

Harrison County Transportation Study Project Advisory Committee

Meeting Two, November 2, 2000, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Benedum Civic Center
Route 50, Bridgeport, WV

Summary of Meeting Two

Purpose & Objectives

The second meeting of the Project Advisory Committee was held November 2, 2000 from 10:00 to 12:00 PM at the Benedum Civic Center in Bridgeport.

The meeting was held to work through with the consultants and the WVDOT, transportation related goals and to also identify current/emerging transportation issues or concerns in the area.

Attendance

The following Project Advisory Committee members (16 total) were present at the meeting:

Daniel Ferrell	Bill Foster	Lee Martin
Anita Menendez	Ken Yost	Joe Timms
Jeff Silka	Marvin Murphy	Tom Hall
Wayne Northey	Richard Wood	Joe Gero
Phyllis Freedman	Jim Griffith	Ann Merandi
Kathy Wagner		

The Honorable Frank Angotti, Jr., Ralph Bean Jr., John A. Bellotte, Robert Boylan, Wallace Brake, Ronald Hanlan, A. Kim Haws, Cecil B. Highland, Jr., James Hall, Ed Corkrean, The Honorable Samuel J. Cann, Bruce Carter, Roger Diaz, James Hunt, David Kates, Tom Keeley, Denny Lamm, Tim LeMasters, The Honorable Joseph M. Minard, The Honorable Larry Linch, Jim Mattingly, Larry Mazza, The Honorable William R. Sharpe, Terry Shulte (represented by Anita Menendez), Thomas Small, Ronald Smith, Roy Smith, Louis Spatafore, Delores Terango, Beth Taylor, Thomas Vidovich, P.R. Watson, and The Honorable Barbara Warner were not present.

Richard L. Warner and Mark Scoular, of the WVDOT were in attendance. Bill Troe of the consulting firm BRW, Inc., Lisa McAdam of URS Corp., and Andrea Sweigart of Mary Means & Associates, Inc. (MMA), Lewis Grimm of Cambridge Systematics, Inc. represented the consultants.

Presentation/Discussion Summary

Welcome. Bill Troe offered welcoming remarks and introduced members of the consulting team. Each member of the Advisory Committee introduced themselves to the group, and Bill gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

Progress Report.

Members of the Advisory Committee requested that meeting materials for review be distributed well in advance of meetings. The first review of information should not occur at the meeting itself, but instead information should be disseminated early enough so members can review it and prepare questions. A request was made for a map of Harrison County that illustrates current construction projects and future work that is planned by WVDOT.

Transportation Goals General Group Discussion: Mr. Troe presented the transportation goals from the 1977 Clarksburg-Harrison County Area Transportation Study and the 1997 Harrison County Comprehensive Plan (transportation element). He explained that WVDOT has also developed a rough set of generalized goals that are used in projects throughout the state. These general goals were introduced to the group to explain the overall concept and direction for the meeting, and to begin discussion about the types of goals the committee feels are important for the plan. The following comments questions and responses were offered by meeting participants:

In response to a question about potential sites for future industrial facilities and their impact on transportation needs, Mr. Troe indicated that socioeconomic data information to be used in travel demand modeling efforts will begin with 1990 census data and then updated to 1999 based on information requested from Harrison County Planning, the City of Clarksburg, the City of Bridgeport, the Town of Shinnston and the Town of Salem. Thus, the models will incorporate these issues.

A comment was made that improved access to the airport is essential in moving people and goods in and out of the area.

Questions were raised at the possibility of developing a relationship with CSX and to include a CSX representative on the committee. Although the study is seen as primarily highway focused, movement of freight (including via rail) will be included.

Representatives from the City of Bridgeport stated their main concerns as traffic in town along Main Street/US 50 and Johnson Avenue and safety/congestion. Concerns about bridge safety and operations were discussed in reference to increased congestion leading to safety concerns. Mr. Troe addressed this issue stating that bridge safety will be included in the plan.

The third goal of the 1997 plan “Improve access into and out of the County to facilitate development and to alleviate traffic problems in the County” was discussed. A comment was made that the total system must be looked at and major traffic sources must be identified. Future studies, including Route 19, may be undermined if the entire system is not looked at as a whole.

Mr. Troe summarized the committee’s discussion about the connection and coordination of the transportation system with other systems in the region as an important goal. Mr. Lewis Grimm suggested that the study look at travel patterns and see where potential improvements could be made in adjacent counties.

