

ROUTE 18  
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

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**COMMUNITY  
PARTNERING TEAM**

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CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

**COMMUNITY PARTNERING TEAM  
MEETING NO. 9 REPORT**

January 28, 1999

**DATE:** January 19, 2000  
**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  
Robert Grimm  
Linda Hunter  
Roberta Karpinecz  
Tom Kelso  
Thomas Loughlin  
Rick Lloyd  
Glenn Patterson  
Todd Smircina  
Bob Spear  
George Ververides  
Frank Wong

Alternates

Helen Erdey  
Ed Kozack  
Vincent Martino  
Catherine Springer

Invited Guests

Michaelene Caruso  
Sarah Clarke  
Doug Joyce  
Tony Gambilonghi  
Michael Heenehan  
Ken Koschek

**REPRESENTING:**

New Jersey Turnpike Authority  
University Mews Homeowners Assoc.  
Keep Middlesex Moving, Inc.  
Dewey Heights Area Neighborhood  
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

Carpender Road Area Neighborhood  
Rutgers, The State Univ. of NJ  
Middlesex County Engineering  
Newell Avenue Area Neighborhood

Middlesex County Administration  
New Brunswick Development Corporation  
East Brunswick Township  
Middlesex County Planning Dept.  
NJDEP, Green Acres  
NJDEP, Office of Program Coordination



**State of New Jersey Department of Transportation**

Division of Project Management

## Steering Committee

Bill Birch

Bill Cochran

Elkins Green

Mike Morgan

Paul Nowicki

Martine Culbertson

NJDOT, Division of Project Management

NJDOT, Division of Project Management

NJDOT, Environmental Services

Gannett Fleming

Gannett Fleming

M. A. Culbertson

## Visitors

Jay Pandya

Mike Sheehan

NJDOT, Environmental Services

Gannett Fleming

## 1. PURPOSE OF MEETING

To finalize the George Street interchange discussion and improvements for the Route 18 corridor in that area; to develop CPT consensus on George Street interchange concept and the Paulus Boulevard intersection concept for the Initially Preferred Alternative. (Agenda attached)

## 2. MEETING SUMMARY

Martine Culbertson opened the meeting by asking members to introduce themselves. She then reviewed the agenda and informed the CPT of a new member to be appointed for the MSM Regional Council, which has been renamed as the Regional Planning Partnership.

Paul Nowicki then presented the results of the George Street interchange investigations for the Initially Preferred Alternative (IPA). Based upon the discussions from the previous meeting, the following concepts were examined:

- Alternative A - the alternate design concept which allows for a full interchange
- Alternative B - a new option with a revised Northbound Ramp
- Alternative C - an option with a revised Southbound Ramp

The suggested option of Alternative B for northbound access contains multiple ramp terminals in close proximity, which do not allow adequate ramp separation distance and have insufficient sight distance due to the George Street ramp wall. As a result, it fails operationally and cannot be implemented.

Due to the severe weave conditions the southbound ramp on Alternative A is not acceptable as an option. It has an unacceptable level of service (operationally unacceptable and safety compromised). This is a 'fatal flaw' which means if there are other viable options they would be considered before this option. Therefore Paul explained that the project team examined another option to obtain a southbound entrance to George Street and the Rutgers' campus which is Alternative C. This does work from an operational standpoint, but has possible environmental and socioeconomic impacts, which would need to be further studied. A map of this option was distributed.

The following comments and questions were raised during the discussion of these alternatives for the George Street interchange:

Q – What happens to the frontage road concept with Alternative C for George Street?

A – Newell Avenue would tie into the frontage road and then connect at Taylor. Paulus Boulevard would remain as the point of access. Further discussion will be undertaken.

Q – Has a cost evaluation been examined for Alternative C compared to Alternative A?

A – Northbound would be the same, however southbound Alternative C is an estimated one million dollars less than Alternative A.

Q – Why does the IPA get a check for meeting Project Purpose and Need versus the alternative design?

A – The IPA meets the projects needs where the alternative design also meets the needs but exceeds them at an increased cost. Given that both options do meet the project needs, they both could have a check.

Q – Could part of the IPA remain and add some of the parts of the alternate design for the George Street area? Could you have a three-quarters interchange?

