

ROUTE 18  
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

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**COMMUNITY  
PARTNERING TEAM**

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CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

**COMMUNITY PARTNERING TEAM  
MEETING NO. 8 REPORT**

December 20, 1999

**DATE:** December 15, 1999  
**TIME:** 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
**LOCATION:** Conference Room, Middlesex County Planning Dept.,  
Elks Building, City of New Brunswick, NJ

**ATTENDEES:**

Members  
Dave DeFiore  
Robert Grimm  
Linda Hunter  
Roberta Karpinecz  
Thomas Loughlin  
Rick Lloyd  
Glenn Patterson  
Todd Smircina  
Bob Spear  
George Ververides  
Frank Wong  
Alternates  
Vincent Martino  
Paul Morrissett  
T.K. Shamy  
Invited Guests  
James Baisley  
Michaelene Caruso  
John Donnelly  
Tony Gambilonghi  
Michael Heenehan  
Ken Koschek  
Linda LaSut  
Carl Nittinger

**REPRESENTING:**

Riverside Towers  
New Jersey Turnpike Authority  
University Mews Homeowners Assoc.  
Keep Middlesex Moving, Inc.  
City of New Brunswick, Administration  
Johnson & Johnson  
City of New Brunswick, Planning  
Carpender Road Area Neighborhood  
Rutgers, The State Univ. of NJ  
Middlesex County Planning Dept.  
Rutgers, The State Univ. of NJ  
  
Middlesex County Engineering  
Newell Avenue Area Neighborhood  
Dewey Heights Area Neighborhood  
  
New Brunswick Development Corporation  
Middlesex county Administration  
Piscataway Township  
Middlesex County Planning Dept.  
NJDEP, Green Acres  
NJDEP, Office of Program Coordination  
NJTPA  
NJDEP, State Historic Preservation Office



## Steering Committee

Bill Birch	NJDOT, Division of Project Management
Elkins Green	NJDOT, Environmental Services
Mike Morgan	Gannett Fleming
Paul Nowicki	Gannett Fleming
Martine Culbertson	M. A. Culbertson
Visitors	
Sarah Clarke	New Brunswick Development Corporation
Mike Sheehan	Gannett Fleming

## 1. PURPOSE OF MEETING

To examine the George Street Interchange and discuss improvements for the Route 18 corridor in that area; to identify issues and develop CPT consensus on George Street interchange area concept for the Initially Preferred Alternative. (Agenda attached)

## 2. MEETING SUMMARY

The meeting began with introductions by everyone. Martine Culbertson reviewed the agenda and revised CPT handbook materials distributed to each member.

Linda LaSut discussed the results of the New Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) interagency consultation meeting to determine if the project would qualify for a safety exemption. The agency ruled that the NJDOT project is exempt from further congestion management studies (CMS) on Route 18 section 2M due to operational needs and because there is not a significant capacity increase with the proposed improvements. In addition, the NJTPA will conduct studies separate from this project which include examination of the Route 18 corridor for long range CMS planning and strategies.

Paul Nowicki then presented the George Street interchange concepts, both in the Initially Preferred Alternative (IPA) and the alternate design concept which allows for a full interchange. After presenting the design concepts, Mike Morgan presented the traffic movements associated with the George Street interchange area. Conceptual drawings of the George Street interchange on the IPA and the alternate design were distributed along with the diverted traffic movement diagrams and a Summary Evaluation of George Street Interchange options. Paul then reviewed the evaluation categories explaining the associated impacts with each design option.

The following comments and questions were raised during the presentation for George Street interchange options:

Q - Is there any lane in the collector distributor where traffic will flow continuously?

A - Yes, the two lanes in the collector distributor are through lanes, provided pedestrians do not push the traffic signal to stop traffic for crossing to the park.

Q - Could a ramp type design be used in the alternate concept for northbound traffic, so as not to have such a large structure similar to the ramp overpass proposed in the IPA?

A - There would be a problem designing such a ramp and still maintaining access to the boathouse area. The study team will further investigate this issue.

Q - Why would the bikeway design be along the roadway instead of in the park ?

A - This design allows for a continuous connection to access points along the corridor. There may still be points of access to Boyd Park for cycling.

Q - What happens at George Street with the bikeway?

A - Due to the fifteen foot drop, cyclists would have to walk their bikes down the circular ramp.

Q - What is the elevation profile on the alternate design concept?

A - The height of the overpass would be the same as today, and the collector distributor will up and then come down again. There are property impacts with this design option, with 50 foot piers to support the roadway down to the property below along the river.

Q - Have you evaluated the costs associated with each design option?

