

MEMORANDUM

To: Route 236 Implementation Committee and Interested Parties

From: Josh Mack, Transportation Planner

Date: March 4, 2005

RE: Meeting Notes for March 3rd Route 236 Implementation Committee

Those in Attendance: Diane Brandon, Community Wellness Coalition; Ken Creed, York County Community Action Corporation; Harland Goodwin, South Berwick; Josh Mack, SMRPC; Terry Oliver, South Berwick/KACTS; Kate Pelletier, Eliot; Tom Reinauer, SMRPC; Tim Roache, Strafford Regional Planning Commission/Seacoast MPO; Rick Rossiter, Kittery/KACTS; Adam Scharff, South Berwick; Duane Scott, Maine DOT; Dan Stewart, Maine Turnpike Authority; Steve Wells, COAST; Steve Workman, Eastern Trail Management District.

Work Accomplished Since December Meeting

Tom Reinauer explained that a great deal of work has been accomplished since the December Committee meeting including:

- A summary of transportation and commuting data for the region;
- A revised purpose and needs statement
- A review of zoning, access management ordinance language, and comprehensive planning policies and goals relating to Route 236 for Kittery, Eliot and South Berwick;
- Researching the idea of having interactive document on website allowing people to share comments from remote locations (SMRPC does not have the technology to do this).
- Prioritization and gap analysis of recommendations from previous studies.

Tom asked the Committee for any comments on any of the documents. He explained that the focus was not just on the road itself, but also land use policies that affect the corridor. Tom noted that he had begun discussions with Carl Croce, Director of the Bureau of Planning for Maine DOT about having an engineer assigned to do a traffic analysis of Route 236 and will be meeting shortly with Maine DOT to prepare for this effort.

Committee Feedback/Questions/Discussion:

- Make the information already collected available to Maine DOT for their future corridor study effort;
- Consider the future possibility of studying traffic conditions for Route 1 and Route 91;

- Other corridor committees in Southern Maine such as the Route 109 and Route 111 Corridor Committee have found it helpful to have a Maine DOT engineering traffic analysis to help town leadership make policy decisions about how to manage the corridor.

Prioritization and Gap Analysis of Route 236 Recommendations

Josh Mack explained that since the December meeting, staff reviewed the relevancy of recommendations derived from nine (9) different studies that were related to the Route 236 Corridor, prioritized those recommendations, and then added recommendations where there appeared to be gaps. Recommendations were categorized as either being short term (up to 2 years), medium term (2-5 years) and long term (over 5 years). Recommendations were also categorized into one of the following theme groups: highway improvements, regulation/policy improvements, and transportation demand management improvements. Gaps that were identified in the process included a need for consistency/compatibility between local access management programs on the corridor, a need to study the feasibility of transit service on the corridor, and the need for the towns to explore some creative financing approaches for the corridor such as an impact fee.

Josh asked the committee for feedback on the “Leadership Participation and Support Needed for Action” component of each recommendation, as it is critical to get the right people involved if the Committee’s recommendations are to be implemented. If the Committee is satisfied with the recommendations, we will go over some action strategies with Tom next, and then present our action items to Town Select boards and Councils for their approval. Josh asked the Committee for feedback and comments on the recommendations document:

Committee Feedback/Questions/Discussion:

- Steve Workman asked if there is something that addresses bicycling in the list of recommendations? Yes. There is a recommendation that discusses ways of taking advantage of funding opportunities for enhancing bike/pedestrian infrastructure.

Development of Short Term Recommendations into Action Items:

Tom explained that the next step with the recommendations is to transform them into action items, starting with the short term recommendations. The plan for the next meeting will be to go over medium and long-term recommendations and transform them into action items as well. The following notes express the major questions and comments directed at the recommendations. **Comments proposed as “action items” are found in the Route 236 Recommendations and Action Items document, and not in these meeting notes.**

S1 Questions/Comments (Re: Secretary of State issuance of overlimit permits):

- Rick Rossiter: The Committee should see how state rules for truck permitting affects truck routes. Terry Oliver responded that, for the most part, states have compatible and standardized permitting procedures, particularly in the Northeast.
- Dan Stewart: With a few exceptions, what the Turnpike allows for vehicles is essentially the same as what Maine DOT allows on its roads.