A – Yes, however this needs further evaluation, because the objective of providing a full interchange is not realized yet the construction cost may remain high. Justification analysis is needed. It is possible that some of the parts of the design can be incorporated; however some design elements are dependent on other aspects of the IPA. In theory, it is possible to have three movements, and not the fourth (southbound entrance).

After presenting the design concepts, Paul then reviewed the evaluation categories explaining the associated impacts with each design option. The NJDOT recommends the modified IPA at George Street (maintaining the existing two ramp access points) because the design does meet the project needs.

Rutgers expressed interest in examining the possible options for George Street recognizing the potential benefits for the City. An interchange that allows three moves may be a worthwhile improvement over the modified IPA and not have the impacts associated with the full interchange options. Paul indicated that such a scenario has been examined as a consideration and he then presented it to the CPT as Alternative D.

The group took a brief break while display maps were changed to show the Paulus Boulevard area. Paul reviewed the concept for the Paulus Boulevard intersection. Concerning U-turns, he noted that all George Street options do allow for U-turns at that interchange and that signage would be implemented to direct motorists for Route 1 to use Ryder's Lane. There were comments and discussions regarding the frontage road concept, the pedestrian overpass and noise walls. Comments were listed on newsprint at the meeting and have been transcribed on the Report Attachment No.1 included with this report.

The CPT agreed to have neighborhood representatives from the Newell Avenue and Phelps Avenue areas meet with the project study team to discuss in detail the issues, concerns and interests associated with the frontage road concept. Results of that meeting will be reported back to the CPT at the next CPT meeting in February.

Martine distributed a draft charter and resolution to the members asking for comments and revisions. The purpose of the Charter /Resolution is to acknowledge support for transportation improvements in the Route 18 corridor as a team. It is intended for use as a document of support for the project and the modifications which have been developed as the modified Initially Preferred Alternative (resolution) and as an understanding of the team's purpose and commitment (charter). The charter may be distributed at the public information center or available upon request by people unfamiliar with the work effort accomplished to date. Members were asked to fax any changes to Mike Morgan at Gannett Fleming, so adjustments can be made for final review at the next CPT meeting.

Bill Cochran, from NJDOT Community Relations, stated the interest to have a public information center after the next CPT meeting, so the modified IPA can be presented to the general public for comment. As requested by the CPT, a new map showing the overall corridor with the current modifications to the IPA will be attached to the charter/resolution and available for the CPT members to share with their constituents. The next CPT meeting date is scheduled for Wednesday, February 9, 2000. The feedback comments are reflected in the action items listed below. The meeting was adjourned at noon.

### **3. ACTION ITEMS**

- NJDOT and Gannett Fleming will meet with the Newell Avenue and Phelps Avenue neighborhood CPT representatives to discuss the issues, concerns and interests associated with the frontage road concept.
- Members and Guests review the draft CPT Charter and Resolution. Also review CPT Handbook materials with your constituents. Provide comments / fax revisions to Mike Morgan (908-755-9849) or to Martine Culbertson (856-795-5254).
- Gannett Fleming will develop a new map for the overall corridor with the modifications to the IPA to distribute to the CPT; and produce materials for the next CPT meeting, based upon the result 'frontage road concept' meeting with the neighborhood representatives of the CPT.
- Martine Culbertson to prepare agenda and materials for next CPT meeting, write and distribute meeting report, and track CPT issues.

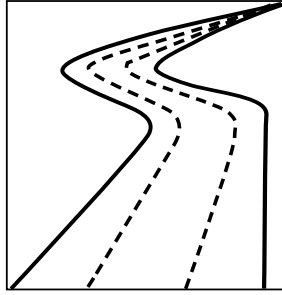
### **4. NEXT MEETING**

Date: Wednesday, February 9, 2000  
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. 9**

**AGENDA**

January 19, 2000

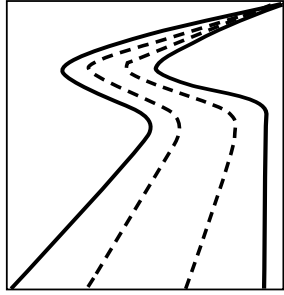
**Objective:** To finalize the George Street interchange discussion and improvements for the Route 18 corridor in that area; to develop CPT consensus on George Street interchange concept and the Paulus Boulevard intersection concept for the Initially Preferred Alternative.