A - Yes, that information is listed on the evaluation summary and will be discussed when the summary is reviewed.

Q - Could the collector distributor roadway not be elevated and only put the ramps up similar to the one ramp?

A - The area would not be able to accommodate the left entrance ramp due to grade and access to the boat house drive. It could also create a weave concern before Commercial Avenue. The project team will further study this issue.

Q - Could the split of the collector distributor roadway be moved further North to accommodate the ramp or less weave problems?

A - This area of the corridor has been designed to accommodate the space needed for the movement of vehicles between the collector distributor and the through traffic.

Q - What will be the effect on Ryder's Lane if George Street becomes a full interchange?

A - Ryder's Lane is beyond the scope of the project study limits, however given the configuration of Ryder's Lane, there is limited volume which can move through the existing roadway, so the traffic capacity will not change.

Q - What is the impact of a full interchange at George Street on Commercial Avenue?

A - There is a weave concern on the collector distributor roadway at Commercial Avenue southbound with the full interchange design concept at George Street.

Q - Should the congestion be on city streets or on Route 18? Shouldn't the flow of traffic be developed so there are many access points into the city to maximize traffic flow?

A - There is a need to balance impacts with design options. The evaluation summary shows the potential impacts associated with the design concept options for the George Street Interchange.

Q - What is the grade at the boathouse drive?

A - There is an 8 % grade.

Q - How do you define pedestrian safety with respect to the two options at George Street?

A - With the IPA design, there are less points of potential conflict between vehicles and pedestrians where with the full interchange pedestrians cross the collector distributor roadway requiring a traffic signal. The crossing of a roadway is a point of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.

Q - What are some of the environmental impacts associated with the full interchange at George Street?

A - The Music Building at Rutgers may incur potential noise impacts, foundation impacts, and vibration. In addition, there are wetlands impacts associated with the ramp, and additional fill needed in the flood plain which would require permitting.

Q - What is included in the cost comparison?

A - The cost reflects only construction, not other costs such as design, utilities, right-of-way acquisitions, or permits.

The summary evaluation indicated that the George Street Interchange design for the IPA does meet the need of the project and would have better geometrics, improved pedestrian safety, meets the bicyclist needs, with less right-of-way impacts, environmental impacts, and less cost. The alternative of a full George Street Interchange however, would improve access and affords more flexibility for detours.

Martine asked members for input on the George Street Area. Comments listed during the discussion of the two options are presented on Report Attachment No. 1. Members from Rutgers University distributed a summary of comments for the CPT to consider. They mentioned that Rutgers is planning to construct a parking facility near the George Street full interchange option to minimize single occupancy cars by students and to enhance free flow bus usage between the campuses.

The team consensus was to look carefully at the design options to see if there may be a way to provide the access that would be desirable to reduce the University buses from the local city streets and would have less impacts than the current alternate design option.

Martine asked each member for action items for the next meeting or feedback comments: contact the Exxon station to see if it a station to be impacted by the corporate merger, the process is fine, examine possible options to minimize impacts and still improve access at George Street, explain what level of improvement in access there would be with a full interchange versus the possible delay to construction for the other improvements in the corridor, look at the performance of the overall corridor with the IPA refinements.

Paul explained the project schedule and intent to hold a public information session early in the new year. With one more CPT meeting to summarize the IPA refinements and present the additional findings for George Street, a public meeting may be held in the following month. Members of the CPT from the City of New Brunswick and Johnson & Johnson recommended a 30 to 60 day extension to continue to study the George Street design options. The next CPT meeting date is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, January 19, 2000. The members were thanked for their efforts and extended best wishes for the holiday season. The meeting was adjourned at noon.

### **3. ACTION ITEMS**

- Members and Guests review George Street Interchange design concepts with your constituents. Provide any comments to Mike Morgan at Gannett Fleming or bring them to the next meeting. For any CPT issues or comments, please contact Martine Culbertson.
- Gannett Fleming will examine design options for George Street and will develop materials and maps for overall corridor with the refinements to the IPA for the next CPT meeting.
- Martine Culbertson to confirm next meeting date and notify CPT, prepare agenda and materials for next CPT meeting, write and distribute meeting report, and track CPT issues.

