

MEMORANDUM

To: Route 236 Implementation Committee and Interested Parties

From: Tom Reinauer, Marian Alexandre

Date: December 18, 2007

RE: Meeting Notes from December 5th, 2007

In attendance: Terry Oliver, So Berwick PWD; Walt Wheeler, State Representative; David Burke, South Berwick Town Council; Kenneth Creed, YCCAC, Assistant Transportation Director; Jonathan LaBonte, Maine Turnpike Authority; Paul Godfrey, HNTB; Dennis Emidy, Maine DOT; Rick Rossiter, Kittery Public Works; Tom Reinauer, SMRPC; John Murphy, Eliot Selectman; Fred Michaud, Maine DOT/Planning; Myranda McGowan, Strafford Regional Planning Commission; Steve Workman, ET/NH Trails & Community Wellness Coalition; Julia Dawson, SMRPC.

1. Staff & Committee Updates

SMRPC Employment Changes: Tom Reinauer announced Josh Mack's employment move to Southwest Regional Planning in Keene, NH. He also informed the group that Julia Dawson has been hired by SMRPC and will begin on 12/17/07.

Mutual Aid Agreement: Tom informed the group that Traffic Incident Management Group is doing well with working on a Mutual Aid Agreement with towns, which would lend equipment and personnel in times of emergency situations. They are gathering a database of information now. MaineDOT has offered to host the program out of their office in Augusta, and keep the database up to date. A subcommittee is working on a draft agreements, and will be sending it to the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Maine Municipal Association for comment.

Senior Transportation: Efforts are being made to submit a grant application through the National Center on Senior Transportation, which would allow York County Community Action (YCCAC) to increase their service to seniors in Eliot and Kittery. The grant has to be completed and in by the December 17th. Staff will develop a draft and send out.

The 2 towns also plan on submitting a Community Development Block Grant, which is due in April.

Kennebunk Savings Bank has grants available for improving the life of seniors in York County. There is no deadline for this application. Kenneth Creed stated that with this

money, he would like to purchase two vehicles; one with wheelchair capabilities and other a 12-passenger van. They are coordinating with York Hospital, the York Senior Center, and the South Berwick Senior Center.

The stakeholder group is going to work on coordinating services, and possibly working toward a “one-stop” option for people in the area that need transportation. They developed a survey of roughly 20-questions as to where seniors go for medical needs and shopping. We have distributed in the Kittery/Eliot area so far.

Impact Fee on Rt. 236: Paul Schumacher and Tom Reinauer will be speaking to selectmen and councils about the possibility of starting a corridor-wide transportation impact fee for Route 236. We hope to set up meeting with the municipalities in January.

So Berwick Downtown Consultant Bid: Bids for a consultant to do an alternative analysis for So Berwick downtown will go out within a month or a month and a half. DOT will assist in reviewing the draft RFP (Ed Hanscom and Ray Faucher).

Rt. 1 Reconstruction in Kittery: On schedule for going out to bid after the 1st of January.

2. **Maine Turnpike Authority update** *-Report on Overlimit Vehicles*

Paul Godfrey and Jonathan LaBonte discussed over limit movement patterns on Rt. 236. They should be on the turnpike instead to avoid road damage. The Maine Turnpike charges a separate permit fee, in addition to what carriers need to receive from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Can get over limit data from Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

Issues are:

- Keep the overlimit vehicles out of the downtowns if possible.
- There are different regulations on the turnpike.
- Trucks have to get over-limit permits from Turnpike Authority. Permits are for one day only and one trip only. Turnpike Authority suggests opportunity to work with BMV to assist with routing trucks. NETC covers six New England states.

Restrictions are:

- Bridges have different heights and widths.
- Toll plazas have different heights.
- Hours permitted: Monday thru Friday, no holidays, ½ hour before sunrise, ½ hour after sunrise. Weather restricts movements on occasion.
- Flat \$10.00 fee. No distance limit.
- Data: FY2005. 1 out of 3 overlimit vehicles are on ME Turnpike. Mobile/Modular Homes – more than ½ are turnpike trips and 1/3 of those permits are issued at the York toll plaza.
- Height is the biggest issue. North of Exit 44 – 11 documented bridge hits in 2004/2006. 130,000 lb. Largest weight on turnpike. Question was asked about over-limit trucking from Canada?? It was decided that Canada did have a larger weight limit.