- I. Welcome and Review
  - Agenda and Goals
  - CPT Update
  
- II. Initially Preferred Alternative
  - Present George Street Interchange Investigation
  - CPT Discussion and Consensus
  - Review Paulus Boulevard Intersection
  - CPT Discussion and Consensus
  
- III. Summary and Close
  - Sample CPT Resolution/Charter
  - 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. 9**  
**REPORT ATTACHMENT NO. 1**  
**COMMENTS FROM DISCUSSION ON**  
**GEORGE STREET INTERCHANGE AREA**  
**AND PAULUS BOULEVARD INTERSECTION AREA**  
JANUARY 19, 2000

- Environmental issues needs to be examined with Alternative C
- Concerns remain about the frontage road concept and therefore oppose the road due to aesthetics: there would be too much pavement and loss of trees
- Important that George Street Interchange allows U-turns
- Concern that frontage road does not tie into Paulus Boulevard since it would cause an increase in local traffic using the intersection and the neighborhood
- In favor of Newell Avenue closure and use of the frontage road concept to create better neighborhood feeling and create buffer from Route 18
- Four-way interchange at George Street has very positive aspects to shift buses off of the other city streets; the three-way interchange would help
- Three-way interchange would benefit the City, by shifting buses and student motorists, it may also encourage more students to take the buses (45,000 students on buses per day)
- During peak hours there are approximately 300/400 vehicles moving from Commercial Avenue to George Street
- Alternative C may be difficult due to the environmental issues that make the three-way interchange more likely
- Would like both Alternative C and Alternative D to be presented at the public information center
- Request for analysis of cost and construction time frame with each design concept
- Design for George Street interchange can be incorporated into Rutgers University's Master Plan
- There is the opportunity to put these improvements in place now to address the commuter interests and for regional benefit
- Regarding the evaluation chart, the indicators should be weighted for access/circulation
- Alternative D does appear as possible balance between the benefits and potential impacts



- Keep in mind the quality of life for local residents may improve with the shifting of buses off the City streets
- The modified IPA with the turn around on Paulus Boulevard is acceptable provided George Street does maintain a U-turn
- Concern regarding minimal signal time at Paulus Boulevard may not occur if a lot of local traffic uses that intersection to connect to neighborhoods on the frontage road – recommend not connecting the frontage road to Paulus Boulevard
- Concern for pedestrian overpass both aesthetics and maintenance issues, will hang over neighborhood areas and question its actual use by pedestrians, therefore oppose
- Need to contact Raritan Gardens to review comments regarding Paulus Boulevard intersection design.
- Concern for best location of the bus stop and pedestrian overpass
- Suggest resolving the neighborhood design concept issues prior to a general public information center
- Recommend pedestrian overpass due to need for improved pedestrian safety in this area of the corridor
- Concern for landscaping and what the noise walls or berms would look like and this is an important consideration, there is a need to visualize so to support the corridor improvements
- Route 18 Extension Project is a separate project beyond the scope of this effort that is to improve operational and safety in this corridor from Route 1 to Route 27
- Aesthetic considerations are important due to the neighborhoods affected by the Route 18 corridor improvements in this area – frontage road concept warrants further discussion
- Some area residents may not want the noise walls but only a landscaped open area
- Pedestrian overpass may be needed due to the safety concerns; not having it is negligent
- Request for photo or artist renderings of the aesthetics or potential visual impacts of the pedestrian overpass and noise walls in this area of the corridor
- Maintenance of noise walls and pedestrian overpass is a concern
- This part of the corridor is an important area as the gateway into the City of New Brunswick, so landscaping and aesthetics are very important
- Since there is pressure to maintain a green light at Paulus Boulevard as much as possible, the need for a pedestrian overpass is important for the bus stop access and to minimize red light.
- Recommend meeting with neighborhood representatives of the CPT and the project study team to discuss in detail the frontage road issue and pedestrian overpass, need to resolve neighborhood issues prior to having the public information center