

MEMORANDUM

To: Route 236 Implementation Committee and Interested Parties

From: Josh Mack, Transportation Planner

Date: August 12, 2005

RE: Meeting Notes for August 11, 2005 Route 236 Corridor Implementation Committee

Those in Attendance: Diane Brandon, Community Wellness Coalition; Jim Fisk, Town of South Berwick; Lauren Fleming, HNTB/Maine Turnpike Authority; Cathy Goodwin, Greater York Chamber of Commerce; Josh Mack, Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC); Terry Oliver, South Berwick/KACTS; Kate Pelletier, Eliot; Tom Reinauer, SMRPC; Rick Rossiter, Kittery/KACTS; Duane Scott, Maine DOT; Ted Short, Eliot Police Department; Steve Workman, Eastern Trail Management District.

Staff & Committee Activities Since June Meeting

Tom Reinauer began the meeting by updating the committee on staff and other activities since the June meeting:

- Tom Reinauer is assisting both the Town of South Berwick and Town of Kittery to develop a Request for Proposal to a pool of consultants to help the two towns redesign portions of Route 236 and Route 1. The two sites for which they are requesting help include the segment of Route 236 north of Marshwood Middle School to Main Street and a redesign concept for Route 1 in Kittery from the Traffic Circle to Love Lane.
- The private consultant, Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers, recently completed a study with recommendations relating to downtown parking and traffic flow issues experienced by South Berwick. Terry Oliver explained that South Berwick town staff and the town council will be meeting over the recommendations and begin implementing some of the recommendations. A .pdf version of the Preliminary Transportation Review document can be downloaded off the Community Bulletin Page of the South Berwick website at <http://southberwickme.virtualltownhall.net/>
- The KACTS Policy Committee is in the process of setting up an early September meeting to discuss the final funding arrangements of the 236 Corridor Traffic Engineering Study scheduled for Fall 2005.
- KACTS staff have performed several activities relating to the follow-up to the May 2005 Overlimit Commercial Vehicles meeting:

Tom Reinauer and Josh Mack have contacted Chris Grotton with the State Police's Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division and the chiefs of police in Kittery, Eliot and South Berwick and all parties have expressed interest in organizing a training that will help local police departments augment the limited mobile commercial vehicle enforcement performed by the State Police on Route 236. Local police chiefs have also expressed interest in receiving notice about when Interstate 95 weigh stations are open and possibly diverting traffic on to Route 236.

The Eliot and South Berwick chiefs have also expressed interest in "sharing" the services of a highly trained officer to take on patrolling duty for commercial vehicle violations on the corridor. The Kittery chief may also be interested, although he is more concerned about truck diversions on to Route 1.

Josh has assembled state-by-state comparisons of overlimit commercial vehicle maximum dimensional and weight restrictions, hours of operation, fee structure, and other information that will be made available in summary format prior to the next commercial vehicle meeting. Staff expect that the next meeting will take place in September 2005.

Route 236 Action Plan Rollout Discussion

Per the committee's request, the rest of the August meeting was set aside to discuss ways in which to market the Route 236 Corridor Plan. In order to frame and start the discussion, Tom Reinauer prepared a presentation on funding sources that are available for planning and capital expenses that are needed to support the plan. Implementation of the various components of the plan will ultimately require financial backing and understanding funding opportunities will help the committee focus its marketing efforts.

Tom broke down funding opportunities into three categories: The Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation Study (KACTS) MPO and Maine DOT programmed funds to the KACTS area, Grant Opportunities, and "Other" Opportunities. Elements of these funding opportunities are summarized below:

KACTS MPO

- KACTS is a Metropolitan Planning Organization, which has 6 voting representatives from five communities in the region including Kittery (2), Eliot (1), South Berwick (1), Berwick (1) and Lebanon (1). Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission, the Maine Turnpike Authority and the Maine Department of Transportation and a transit agency (currently York County Community Action Corporation) also have voting privileges.
- KACTS has a budget in which it programs capital improvements every two years. This is called the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is currently being programmed for the next two years. The current TIP budget is approximately \$1.4 million. Most of this money comes from the "Surface

Transportation Program” (STP), the major component of the federal transportation bill. Transportation projects eligible for KACTS capital projects must be within the Metropolitan Planning Area, an area inside the 5 towns which is basically the Census designated urbanized areas of the five towns.

- Other funds are invested in the KACTS area through Maine DOT planning including programmed funds for safety, bridges and paving.
- Maine DOT also has a statewide municipal solicitation process in which it contacts towns via mail for project requests. KACTS towns are included in this process.
- Planning and operations funds are also allocated to towns in the KACTS MPO for consultants, staff planning, and for transit operations in the area.

Grant Opportunities

- Transportation Enhancement is a grant program that funds mostly bicycle and pedestrian improvements to the transportation system.
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) is a grant program that funds projects that will mitigate or improve air quality issues relating to transportation. Examples of projects include transit funding, park and ride developments, signal timing improvements to decrease idling, etc.,.
- Transportation And Community And System Preservation (TCSP) is a grant program that is available to implement strategies which improve the efficiency of the transportation system, reduce environmental impacts of transportation, reduce the need for costly future public infrastructure investments, ensure efficient access to jobs, services and centers of trade, and examine development patterns and identify strategies to encourage private sector development patterns which achieve these goals.
- MaineDOT's Community Gateways grant program assists Maine communities in enhancing transportation corridors and community landscapes. MaineDOT financially supports projects that create and/or maintain community gateways near highways or other transportation facilities. Funds can be used for streetscape design, public space improvements, visual access, etc.,.
- Rural Road Initiative (RRI) is a program to help local communities improve minor collector roads. Maine DOT splits costs for road funding (two-thirds Maine DOT and one third local municipality).
- There are other grant opportunities also available. Contact Tom Reinauer for more information.

