**Central York County Connections Study**

**Steering Committee Workshop**

**May 22, 2012 2:00-5:00**

**York County Community College, Community Board Room**

*Attendees:* John Bubier, Biddeford; Tad Redway, Arundel; Judy Bernstein, Kennebunk; Mike Livingston, Wells; Brad Littlefield, Sanford; John Sylvester, Alfred; Dwayne Morin, North Berwick; Myranda McGowan, SMRPC; Sara Devlin, MTA; Gerry Audibert, MaineDOT; Sue Moreau, MaineDOT; Uri Avin, Parsons Brinckerhoff; Steve Rolle, Parsons Brinckerhoff; Tom Errico, T.Y. Lin; Mark Eyerman, Planning Decisions; Carol Morris, Morris Communications; Ben Ettelman, Morris Communications.

*Meeting began at 2:00*

Carol Morris: Hello and thank you very much for coming to today’s Steering Committee workshop. Today’s meeting is going to be a little different than meetings we have had in the past. Rather than going through a slideshow we are all going to gather around the table and focus on the entire study area corridor by corridor. We have identified trouble areas and some potential solutions and we would like to get feedback from you on the specific issues that each corridor faces.

Gerry: Thank you Carol, and thank you all for coming today. At this point in the study we are looking at how to increase accessibility and safety on the major corridors within the study area, but as we explained at the last meeting we are no longer considering any major capacity increases, or major highway construction for the study area. We will be looking to wrap up the study by this summer with our final analysis and recommendations. Now we are going to get started with the Route 111 Corridor.

*The Steering Committee went through the High Crash Locations on Route 111 and discussed the following concerns and issues regarding safety and access:*

* The Steering Committee discussed that the recent work on Route 111 has led to fewer high crash locations and a safer corridor overall.
* The Steering Committee discussed that the majority of traffic is coming from the western communities to access I-95.
* There was a suggestion to move I-95’s Exit 32 further to the west and open a new additional interchange to the east by South Street in Biddeford, or provide two half-interchanges with connecting collector lanes.
  + It was discussed that a lot of traffic goes to Route 1 from Exit 32 so moving the interchange west would affect that traffic.
* The Steering Committee discussed that if the Turnpike changes to electronic toll collection that would alleviate congestion at the Exit 32 interchange as the cash lane causes much of the congestion.
* The Steering Committee discussed that north of the existing interchange is not an option for a new interchange per Biddeford due to environmental constraints.
  + Locations immediately adjacent to existing development along Route 111 may be viable.
* The Steering Committee discussed a potential connection to Route 111 behind Biddeford Crossing, perhaps along the existing power line.
* The Steering Committee discussed that two-thirds of the traffic traveling west on Route 111 is getting onto the turnpike and if the bottleneck at the current I-95 interchange could be eliminated it would solve much of the congestion issues in the region.
* It was mentioned that the region will have congestion issue similar to the congestion in Gorham if the capacity issues at the interchange are not addressed now and the only way to get rid of that traffic is to divert it away from Exit 32.
* The Steering Committee discussed that Biddeford Crossing will not lose business if traffic is diverted from that stretch of Route 111 because that it is a major regional shopping destination.

*The Steering Committee discussed Access Management issues on the Route 111 Corridor:*

* The Steering Committee discussed that there should be recommendations for Lyman to reconsider access management and parallel/frontage roads.
* The Steering Committee had a conversation about what power MaineDOT has to limit curb cuts and the struggle between the perception that access management can adversely affect economic development.
* The Steering Committee had a conversation about Sanford’s limits on curb cuts and how it has been effective as long as property owners understand the regulations early on.
* The Steering Committee questioned who convinces the municipalities that access management is important. It was discussed that this is out of the purview of MaineDOT and that this is not effectively communicated to municipalities.
  + The Steering Committee discussed that educating municipalities in order to preserve essential highway corridors is very important.
* It was suggested/requested that MaineDOT show how access management issues have impacted the roadways in order to educate the public.
  + It was also mentioned that if MaineDOT could show beneficial impacts to developers (reduced impact fees) it might be very effective.
* The Steering Committee had a conversation about how SMRPC can take study recommendations and meet with towns in order to help with the education piece in the form of presentations about access management strategies.
  + There was discussion regarding how land use regulation and land use access are out of MaineDOT purview, but that MaineDOT could provide education to community leaders with the help of SMRPC.
* The Steering Committee discussed whether it would be worthwhile for the study team to look at what the potential access management plans could be and noted that it could be done on a corridor management basis.
* The Steering Committee had a conversation about the prevailing mindset that speed limits are not enforced and that they should be reduced. The Steering Committee feels that this is something that the public needs education about.
* The Steering Committee discussed that municipalities need to be able to show the negative aspects of access management so they can sell it to their constituents.
* The Steering Committee discussed the fact that Incremental development with no oversight causes a lot of problems over time.

