

ROUTE 18
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

**COMMUNITY
PARTNERING TEAM**

CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE MTG. NO. 3
CONGESTION RELIEF MEETING
REPORT

PROJECT: ROUTE 18 - Section 2F, 7E, and 11H
City of New Brunswick
Middlesex County, New Jersey

DATE: September 14, 2004

TIME: 10:00 a.m. - Noon

PLACE: Middlesex Cty. Planning Dept. Conference Room, Elks Building
City of New Brunswick, NJ

ATTENDEES:

Morteza Ansari	KMM	732-745-2326
Chris Barretts	NJDOT, Park-n-Ride	609-530-2951
Tony Gambilonglu	MS Cty Planning Dept	732-745-3843
Mark Hauske	NJDOT/VE	609-530-5278
Lawrence Kolodiej	MC Engineering	732-745-3283
Thomas Loughlin	City of New Brunswick	732-745-5007
David Martella	NBPD	732-745-5165
Steve Mikulak	NJDOT	609-530-6558
Jack Molenaar	Rutgers Univ/Planning	732-445-2430X650
Michael Morgan	Gannett Fleming	908-755-0040
Dennis Motiani	NJDOT, Traffic Ops	201-797-7314
Paul Nowicki	Gannett Fleming	908-755-0040
Sharad Rana	NJDOT, Project Coordinator	609-530-2196
Martin Robins	Voorhees Trans Ctr	732-932-6812X697
Bob Spear	Rutgers	732-932-6966
Paul Truban	NJDOT, Intermodal Coord	609-530-3521
LeRoy Washington	Rutgers RUPD	
Kyu Whang	Rutgers Univ/Facilities	732-445-2430X614
Tim White	City of New Brunswick	732-745-5056
Jim Wilno	NJ TRANSIT, Bus Planning	
Frank Wong	Rutgers	732-445-2430X604
Greg Wright	Academy Bus Co.	201-725-5612



SUMMARY:

To identify issues and options for congestion relief during the construction stages of the Route 18 Improvements from Route 1 to Route 27 through the City of New Brunswick. (Agenda attached).

POINTS OF DISCUSSION:

1. Sharad Rana presented the project status and schedule. The project will be advertised for construction on November 18, 2004. The plans will include the construction staging and traffic management plans. The anticipated contract award date is January 2005 with construction to begin in February 2005.

2. The construction staging may change due to the contractor's schedule of activities. Recommendations are made to the NJDOT Field Office Resident Engineer and are subject to approval by NJDOT.

3. Sharad noted that NJDOT recognizes that the traffic congestion issues exists within the corridor currently, so traffic management and the communications plan during construction will be needed. The purpose of this meeting is to identify and discuss options to assist with congestion relief.

4. The participants expressed interest in NJDOT to fund a traffic study to examine traffic circulation patterns, shuttle bus service of options, and opportunity for park n'rides given concerns that during construction especially in Stages 2 and 3 when the interchanges at New Street is out of service and then the Commercial Avenue interchange respectively. Rutgers is also concerned of traffic flow and detours for the bus routes during the closure and reconstruction of the George Street interchange.

5. Rutgers has prepared a document indicating the scope of the study requested and potential options to explore in trying to potentially relieve some of the congestion during the construction staging. See attached document and map (possible park n'ride sites, more could be considered).

6. Rutgers noted a letter from the members of the Transportation Summit to be sent to the Commissioner requesting this study and need to examine possible options to assist with congestion relief.

7. Paul Nowicki, Gannett Fleming Project Manager, presented an overview of the traffic management plans for Stage 1 construction. Martine Culbertson, facilitator, asked participants for comments on Stage 1 which are listed below. Paul provided overview information of the construction and traffic management plans for stages 3 through 5. Stages 6 and 7 are primarily resurfacing and final construction activity, which involve minimal traffic management, given that after stage 6 when all new interchanges will be open. Paul noted that the New Street interchange would not be taken out of service until the improvements needed to assist with traffic flow were completed. Also the Commercial Avenue interchange would not be taken out of service until the new improved New Street interchange was operative.

8. During comments for Stage 2 participants noted that as a result of New Street interchange being closed, traffic volume and congestion would increase at the remaining interchanges to a point of severe congestion. Due to this stage of construction and the following stages 3 and 4,

Rutgers, the City and County representatives expressed their support and request for a traffic circulation study of the areas as defined in their written scope.

9. Jack Molenaar, Rutgers Planning, reviewed the tasks and scope of work they propose to be considered. Martine asked participants for their comments concerning the options for proposed relief: bus services, revised circulation patterns, dedicated bus lane, and park n'rides. Comments are below.

COMMENTS ON TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STAGES

STAGE 1 - 5 month duration

Albany Street night closure may be partial or total: less than 2 weeks (10-14 days)

- Night closure is defined as 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. - work to be done Sunday-Thursday
- Full closure would be a concern for the Hyatt & restaurants and business in that area
- Partial closures and full should be announced in advance
- Avoid Friday & Saturday nights !
- Possible parking concerns in the area
- Bike/Pedestrian access to remain open - there are large numbers of pedestrians who walk to the train station

STAGE 2 - 11 months

- New Street - out of service, New Street Interchange
- Must complete Stage 1 improvements (which impact traffic flow) before beginning Stage 2
- Concern for increased traffic on George Street given the closure of New Street interchange
- Truck detours must allow for the turning radius of the tractor trailers - problem at certain intersections now
- Need to examine traffic flow and circulation patterns around George Street to minimize traffic bottlenecks

STAGE 3 - 13 months total - 3A = 3 month duration

- Commercial Avenue closed - to be reconstructed in this stage
- New Street interchange improvements completed and open
- This stage is estimated to be done in the summer months
- This stage is most difficulty for Rutgers: "How will the buses move during this stage?"
- Encourage incentives to open this interchange to traffic as soon as possible
- Burnett will also be closed during Stage 3A

STAGE 4 - Commercial Interchange improvements constructed - 10 month duration

- Traffic congestion concerns around George Street
- Other construction projects on-going in this area at the same time could complicate traffic and construction

- Construction to occur June to September

STAGE 4A - Pedestrian Underpass at Albany - 4 day duration

- Albany Street bridge will be closed to traffic over a 4-day-long weekend to replace the culvert
- The bridge will remain open to only emergency vehicles and pedestrian access for 72 hours
- Route 27 ramp will be taken out of service - examining partial closure for 3 week duration
- If Route 27 ramp will fully closed, concern for pressure on New Street
- During ramp closure or partial closure, notify motorists to take alternate regional direction

STAGE 5 - George Street Interchange out of service and reconstructed - 15 month duration (partial and full)

- Total closure for a 4 month duration anticipated in October, however could come in summer
- Concern George Street and Commercial Avenue intersection will be gridlocked due to vehicular volume
- Request to have improvements made at Gibson Ramp - Ryder's Lane - put in jughandle to allow left turn
- Jughandle at Gibson to allow left turn is not part of project, but CPT

STAGE 6 - Ramp n/s to Route 1 to be constructed - 2 month duration

- Vehicles must take Ryders lane
- Anticipated Fall season
- This work now on end of project rather than at beginning of project due to concern from Turnpike backups and Route 1 congestion.
- City water main to be installed during this stage - best to have Route 18 interchange improvements operating
- Examine detours in this area

STAGE 7 & STAGE 8 - No traffic detours; minor closures as needed

- Construction work estimated at 50 months with completion by July 2009

CONGESTION RELIEF - OTHER OPTIONS

- Study:
 1. Traffic Analysis
 2. Circulation Changes
 3. Establishment Bus Services/ Park and Rides
- Bus Options to be examined once traffic flow understood
- Park - n - Ride - determine potential locations and type of bus services available
- Bus Shuttle / Park - n - Ride if feasible then must determine Financing, Cost Impacts, Operation
- Car Pooling/Van Pools ---> Funding assistance via KMM
- Examine Bus Lanes dedicated during the peak hours such as northbound in a.m. and southbound in p.m.

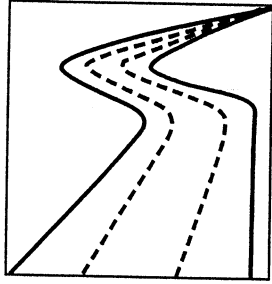
- Examine other projects under construction during this time period and potential impacts
- Park - n - Ride idea - to look at regional perspective: Jurors, J&J, Hospitals, major employers
- Data - obtain, gather, and analyze
 - On Rutgers buses & students counts
 - Busing companies
 - County data, State planning data
- Parking – off-street and garages should be examined to minimize congestion issues
- Dedicated bus lane may include bikes and EMS vehicles - need to examine impacts vs. benefits
- Request for traffic study and examination of these options has been elevated - letter to Commissioner
- Time is critical to conduct study to examine and implements congestion relief strategies
- Recommend a meeting of Major Employers on Congestion Relief:
 - Sponsor shuttles
 - Work shifts
 - J&J facility on Route 1 - possible Park-n-Ride
 - KMM to facilitate meeting with major employers

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1. Review the scope of proposed tasks by Rutgers and provide comments to NJDOT project manager.
2. NJDOT to examine bus services, park n ride options and other congestion relief strategies as implemented on other projects of this scale.
3. Provide letters of support for NJDOT to conduct traffic analysis and options for possible funding.
4. Recommendations of this congestion relief meeting to be presented to NJDOT project management and discussed at the next Steering Committee meeting.
5. Revised construction staging and traffic management plans to be provided by Gannett to participants upon request.
6. Minutes of the meeting to be distributed to all participants and Steering Committee members.

We believe the foregoing to be an accurate summary of discussions and related decisions. We would appreciate notification of exceptions or corrections to the minutes within three (3) working days of receipt. Without notification, we will consider these minutes to be record of fact.

Martine Culbertson
CPT Facilitator



ROUTE 18

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

**COMMUNITY
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CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

CONGESTION RELIEF MEETING

AGENDA

Tuesday, September 14, 2004

Middlesex County Planning Conference Room, Elks Building, New Brunswick, NJ

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Objective: To identify issues and options for congestion relief during the construction stages of the Route 18 Improvements from Route 1 to Route 27 through the City of New Brunswick.

I. Welcome and Introductions

- Agenda and Goals
- Project Status and Schedule

II. Congestion Relief During Construction

- Traffic Management and Staging
- Park-n-Rides / Jitney Bus Service
- Circulation Patterns
- Alternative Routes
- Other Relief Options
- Recommendations to the Steering Committee

III. Summary and Close

- Action Items / Next Steps
- Closing Comments

