

MEMORANDUM

To: Route 236 Implementation Committee and Interested Parties

From: Josh Mack, Transportation Planner

Date: October 14, 2004

RE: October 13, 2004 meeting of the Route 236 Implementation Committee Meeting Notes

Those in Attendance: Ken Creed, York County Community Action Corporation; David Burke, South Berwick; John Rudolph, South Berwick; Jerry Douglass, Maine DOT; Harland Goodwin, South Berwick/Maine Turnpike Authority; George Romossen, Eliot; Terry Oliver, South Berwick/KACTS; Kate Pelletier, Eliot; Bev Hooper, MSAD #35; Rick Rossiter, Kittery/KACTS; Conrad Welzel, Maine Turnpike Authority; Donald Webber, Jr., Eliot; Tom Reinauer and Josh Mack, SMRPC/KACTS MPO; Tim Roache, Strafford Regional Planning Commission/Seacoast MPO.

Tom Reinauer opened up the meeting explaining that the Route 236 Implementation Committee is a result of a KACTS/MDOT funded proposal to develop an action plan to improve traffic mobility and safety on Route 236 from Berwick/South Berwick Town Line to the Kittery Traffic Circle. The Route 236 Implementation Committee will steer the action plan process and serve as a sounding board for the implementation process. A diverse group of committee members were invited to participate on the Committee in order to focus on the transportation, land use, and economic development challenges of the corridor, and bring broad attention and support for the 236 implementation effort.

There will be four more Committee meetings scheduled between October and June 2005 as well as two public meetings to gather public input on the Committee's findings and implementation strategies. The next Committee meeting will take place in the **Conference Room in the Kittery Town Hall on Wednesday, December 15 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.** For the next meeting, the Committee requested that the staff invite N.H. officials to discuss planning efforts and projects that might affect Route 236. In addition, the Committee requested that the staff develop an inventory of former planning studies related to improvements in Route 236 safety and mobility.

As the first committee meeting, discussion was dominated by three themes:

- The scope and strategy of the Route 236 proposal and work plan;
- An update on current planning efforts; and
- The purpose and needs statement.

The following comments summarize the first meeting under these three themes:

Route 236 Proposal & Work Plan

Comments relevant to Work Plan:

- It would be beneficial to the 236 corridor planning process and to town representatives to examine studies and strategies adopted by similar corridor planning efforts. It will be easier for the committee and town representatives to sell strategies that have had a successful impact on other corridors either within Maine or in other parts of the U.S. Examples of successful municipal or regional impact fees programs should be considered;
- The 236 planning effort may want to consider having alternate routes, such as connecting with Dennett Road in Kittery.
- The work plan effort should consider developing an inventory of former planning studies that are relevant to the Route 236 corridor, examining past recommendations and prioritizing unimplemented recommendations;
- Committee requested if a modeling effort could be part of the current process. Staff explained that modeling could be an outcome of the process, but the current budget will not cover a consultant's modeling fee;
- A developer representative should be included in the work plan process, especially if the committee decides to investigate the feasibility of creating an impact fee program.
- NNEPRA and C&J should be among the transit representatives included in the Route 236 corridor planning process;
- When the Committee is exploring ways to raise funds for Route 236 implementation efforts, they should be cognizant that there will be very little federal money available through the state and MPO coffers for the foreseeable future. Generally there are three ways that new revenue could be collected for implementation efforts: 1) through a gas tax increase, 2) through tolls, or 3) through impact fees. Impact fees appear to be the most logical revenue base for towns that want to implement local corridor improvement strategies;
- One way to raise revenue to build new roadways for a corridor solution would be to have a private entity design/build a road and then lease it back to the State or Municipality.