Other Funding Opportunities

- In state government it is useful to look for support from the state legislature’s transportation committee. The Transportation Committee is the body that is required to approve the State’s Biennial State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), a 2 year list of projects to be funded in the State. This committee also influences state bond issues involving transportation projects.

- Local legislative support is also important. An example is the Traffic Light at Bolt Hill Road on Route 236 that was inserted into the STIP a few days before the STIP was approved by the Transportation Committee.
- At the federal government level, it is important to have federal legislators on board to advocate for projects.
- Earmarks have become more important than ever as part of the Federal Transportation Bill. The new Transportation Bill, which was signed yesterday, includes 6,371 earmark transportation projects, which constitute 9% of the total funding expenditures of the bill.
- The new transportation bill includes 54 transportation bills for the State of Maine (including large scale project funds such as funding for the Gorham Bypass). These 54 projects carry a price tag of \$205 Million. Only one of these projects is slated for York County. This is for a \$1 Million project to expand the Eastern Trail off-road system.
- There are also local or regional ways to raise funds for projects. Regional or local traffic impact fees are being looked at closer in the state of Maine as a revenue source. The idea is to shift more of the cost burden on private businesses that are putting a disproportionate share of traffic demand on highways customarily supported only by tax dollars.

Discussion Points from Committee

- Diane Brandon and Cathy Goodwin requested that the committee be sent a link with detailed information about Maine transportation earmarks in the new transportation bill. A link to this information is at the Taxpayers for Common Sense website: <http://www.taxpayer.net/Transportation/safetealu/states.htm>
- Diane Brandon advocated that the committee have a strong public outreach component to the rollout of the plan and pointed out community dissatisfaction with the sidewalks in Eliot's recent State Street project as an example of how important public input is to the process.
- Jim Fisk suggested making charettes part of the rollout of the plan to the public.
- Terry Oliver suggested having a three-tiered approach to the rollout: (1) present findings to town select boards and councils for their support, (2) hold public meetings or hearings with town greater public and (3) hold meetings with political leaders and DOT officials in Augusta. He advocated monitoring these three tracks and keeping all different tiers informed as the process advances forward.
- Diane Brandon recommended that 236 have a one-stop webpage. The current webpage is difficult to get to. This could be a webpage/brochure. Cathy Goodwin recommended that the brochure be brief and offered assistance from the Chamber. Diane suggested headlining it something like "Changes are Coming to Route 236".
- Ted Short suggested that there were several important decision makers that should be first exposed to and supporting the idea including municipal officials, school boards, legislators and public safety officials. He also recommended that there be a visual component as part of the presentation such as the traffic forecasting SIM

model that Maine DOT uses to show increasing effects of traffic growth on the highway.

- Steve Workman suggested that the public component wait, and that the first step would be to try to secure town official support of the 236 Action Plan that we have developed, ask for feedback, omissions or amendments and then launch public hearings and seek legislative support.
- Cathy Goodwin explained that with the KEYS effort to discuss the planning effort with towns took several months trying to get on each of the town's agendas.
- Cathy offered Chambers help in providing food for the meeting with municipalities.
- Duane Scott suggested that the traffic data collection for the Maine DOT Route 236 Traffic Engineering Study be done in fall and made available for the municipal and public outreach activities planned.

The following goals were agreed on by committee consensus with regard to the rollout of the Route 236 Action Plan:

- Organize Planning effort using three tiered roll out approach. Begin first tier effort first. Keep all parties informed as the planning process continues.
 1. Municipal Support: request feedback and support from municipal leaders and staff of Kittery, Eliot and South Berwick on Final Draft of Route 236 Action Plan. Target meeting dates are either October 5th, 11th, 25th, or 26th.
 2. Public Support: Hold public informational meetings on Committee's work and solicit feedback and ideas on ways to improve Route 236 early on.
 3. Support from Augusta and Washington, DC: Keep legislators (federal and local) and Maine DOT abreast of Route 236 Implementation Committee efforts.
- Develop an informational website and brochure explaining Route 236 Implementation Committee's goals and accomplishments.
- Use Route 236 Implementation Committee as steering committee for Maine DOT Traffic Engineering Study of Route 236.

Other Business

- Josh Mack stated that there are a few future agenda items in the pipeline for this committee, including a possible agenda item set aside for the Maine Turnpike Authority to discuss its long-term planning efforts and how it relates to the Route 236 Implementation Committee's work, as well as an agenda item for the group to comment on and give feedback on the Scope of Services that will be developed for the Maine DOT Route 236 Traffic Engineering Study.
- Lauren Fleming stated that a previous meeting's recommendation to change an action item from a long-term to medium-term goal is probably unrealistic because of the bridge reconstruction activities that will need to occur. This action item is currently M7, "Work with the Maine Turnpike Authority to ensure complete

accommodation of overdimension vehicles on the Maine Turnpike.” She would like to see this a long term action item again. Josh answered that the Committee should pick this up at the next meeting for further discussion.

The next meeting is scheduled for November, 17th 2005 at Kittery Town Hall at 10 AM.