Concerns:

- On Route 1 south of Portland, 98% of over-limit travel is with there with a good reason, meaning that they typically have a destination which requires them to be on Route 1.
- Rt. 236: 1/3 of permits are local destinations. 22% could have traveled the turnpike, but were not routed there. Carriers are choosing their own routes. This is something that the Turnpike Authority has discussed with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, which issues the permits. If the truck can be on turnpike, they should be on turnpike.
- The Turnpike Board does not want to bifurcate overlimit rules (have two sets of over-limit standards (South end of Exit 44 and North end of Exit 44). Very confusing. Different rules – different regulations
- Automated OL System. DOT is very good on 395 Bangor, but drivers ignore the signals/alarms. What do we do with the over-limit carriers, they cannot backup or turn around.

Conclusion:

- Maintain consistent regulations.
- Staff have to build new bridges at 16'.6" height and rebuilds at 15.0. New toll booths have to be 16'.6" and 16' wide.
- Continue to maintain communications with the BMV staff, such as Gary Hinckley.
- Take a look at increasing Overlimit fees. There has not been an increase since 1977. NH charges \$5.00, Vermont slightly higher. Southern states charge a much higher rate. Virginia \$75.00, Pennsylvania \$86.00. 22% of over-limits chose not to travel turnpike due to costs. It may be a good idea for the DMV to contact companies and ask why they don't use the turnpike.

Toll Increases: Will it cover international travel? Fees charged by the damage caused. Do fees cover access roads? No. Can municipalities initiate fees? No. During a new Irving Truck Stop, they were charged a small fee to reconstruct curbing, etc., which was included as part of the required Traffic Movement Permit for the project.

It was suggested that Staff contact Gary Hinckley and discuss the current options for carriers to obtain a permit. There may be an opportunity to have more control over routing the overlimit vehicles. Tom said he would talk to Gary and report back at the next meeting.

3. Route 236 Engineering Study

South Berwick: Dennis Emidy from MDOT discussed the long-term/short-term, AM/PM, Parking/traffic, downtown business and alternatives for travel through So.

Berwick. 20,000 vehicles travel through So Berwick daily getting to Rt. 236 and Portland Street. Less when schools are out. Possible options included:

- Traffic Signal
- Round about
- Several different lane configurations
- Bi-pass

Two traffic signals would be good for a 20-year plan at corner of Portland St/Rt. 236 and at Main Street/Route 236. This option would also include 4 lanes through the center of town, which would not be very feasible or popular with the municipality.

Dennis also spent some time looking at a bi-pass option, although the analysis is very preliminary and conceptual at this point. According to this preliminary analysis, a bi-pass could have the potential to remove ¼ to 1/ of vehicle traffic through town (5,000-7,000 vehicles). However, it may have serious environmental impacts.

One of the options for a possible location would involve land owned by three sources (Town of So Berwick, Berwick Academy and Water District). It was suggested that Terry Oliver meet with the Berwick Academy, and then work with Jeff Grossman to set up a meeting in January with the South Berwick Town Council.

Next steps:

- Meet with Berwick Academy
- Set up meeting/presentation to Town Council
- Dennis will be completing his written report and submitting to SMRPC
- At least one public meeting on the Study will be needed

4. Other business

Rick Rossiter mentioned that the Kittery Town Council has endorsed a study of interchanges in the Kittery area. A preliminary meeting was held with Town officials, SMRPC, MaineDOT, and the Turnpike Authority. A study scope will be developed over the next few months, including total cost estimate and funding breakdown. The Town of Kittery will need to provide some of the funding. The study will most likely include a review of the current interchange configurations, and also the possibility of new interchanges.

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, February 13th at 10:00 am at the South Berwick Town Hall.