Representatives from the City of Salem indicated that the US Route 50 corridor is critical in the continued growth and development of the City. A question was asked whether any work was being done in this area and what projects WVDOT has planned that relate to Route 50. Mr. Richard Warner of WVDOT replied that the Corridor “D” Parkersburg Bypass and related projects in WV and Ohio are moving ahead at this time. These improvements will have impacts that will affect traffic from a regional standpoint. City representatives stressed that the needs of the City of Salem, and adjacent Doddridge County, should be reflected in the HCTS.

Mr. Troe posed the question to the committee “What are the major economic corridors in the county?” Committee members identified I-79, Route 279, US Route 50 (east and west), US Route 19 (particularly to the north) and the airport. A need to assess the air travel linkages to and from the airport as well as ground access was mentioned. Passenger routes (Pittsburgh, Washington D.C., etc.) and airfreight links are important.

A comment was offered about the need to look into trail linkages along both the US Route 19 and US Route 50 corridors. The West Fork River corridor was identified as an important opportunity for bicycle and pedestrian trail improvements. Multi-county linkage potentials from Jacksons Mill (Lewis County) through Lost Creek to Clarksburg and north to Fairmont and Morgantown exist and were identified as a potential economic development tool. The need for improved biker/hiker support facilities such as rest areas, campsites and transit was discussed.

A comment was made that through the rail bank program Harrison County has ownership of the railroad corridor from Clarksburg south to Lost Creek.

A suggestion was made for the need to examine a southern bypass of Bridgeport to improve linkages between I-79 and US Route 50.

A question was raised on the status and philosophy of I-79 corridor improvements. Mr. Marvin Murphy, WVDOT Division of Highways, replied that I-79 demand is increasing and that long range corridor demand will require a combination of mainline widening and improved interchange/collector distributor road system - as well as improved parallel arterial streets such as Lodgeville Road. A recent proposal calls for an upgrade of Lodgeville Road from the intersection of Johnson Avenue at 84 Lumber to the I-79 interchange.

A question directed to the WVDOT staff asked if anything is being done to improve access to Old Route 50 at the top of Bridgeport Hill. Staff replied that construction of this project is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2001.

A comment was made that equipment movement by the Army National Guard is constrained by narrow, windy roads. Low bridges, restricted clearances, weight limits and narrow lanes make the movement of emergency vehicles difficult in certain areas. A comment was offered that a resolution to these restrictive clearances, etc., should be a part of this study. Mr. Troe responded that bridge deficiencies will be addressed as part of the plan, and that specific needs of certain adjacent land uses can also be incorporated into the study.

Several members of the committee stressed the importance of eliminating the bottlenecks on Route 50 through Clarksburg. The status of improved access to the hospital was questioned, along with the speculation of a regional medical center along I-79.

A comment was made that appropriate pedestrian access on all state and local routes should be considered – especially in areas where people walk along side of the roadway. A suggestion was made that an objective of the HCTS could be to complete the missing links in the pedestrian system. Examples discussed included the Nutter Fort/Clarksburg interface along State 20 and access to Lincoln and Byrd High Schools.

A suggestion was made to add the words “multi-modal” and “safe” to the second goal of the 1977 Harrison County Transportation Study.

A comment was raised about the need to establish priorities as part of the planning effort such as immediate, near term, and long term. Included in this are ensuring adequate maintenance of existing transportation systems.

Environmental protection was identified as being an important component of the study. New roads should not impact critical natural resources. A program for monitoring the use of the transportation system that reflects land use, transportation and environmental changes is needed.

A comment was made that alternative modes (pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, railroad, airport) of transportation should reflect connectivity. Connectivity between alternative modes and the highway system should be considered and major intermodal nodes should be identified. The system should support the needs and opportunities of a multi-modal system.

A discussion about the public transit system identified the need for expanded CENTRA operations throughout the region. Both fixed bus routes and senior citizen rural transit needs were identified as important. A need to improve the current linkages from Marion County to the VA Hospital and UHC was mentioned.

The discussion period ended with Mr. Troe dividing the group into three sub-groups to discuss and formulate regional transportation issues.

Next Meeting. The next organized meeting for the Advisory Committee has not been identified at this time, but will occur after the public information meetings are held at the end of November. Committee members are encouraged to attend one or both of the public meetings:

November 28, 2000	Robert C. Byrd High School Cafeteria, Clarksburg	6:30 – 8:30 PM
November 29, 2000	Salem Recreational Barn Facility, Salem	6:30 – 8:30 PM

This concludes the meeting summary.

Comments or questions regarding the meeting summary should be provided to Bill Troe, from BRW at (402) 334-8182, email at bill_troe@urscorp.com or Richard Warner of the WVDOT at (304) 558-3156, e-mail: rwarner@dot.state.wv.us in advance of the next meeting of the Committee. Revisions to the summary will be made as necessary and a revised draft will be forwarded to members for their review.

Enclosures: