

MEMORANDUM

To: Route 236 Implementation Committee and Interested Parties

From: Josh Mack, Transportation Planner

Date: December 15, 2004

RE: Meeting Notes for December 15 Route 236 Implementation Committee

Those in Attendance: Ruth Boston, South Berwick; Diane Brandon, Community Wellness Coalition; Ken Creed, York County Community Action Corporation; Jerry Douglass, Maine DOT; Cathy Goodwin, Greater York Region Chamber; Bev Hooper, MSAD #35; 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; John Rudolph, South Berwick; Adam Scharff, South Berwick; Dan Stewart, Maine Turnpike Authority; Steve Workman, Eastern Trail Consultant.

Purpose & Needs Statement

Tom Reinauer explained staff has revised the Route 236 Corridor Implementation Action Plan Purpose and Needs Statement based on Committee recommendations at the October meeting. Staff worked on the revision with assistance from Duane Scott from the Maine DOT. Tom asked the committee if they had any comments or suggestions for the revised document.

Committee Feedback/Questions/Discussion:

- The Committee should make it explicit in the statement that improvements are needed to facilitate bike and pedestrian use on the Route 236 corridor.

Summary of Past Studies

Josh Mack presented a "Summary of Former Relevant Planning Studies Relating to Route 236" to the Committee. The document contains summary information on 9 planning studies including their relevant findings, relevant recommendations and status information about recommendations. Recurrent themes in the documents are concerns over heavy truck traffic, insufficient access management, South Berwick bypass proposals, and some attention was given to transportation demand management strategies. Josh and Tom explained that SMRPC would like the committee to give feedback on the following:

- the status of recommendations with question marks;
- whether there are other studies that should be considered;
- any major Route 236 issues that were not identified in the past studies (gaps) that should be addressed by the Route 236 Corridor Implementation Committee; and
- comments as to whether prior study recommendations are valid, need more study, or are not practical

Josh explained that one of the major gaps not sufficiently addressed by former studies was the use of transit. Recommendations were generally not very bold, did not give any priority to one recommendation over another, and did not assign time lines or responsible parties to follow through on a recommendation. The Committee was invited to give feedback on the prior studies.

Committee Feedback/Questions/Discussion:

- Are towns on board with the Route 236 Implementation Committee process? There are town/KACTS representatives that are represented on the Route 236 Committee and the Town Manager of Berwick is being briefed on the process as well (Berwick is not part of the 236 study area). Depending on the direction of the Committee, we will try to meet with town planning boards or selectmen to discuss our findings. In addition, the committee is scheduled to make two public meetings (one meeting to seek public input on the Committee's findings and one meeting to seek public input on the Committee's action plan recommendations).
- The Route 236 Committee through SMRPC should explore the feasibility of whether to apply for a State Planning Office Competitive Grant "The Fund for the Efficient Delivery of Local and Regional Services." The grant is meant to stimulate and maintain momentum of inter-governmental cooperation that result in administrative savings, efficiencies, or improved delivery of municipal services. The grant deadline is on January 14th, 2005. For more information about this grant go to <http://www.maine.gov/dafs/fund.htm>
- The Route 236 Committee was invited to review a document recently drafted by Steve Workman, the transportation representative for Kittery, Eliot, York South Berwick (KEYS): Our Future by Design. He will be forwarding this document to the Committee.
- One gap that is not sufficiently addressed by the studies are the pedestrian and bikeway needs of the corridor. Route 236 is currently designated a bikeway, but improvements could be made.
- Another gap in prior studies is a lack of transit as a solution for the corridor. COAST had a discussion last spring with several stakeholders including the Kittery Outlet Association and it appeared that they were interested in taking a closer look at that option. COAST should be invited to a future meeting. Tim Roache said that he will contact COAST and invite them.
- Other transit groups that should be considered to integrate with the 236 corridor are the Downeaster service and C & J Trailways. C & J currently runs empty busses several times a day up Route 236 into Rollingsford, NH. Downeaster was notified about the Committee and C & J Trailways will be notified.

- Diagrams of count locations on the South Berwick Origin-Destination Survey should be included in the “Summary” document.
- Where is the Kittery shoulder deficiency cited in the Heavy Haul Truck Network Study?
- Staff should make an attempt to prioritize recommendations from prior studies, identify gaps in recommendations, explore the practicability of the recommendations, and investigate the unknown status of some of the recommendations.

Summary of Recent Highway and Transit Projects

Tom made a presentation on the major Maine DOT projects that have occurred on Route 236 over the last couple of decades, not including maintenance and repaving projects. A resurfacing project is scheduled for next summer. The Committee was briefed on the following projects:

- Installation of traffic signals at Martin & Stevenson Roads – Kittery
- Installation of signals and intersection reconfiguration at Beech Rd – Eliot
- Installation of signals at Depot Rd – Eliot
- Installation of signals at Route 101 – Eliot
- Minor intersection improvements at Route 91 – South Berwick
- Reconfiguration/Redesign of Main St – South Berwick

The Martin and Stevenson project was constructed and financed by the Town of Kittery. All other projects were completed by Maine DOT.