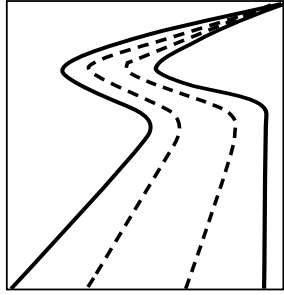
### **4. NEXT MEETING**

Date: Wednesday, January 19, 2000 (tentative date)  
Time: 9:00 a.m. - Noon  
Location: Middlesex County Planning Conference Room  
Elks Building, City of New Brunswick

Report prepared by:

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Martine Culbertson, CPT Facilitator



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CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

**CPT MEETING No. 8  
AGENDA**

December 15, 1999

Objective: To examine the George Street Interchange and discuss improvements for Route 18 corridor in that area; to identify issues and develop CPT consensus on George Street interchange area concept for the Initially Preferred Alternative.

I. Welcome and Review

- Agenda and Goals
- CPT Update

II. Initially Preferred Alternative

- Report of NJTPA Meeting (held 12/10/99)
- Present George Street Interchange
- CPT Discussion and Consensus

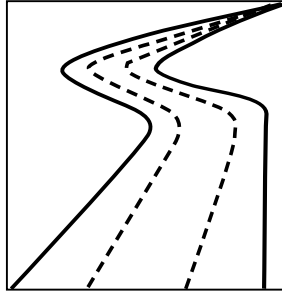
III. Summary and Close

- Project Schedule and Next Steps
- Action Items and Feedback



**State of New Jersey Department of Transportation**

Division of Project Management



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CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

**CPT MEETING NO. 8**  
**REPORT ATTACHMENT NO. 1**  
**COMMENTS FROM CONSENSUS DISCUSSION**  
**GEORGE STREET INTERCHANGE AREA**  
DECEMBER 15, 1999

- Try to maintain consistent grade in the corridor
- Look at profile of corridor and design concepts
- Is it possible to develop other design ideas to minimize adverse impacts such as the "roller coaster" effect, because it would be highly positive to have full access at George Street.
- Concern for circulation and impact to Ryder's Lane
- Prefer IPA interchange due to concern for environmental impacts, aesthetics of 50 foot piers from the river, and overall appearance of this interchange
- Prefer IPA over full interchange because the full interchange is an intrusive, expensive option and may cause further pedestrian problems
- Prefer IPA using the overpass and not have pedestrians cross the roadway
- Prefer Alternate design concept with full interchange - gives more options to connect to Route 18 and Route 1 - can prevent current backups
- The full interchange at George Street would provide further options for people to take
- Exxon station creates greater weave concern - may be worth contacting to see if corporate merger may mean closing of this station.
- Concern for congestion on Commercial Avenue - prefer option which best relieves congestion on Commercial Avenue
- Look further to see if alternate design option could be done better to provide moves with less impacts
- Concern for impacts to Ryder's lane with full interchange
- Because it improves traffic flow and access with the alternate design, it deserves more examination however concern that the alternate design complexities may delay overall project and not worth it if the improvements are limited compared to the impacts
- How does the full interchange affect construction will there be years of delay for small percentage improvement to corridor traffic flow
- Examine all of corridor for improvements versus the time frame to build, compare construction schedule for different options
- With full access at George Street, the Rutgers buses will be out of the downtown roadway system and this improvement in traffic flow and access better supports future development - an important consideration



- Can full access be done by ramping rather than raise the collector distributor roadway
- Look closely at improving the alternate design, but not delay project
- Benefits to alternate design of a full interchange - does it exceed needs of the project - subject to interpretation
- Detour during construction better with the alternate design - issue of constructibility and length of time to build
- At what point is it best to get on collector distributor and to then get off for access to the station - won't this be an issue for the Exxon station gas
- Advantage to Rutgers and the City of New Brunswick to relieve congestion, maximize access with full interchange, and relieves bus impacts on local streets
- Appropriate timing to provide improvements for future development
- Examine alternate design concept to look carefully at future potential for City of New Brunswick and Rutgers University
- Stairs or ramp are a break in the continuity of the bike way - must be visible to vehicles or pedestrians won't use it
- Improve access so park is more usable
- Environmental impacts exist, but less than other concepts
- Purpose/Need statements are subject to interpretation especially with consideration of development/economic support
- Must look at these options for George Street from short term versus long term opportunity for better access - if you do, then the IPA falls short
- Ensure access to park land by the IPA or alternate design.
- How impacts balance out - one may improve certain aspects, must look at overall impacts
- Concern for effect on boat house property - need further analysis
- Alternate design with full access at George Street offers better regional access - more alternatives to move traffic
- Transit Benefits - should be a criteria on the evaluation form for comparison
- Parking deck offered by Rutgers provides an option for possible public facility
- Deserves further examination on access and improvements
- Consequences of not doing it needs to be weighed, Board of Freeholders support the City
- Concern that project consider flooding issue with the overall design
- Concern for aesthetics and visual appearance of the roadway with fifty foot piers.