*The Steering Committee discussed transit issues for the Route 111 Corridor:*

* A TIGER grant application was submitted to develop a Park and Ride lot at the bottom of Hospital Hill. This site is currently an empty lot and a brownfield (mostly tires).
* The Steering Committee expressed a desire to Improve transit. There was discussion regarding the people who are commuting to Biddeford who need parking for park and ride opportunities.
  + There was discussion regarding the desire to provide park and ride lots but not in prime locations where people need to park for businesses.
* The Steering Committee discussed the potential for extending Zoom service to Sanford.
  + It was discussed that this depends on where the park and ride lot is.

*The Steering Committee went through the High Crash Locations on Route 4 and discussed the following concerns and issues regarding safety and access:*

* The Steering Committee had a conversation about the High Crash Locations. There was discussion regarding School Street and Jagger Mill Road and the Steering Committee felt that recent improvements lead them to believe that this will not be a High Crash Location
* The Steering Committee discussed that all four approaches to the roundabout are High Crash Locations. It was discussed that this is a complicated roundabout and fairly new, so the hope is that people will continue to learn how to use the roundabout and that will reduce crashes. The town received many complaints initially.  DOT adjusted signage, and as drivers have gotten used to the roundabout, complaints are now rare.
  + The Steering Committee suggested that signage may help at this location.
* The Steering Committee explained that the roundabout has significantly reduced congestion at this intersection.
* The Steering Committee discussed that the overall crash rate on the Route 4 corridor is low.

*The Advisory Committee discussed the following transportation safety and access issues in Downtown Sanford:*

* The Steering Committee discussed the High Crash Location at the intersection of Route 109 and Route 202. It was discussed that when two major roads meet at an intersection having a High Crash Location is not uncommon. However, the south leg (Route 109) of the intersection has a particularly high number of crashes.
  + The fact that this is an urban area so there are lots of visual distractions was also discussed.
* The Steering Committee discussed that the Ignatius Center is for sale and that this is an opportunity to reconfigure this highway.
  + It was pointed out that Lebanon Street off of Route 202 has a church and the oldest house in town so there are physical and cultural constraints.
* The Steering Committee discussed the proximity of the entrance to Twombley Road also causes issues as it is very close to the intersection of Route 202 and Route 109.
* The Steering Committee discussed that truck traffic on Route 202 is heavy.
* The Steering Committee discussed that Route 224 has to be rebuilt/repaved and when this is done more truck traffic will take this route, but that it is in poor shape right now. (AFTER MEETING NOTE: The urban section of Route 224 is scheduled to be repaved next year.)
* The Steering Committee discussed that Route 11A is currently in very poor condition.
* The Steering Committee discussed that Route 202 and River Street is a very bad intersection and needs to be realigned. It was brought up that there is a possibility that the house on the corner may eventually be torn down and that right-of-way may be available through property acquisition across the street.
  + It was mentioned that this intersection is identified as a gateway to Sanford.
  + It was also discussed that this section of Route 202 needs to be improved but there are cultural/physical constraints (The 12 Apostle Houses).
  + It was also discussed that there are underutilized commercial properties along this stretch.
* The Steering Committee discussed that the building on the corner of Route 202 and River Road is dilapidated and that the town is hoping that the owner will hand the property over to the town. If the building were to be turned over to the town, the town would most likely tear this building down.
  + It was suggested that while this building may be old, it does not have historic value, neighborhood appeal, or any value.
* The Steering Committee discussed that the buildings on the south side are in substandard condition and not as historically important as those on the north side.
* The Steering Committee had a discussion questioning whether the Apostle Houses on Bridge Street are on the historic register/eligible for the historic register.
* The Steering Committee discussed the wires at the top of the hill by the Hospital and mentioned that the cost of burying wires is extremely expensive.
* The Steering Committee discussed the potential for a connection from Jagger Mill Road to Old Mill Road behind the shopping center as this provides a parallel reliever route to Route 109. Sanford says this is feasible, as the owners of the shopping center would like to see this area opened up for development.
* The Steering Committee discussed the potential for a southwestern bypass that follows the existing Mount Hope Road and connects Route 109 back to Route 202. It was discussed that this would divert through traffic out of Sanford.
  + It was questioned as to whether this could be converted to high enough speed, given the alignment and residences located along the roadway
  + It was also mentioned that the topography is terrible here with winding and steep roads.
* The Steering Committee discussed that Route 202 from Waterboro to Sanford has no High Crash Locations and has sufficient capacity.
* The Steering Committee suggested that there is ample room to pass coming down from Shaker Hill in Alfred.
  + There was a question as to whether passing lanes are therefore needed in this area.
  + The Steering Committee explained that once you get past Gore Road to Waterboro the traffic moves well.
* Alfred officials see no need for improvements on Route 202 but mentioned that it would be nice to see shoulders done because the edges break off into a drop-off in the Center of the village. The Town wants to provide pedestrian access in the Village and has set aside funds to do so.
* The Steering Committee discussed that the intersection of Route 202 and Gore Road is problematic and unsafe because of poor sight lines. The Steering Committee discussed that “T-ing” up this intersection would solve a lot of the sight line issues and that there are a lot of accidents here as well.

