCOG).

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Mountain Division

A. What's Next

In September 2009, the State submitted a \$28.5 million TIGER grant to the U.S. Department of Transportation to rebuild the Mountain Division track to support freight and excursion service: <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/tigergrants/mountaindiv/documents/mdapplication.pdf>. Grant announcements were made on February 17, 2010. The grant was not funded. The purpose of this meeting was to brainstorm what actions the Committee should take to champion the return of rail service on the Mountain Division, which is a strategy in our Economic Opportunities Plan. Issues discussed included the following:

- There was about two weeks from the time the TIGER grants were announced to the announcement of the Bond package. Several projects left unfunded by TIGER made their way into the Bond package, including construction of the megaberth cruise ship terminal in Portland and acquisition of the Maine, Montreal and Atlantic (MMA) rail line in Aroostook County. What are other regions doing to get noticed that we are not?
- The MMA includes 241 miles of track hauling 9,000 carloads from 22 businesses.
- The Aroostook and Androscoggin County delegations are very powerful.
- Bethel is very opposed to the Mountain Division and has recruited the Androscoggin County delegation to join this opposition.
- We need to focus on a positive message, e.g., job creation, not a negative one pitting one region of the state against the other.
- Maybe we should scale down our request, i.e., ask for \$10 million as part of the Bond package to get the rail line running to at least serve the proposed Woods pellet plant in Baldwin.

- There may be another round of TIGER funding. We need to make a stronger case re: the economic impact of rail restoration on the Mountain Division.
- A rail-truck transfer facility associated with the Mountain Division could also generate many jobs and reduce traffic congestion on the Portland waterfront. Companies from Vermont and New Hampshire send trucks down to the waterfront because it is the gateway for distributing oil to Northern New England.
- Maietta owns a rail-truck transfer facility for gravel in Scarborough that is unused.
- We need to show Portland, Westbrook, Gorham, and Windham “what’s in it” for them.
- Our best argument is demonstrating that we have carloads of freight that could take advantage of the Mountain Division. Build it and they will come.

Short term action: Rep. Shaw and others will work on adding \$10 million to the Bond proposal to restore rail service from Westbrook to Baldwin.

Long term action: The Committee will host a potluck for rail users, including potential operators and shippers, to generate better economic data for the next round of TIGER funding.

A. Next meeting date

The next meeting will be held sometime in May, date and location TBD.