

ROUTE 18
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

**COMMUNITY
PARTNERING TEAM**

CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

**COMMUNITY PARTNERING TEAM
MEETING NO. 12 REPORT**

December 20, 2000

DATE: November 2, 2000
TIME: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Conference Room, Middlesex County Planning Dept.,
Elks Building, City of New Brunswick, NJ

(Meeting Attendees are listed at the end of the report)

1. PURPOSE OF MEETING

To present the project status, results of the environmental studies and review Boyd Park/City docks mitigation concepts; to discuss any outstanding CPT issues; and to establish task forces to address the corridor aesthetics and the Boyd Park expansion in the City Docks area. (Agenda attached)

2. MEETING SUMMARY

Martine Culbertson welcomed everyone to the meeting. She introduced the new members and asked everyone to introduce themselves as a courtesy to the new members and visitors. Martine reviewed the agenda, explained the revised materials for the new 2-inch binder handbooks, and then asked for each member to restate their name and provide any issue which in their opinion still needed to be considered. The issues are listed on Attachment No. 1 of these minutes. Martine explained that we would follow-up on these issues in Section III of the Agenda.

Paul Nowicki then presented the project update and a brief summary of the project schedule. He explained that the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) Document and Section 4(f) Document are being reviewed by the Federal and State agencies and a Public Hearing is tentatively scheduled for February to obtain public comments on the document which presents the proposed improvements to the Route 18 corridor. Paul then introduced Ben Gindville, an Environmental Specialist from Gannett Fleming, to present an overview of the findings of the technical environmental studies. Details of each aspect of the environmental analysis are available in the draft documents and are available to review by contacting Paul Nowicki or Mike Morgan at Gannett Fleming.



The following is a brief synopsis of the issues and impacts presented by Ben Gindville, regarding the Route 18 Section 2(F) project. This information was compiled from the Environmental Assessment document and is based on the various Technical Environmental Studies and subsequent studies prepared for the proposed project. The impacts presented are as follows:

- The Preferred Alternative will require minor to moderate cutting of the underlying Brunswick shale formation. However, it is not anticipated the cutting will adversely alter the geologic formation.
- The proposed project will involve the addition of approximately 5.1 hectares (12.6 acres) of impervious surface. The project will include sedimentation and soil erosion control measures, as well as stormwater management facilities where practicable.
- Major disruptions of the aquatic habitat within the Raritan River, the Delaware and Raritan Canal, and their tributaries are not expected, and fisheries impacts will be negligible. No significant surface water quality impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.
- The Preferred Alternative will require the placement of approximately 3900 cubic meters (5100 cubic yards) of fill within the floodplain of the Raritan River. In addition, the project will also involve the placement of retaining walls within the floodplain. Retaining walls will be designed to minimize restriction of the flow of floodwaters across the floodplain.
- The proposed project will require minor disturbance of vegetated areas. No threatened or endangered species are within the areas to be disturbed and the disturbances are negligible in comparison to the remaining habitat surrounding the project area.
- 0.004 hectare (0.01 acre) of freshwater wetlands and 135 linear meters (443 linear feet) of wetland transition area will be impacted as a result of implementation of the Route 18 project. Because impacted wetland areas will be less than 0.4 hectare (1 acre), wetland mitigation will not be required, and a NJDEP General Permit will be sought.
- The improved traffic flow resulting from project implementation, will result in improved air quality of the project area for some receptors and will not exceed the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for any receptor.
- Soils in some areas along the project corridor have been found to contain levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and semivolatile organic compounds and the metal arsenic above the NJDEP's Non-Residential Soil Cleanup Criteria, and in some areas, soils were above the more stringent Residential Soil Cleanup Criteria. Groundwater samples in some areas have indicated VOCs and the metal arsenic, which have exceeded the NJDEP Groundwater Quality Criteria. Contaminated non-hazardous soils may be re-used on site for fill and capped by clean soil or capped under roadways. Soil re-use would be subject to NJDEP approval.
- Currently, two residences, one business and one community facility will be displaced as a result of the project. Other property related impacts resulting from the project will be minor, and include changes in landscape, minor parking loss or reconfiguration, and changes in accessibility.
- The Preferred Alternative will result in total tax revenue loss of approximately one tenth of one percent (\$53,046) due to taxable property acquisitions. This is not considered significant.