Tom also presented candidate projects for the Maine DOT’s next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). These projects have not secured funding at this point—they are only *possible* candidate projects. If the committee is interested in supporting one, some or all of the candidate projects the committee could send a letter of support to Maine DOT. The Committee was briefed on the following candidate projects:

- Kittery Traffic Circle –Relocate the northbound Route 1 Bypass off-ramp to a new location, with deceleration lane, to the north side of the traffic circle. This project would eliminate the Old Post Road leg of the circle.
- Installation of a flashing beacon at the intersection of Bolt Hill Rd in Eliot.
- Intersection improvements (without signal) at the intersection of Vine & Academy streets. SMRPC has not had a chance to investigate the details for the proposed improvement.

Committee Feedback/Questions/Discussion:

- Another project/change to Route 236 was the development of Marshwood High School and the 15-20 mph zone in front of the school.

- The Kittery Traffic Circle candidate project was not proposed by the Town of Kittery. Kittery would probably recommend a different scenario that would keep Old Post Road open. Tom and Rick will discuss this item later.
- Transit programming and funding was not included in this presentation. The last transit routes stopped in 1987-1988. Only recent transit planning of late has been SMRPC work with York County Community Action on their demand-responsive services in the area.
- Based on progress of projects, it appears that access management strategies may be needed to help preserve mobility.
- It would be helpful to have Journey to Work data in map form to see if Route 236 is a community or through road. Is it a community or through road?
- Committee should consider notifying York about Committee process.
- Does type of zoning change dramatically from community to community? Yes.
- Next meeting, SMRPC will present journey to work, high crash location data and access management and zoning analyses to the Committee.

Update on Major Highway Projects in New Hampshire

Tim Roache made a presentation and passed out a handout on Spaulding Turnpike Corridor Project Updates to the Committee. New Hampshire DOT is currently reviewing alternatives for improving the Newington-Dover Bridge system—they are examining both four lane and three lane alternatives. The three lane alternatives would be coupled with an aggressive transportation demand management program. The alternatives will be discussed at a public meeting in Dover City Hall on January 12, 2005 at 6:30 PM. Members of the Rte 236 Corridor Implementation Committee are encouraged to attend.

Tim briefed the committee on New Hampshire's progress in reviewing an Exit 10 environmental impact. Project construction for the exit is scheduled for 2014 in the NHDOT Ten Year Plan.

Another large project that will have some impact on the Route 236 region communities is New Hampshire's plans for widening Spaulding Turnpike from Exit 11-16. Project construction in the Exit 11 and 12 areas will begin in the spring of 2005. Phase 2 work will be advertised in June of 2006.

Another noteworthy planning effort in New Hampshire is a land use/transportation coordination initiative that Strafford Regional Planning is developing. Staff are working on developing access management regulations "with teeth" that can help municipalities do a better job preserving roadway mobility and safety. If the Route 236 Committee is interested, Strafford staff can come in and talk about that project.

NH DOT is also getting set to integrate the state into the East Coast EZPass system.

Committee Feedback/Questions/Discussion:

- With widening of Spaulding turnpike is there any discussion about new toll structures, or movement of tolls, or integration with EZ pass? Tim stated there has been some discussion of moving the toll barriers, but nothing about new toll structure or integration with EZ pass.
- Is there anything the Committee can do to influence NH to be more supportive of the Downeaster. Tim stated that he will provide contact information of the Governor's Advisory Council on Highways and Intermodal Transportation (GACHIT).

Next Steps

The following steps were recognized for the next meeting:

- The Committee will review recommendations in the "Summary of Planning Studies" document and offer suggestions and comments on the recommendations (gaps, missing information, relevant/impractical recommendations, missing studies).
- SMRPC will develop a list of recommendations (grouped and prioritized based on existing prior study recommendations and gaps in those recommendations) for the Committee's review at the next meeting.
- SMRPC will investigate the Route 1 traffic circle work plan candidate project.
- SMRPC will make changes to the Purpose and Needs Statement and Summary of Planning Studies based on Committee feedback.
- SMRPC will produce a concise summary of Kittery, Eliot & South Berwick access management-related standards and compare those standards to Maine DOT standards.
- SMRPC will provide maps with summarized zoning information at the next meeting.
- SMRPC will provide traffic volume, commuting data, high crash location and other data to the group at the next meeting.
- Tim Roache will attempt to bring COAST to the next meeting. SMRPC will extend invitations to other stakeholder groups mentioned at last few meetings.
- Steve Workman will forward the KEYS transportation document to Committee Members.
- SMRPC will investigate the possibility of using an internet based "interactive document" that the committee can use to review and comment on Committee-related documents.
- The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, February 10, 2005 at 10 AM in the Council Chambers at the South Berwick Town Hall.