S2/S4 Questions/Comments (Re: Maine DOT assigning engineer to analyze 236 corridor):

- Duane Scott announced that the State might be willing to provide a state match to support an effort like the Route 236 Corridor Committee effort.
- Tim Roache: Not sure what the Maine DOT scope will be, but New Hampshire has a model that already incorporates Route 236 that is being used to analyze the Spaulding Turnpike. This information could be used for the MDOT engineering study if needed.

S3 Questions/Comments (Re: Commercial Vehicle Weight Enforcement):

- Tom Reinauer: The Committee could send a letter from the committee explaining our stance on overweight commercial vehicles on the 236 corridor.
- Terry Oliver: Another problem with enforcement are vehicles with log violations. Log violations are more frequent than weight issues.

S5 Questions/Comments (Re: Decision as to whether bypass study is required):

- Tom Reinauer: The decision to ask MDOT to study a bypass ultimately rests with the Town of South Berwick.
- Tom Reinauer: Study would be an alternatives analysis, not a study just for a bypass.
- Josh Mack: The South Berwick Origin-Destination Survey results should be finalized in two or three weeks.
- Duane Scott: The Town must make a formal request for the Maine DOT to think about committing resources for a bypass and alternatives analysis study.
- Tom Reinauer: Doesn't expect to see many destination trips going into downtown South Berwick. He expects most trips to be through trips from station to station.

S6 Questions/Comments (Re: Maine DOT restrict use of waivers for access mgmt permits on 236):

- Josh Mack: current access management rules are such that developers can negotiate with Maine DOT to create waivers for mobility sight distance, minimum spacing, and corner clearance, etc. so that mobility can still be compromised on a corridor.

- Dan Stewart: Sometimes circumstances of lots are such that is difficult not to grant a waiver given that every parcel is usually given an opportunity to access corridors. Safety is the primary concern of the access permitting process.

S7 Questions/Comments (Re: reviewing access management protections in town ordinances):

- Diane Brandon: the modeling presentation that Maine DOT does for other towns should be considered as a possible tool to use when presenting findings to the planning boards.
- Steve Workman: Eliot appears to be a hot spot for potential access management problems and the Eliot Comp Plan and Planning Boards should be consulted on any access management initiative.

S8 Questions/Comments (Re: South Berwick Town Center Vision):

- Adam Scharf: Work with South Berwick's new Economic Development Committee. Also look at possibilities of consulting with Chambers of Commerce.

S9 Questions/Comments (Re: impact fees)

- Steve Workman: Show town leadership case studies to illustrate the benefits/drawbacks of an impact fee program.

S10 Questions/Comments (Re: access management buildout analysis)

- No comments

S11-S16 Questions/Comments (park and ride development and carpooling):

- Terry Oliver: There are a handful of people that use the South Berwick Town Hall parking lot as a park and ride lot. The other lot in South Berwick is not used for commuter parking.
- Steve Wells: Availability of transit services can be an important factor in making a park and ride lot successful.
- Harland Goodwin: A lot in the vicinity of 109/4 might be a good location for commuters heading east from Sanford into Wells and south from Sanford into North Berwick and beyond.

S17 Questions/Comments (Re: study possibility of developing transit operation for corridor):

- Steve Wells: COAST has planning funds that could be used for this effort.
- Adam Scharff: C & J Trailways should be contacted about this effort, as it already has several empty buses passing through the area in the morning heading to Portsmouth.

S18 Comments/Question (Re: improving bike/pedestrian access and safety):

- No comments.

S19 Comments/Questions (Re: opportunities for commuter bus service)

- Pair this recommendation with S17.