*The Steering Committee went through the High Crash Locations on Route 109 and discussed the following concerns and issues regarding safety and access:*

* The Steering Committee discussed that the one High Crash Location that is problematic is the intersection of Route 109 and Route 9A and that location is currently being addressed by MaineDOT improvements.
* The Steering Committee had a discussion regarding how the left turn from Route 109 onto the I-95 interchange fails at peak times and needs to be addressed.
  + It was discussed that the tollbooth and split between the North and South entrances prevents a potential dual left turn lane from Route 109 here.
* It was asked if MaineDOT will increase the posted speed limit in the High Pines area. They were informed that the Town would need to submit a formal request to MaineDOT for that to be considered.

*The Steering Committee went through the High Crash Locations on Route 99 and discussed the following concerns and issues regarding safety and access:*

* The Steering Committee discussed the potential to build a connection directly from Route 99 to Route 35 by the West Kennebunk I-95 interchange.
  + This could be through the industrial park and/or straight by the side of the soccer/lacrosse field on Route 35.
  + Kennebunk officials explained that this area is part of the West Kennebunk Village and Kennebunk just improved pedestrian facilities in this area.
  + Kennebunk officials also explained that this is part of Kennebunk’s growth area, which was recently identified for residential, and small commercial/retail type growth. There was concern that a major truck route would reduce the character of the village setting.
  + It was also mentioned that trucks heading from the South Sanford area to the Interstate might also prefer this connection.

*The Steering Committee discussed transit issues for the Route 109 Corridor:*

* The Steering Committee discussed that Route 109 is the most established corridor in terms of transit as it has the Ocean Service and access to the Wells Transportation Center.

*The Steering Committee discussed Access Management issues for the Route 109 Corridor in Wells:*

* The Steering Committee discussed the importance of a corridor overlay zone, joint access, and parallel roads west of I-95 on Route 109.
* Wells officials explained that If sewer and water is extended to the west side of I-95 it would be targeted for hotel and other types of development and that currently this area is suitable for septic.
* The Steering Committee discussed that the current rural zone west of I-95 allows convenience stores and strip commercial uses with the potential for creating turning movements.
* Wells officials explained that now that Route 109 is paved, sewer and water would be at the minimum of 4 years away.

Carol Morris: I want to thank you all for coming this afternoon and for offering such detailed insight. We will have another meeting in either July or August and we will come back with some specific recommendations that the study will be making regarding the points that you raised today.

*Meeting adjourned at 5:00*