Current Planning Efforts Relevant to Route 236

- **South Berwick Origin Destination Survey:** South Berwick requested a KACTS funded effort to do an a.m. and p.m. license plate survey to follow traffic flow movements through four counting stations around downtown South Berwick. There were two major interesting outcomes in the license plate survey: 1) the high number of vehicles entering and exiting only one station, and 2) the high number of vehicles traveling straight through Route 4 from the North Berwick/Sanford area to NH. Some of the vehicle counts from the survey appeared somewhat inflated. SMRPC is following up to perform an a.m. and p.m. delay analysis and reexamine whether the traffic movement numbers correspond with the SMRPC delay analysis. The Origin-Destination Survey is a major study that the South Berwick Traffic Committee is using to improve traffic problems in the town (see below).
- **South Berwick Traffic Study:** The South Berwick Traffic Committee is currently working with Maine DOT to develop a purpose and needs statement that will focus on ways in which to improve traffic mobility and safety, particularly through the South Berwick

downtown area. One idea that the committee has reviewed is similar to the one-way downtown circulation model currently used by Dover, NH. Terry Oliver has presented this idea to Maine DOT, KACTS, and the South Berwick Traffic Committee.

- **South Berwick Intersection at Route 4 and Route 236:** South Berwick is working with Maine DOT to examine the possibility of lengthening the left turning lane at the intersection of Route 4 and Route 236 next to the Cumberland Farms, in an effort to reduce queuing at that intersection. Maine DOT has ruled out having a full traffic light at that intersection because there is not enough space at the intersection. It was recommended that South Berwick consider placing another traffic policeman at that intersection.
- **Kittery Traffic Circle:** Two years ago Kittery was working with Maine DOT on possibly changing the configuration of the intersection from a traffic circle to a full-lighted intersection. The town of Kittery decided not to pursue that project and is exploring other ways to improve safety and mobility at the traffic circle.
- **Kittery Ramps to I-95:** Kittery is petitioning the Maine Turnpike Authority to improve the sight distance on the current northbound ramp, improving the rest area ramp, and developing a new southbound ramp. KACTS has expressed support to research the feasibility of improving Kittery access to I-95.
- **Intersection at Route 236 and 91:** The intersection at 236 and 91 is currently a High Crash Location. A committee member asked if there were any projects in place to improve safety at the intersection. *Staff research after the meeting found that between 2000-2002 there were 15 accidents at the intersection and the location had a critical rate factor of 2.47. There currently is no project in Maine DOT's FY 2002-2003 BTIP directly addressing this intersection.*
- **Maine DOT Regional Needs Assessment Process:** Maine DOT is launching a new public involvement process that it will use to help guide transportation investment in Maine. The new approach will attempt to coordinate transportation improvements with transportation, land use and economic development planning efforts. The process was set up to prioritize public participation and transportation investment under a corridor planning framework. Smaller corridor committee efforts such as the Route 236 Implementation Committee should be cognizant of this new process and use it as a forum to express transportation needs in Southern Maine.
- **Spaulding Turnpike in NH:** Strafford and Rockingham Planning Commissions and the Seacoast MPO are working with the NH DOT to look at adding another lane on the Spaulding Turnpike up to Rochester, NH. Construction and the eventual widening of the Turnpike will significantly affect traffic volume and movements on Route 236. Strafford Planning Commission and the Seacoast MPO are also looking at ways in which they can keep people in the Strafford County area and decrease commuter traffic heading to the coastal traffic corridors for employment opportunities.

Purpose and Needs Statement

- There was a question of whether the purpose and needs statement was developed for the work plan or for the committee. Staff explained that it was developed as a hybrid of both.
- Duane Scott from Maine DOT has offered assistance in redeveloping the current purpose and needs statement;

- It was suggested that the format of the statement should be in bullet form so that it is easier to read and extrapolate the concise points of the purpose and needs;
- The purpose and needs statement should incorporate “short”, “medium”, and “long” term goals and objectives and should prioritize the efforts from the small-term goals to the medium-term goals to long-term goals because the shorter term goal tends to require less resources needed to accomplish the task.