- The Preferred Alternative and associated right-of-way impacts will not hinder access to any community facilities within the project corridor. Improved pedestrian/bicycle circulation and safety, and access to public transportation will result from project implementation.
- The Preferred Alternative will have an Adverse Effect on two cultural resources: the National Register of Historic Places listed Thomas Agnew House, and the archaeological resources in the northwest quadrant of the Route 18/Route 27 (Albany Street) interchange. A Memorandum of Agreement will need to be executed to mitigate these effects.
- The Preferred Alternative will impact approximately 0.73 hectare (1.80 acres) of Boyd Park along the park's western boundaries. The proposed project will not impact the use of Boyd Park.

The questions and comments raised during the environmental presentation are noted below:

Q - What impact will the project have on the old Police Department's building and its fueling and maintenance building?

A – The proposed roadway alignment hits the corner of the building, so demolition will most likely be required. It may be possible to maintain the fueling station. The project team will meet with the City to discuss this site as part of the right-of-way process. Access to the site will be maintained. Partial right-of-way taking is expected.

Q – Where are the pedestrian overpasses?

A – There will be pedestrian crossings at Phelps Avenue, George Street interchange, Commercial Avenue interchange, Tabernacle Way, and New Street. The area for the bikeway to continue under Route 27 is still being investigated.

Q- Will there be bikeway improvements connecting to the other Rutgers campus?

A- The bikeway from Albany Street to Johnson Park is not part of this project since it extends beyond the project limits. However the County and NJDOT do have a bikeway study for that area. The coordination is with Bill Feldman and RoseAnn Scott at NJDOT. The Route 18 Extension Project also has bikeways in Piscataway. Bikeway continuity is considered as part of these projects.

Q – Is Boyd Park a Section 4(f) site because it is a community facility?

A – Yes it is a park, which is a community facility, and is a Section 4(f) site.

Q – Noise walls are shown at Dewey Heights. The NJDOT committed to a wall at this location, independent of the noise analysis at this location. Does the NJDOT continue to propose a wall independent of the noise study?

A - Yes, NJDOT will honor all previous commitments to the Dewey Heights neighborhood as well as the City of New Brunswick. Noise analysis indicates walls are required at this location. Heights and specific details will be determined at a later date.

Q – Have there been any changes in the locations of the noise walls since the Public Meeting and based on the studies which were conducted?

A – No, the locations indicated at the Public Meeting have remained the same. The studies have confirmed that noise mitigation is warranted in those locations. The actual height, length and materials need to be designed during the Final Design phase of the project with input from the community. The project team is suggesting a task force composed of CPT members to look at the corridor aesthetics and type of noise walls or barriers to be proposed.

Q – Is noise mitigation required at Newell Avenue?

A – Noise mitigation was found to be warranted in the Newell and Phelps area and the landscaped earth berms will be effective at mitigating noise over much of the area.

Q – What will the design do to deal with the flooding situation on Route 18?

A – Regarding the floodplain delineation, there will be a floodplain redelineation in the area near Commercial Avenue. The project must demonstrate that there is no adverse impact in order to obtain permitting from the State DEP. This means that there must be no change in the 100 year flood water elevation due to this project. To keep Route 18 from Raritan River flooding would require walls or levees which only cause a flood disturbance elsewhere in the county and watershed. However there will be drainage improvements to the roadway to improve existing conditions and to properly handle roadway runoff during rain storms.

Q – How did the study team come up with the floodplain and floodway areas indicated on the project study map because they may be different from the FEMA map?

A – The map shows the floodway and floodplain lines from the State Study of the Raritan River; the two maps should be somewhat consistent, but the State Study is the more accurate source. The project study team will reexamine the project study map to be certain the lines are generally consistent.

Q – Are there any underground tanks in the 16 hazardous material sites identified?

A – The Gulf gas station which will be acquired as part of the right-of-way for the project and the police station are the only existing tank sites. There are 4 sites noted in the EA document for clean-up. Ten sites out of 16 locations were identified as requiring soil remediation or special handling during construction.

Ben Gindville then reviewed the Historic Architecture TES. Martine introduced Eugenia Babiak, a new CPT member representing the historic property known as the Thomas Agnew House, which is on the National Historic Register and which will be impacted as part of the planned action. She also reintroduced a number of the CPT members who represent the cultural and historic interests in the project area. It was determined that this structure due to safety and operational requirements of the Route 18 roadway can not remain its existing location. As part of the right-of-way process and the Section 106 process protecting historic structures, the project study team will meet with the property owner, the State and County Historic Preservation agencies to determine if the building can be moved to a suitable on-site location. If it can not be moved, another alternative could be to acquire the property.

Ben mentioned two other sites: the New Jersey College for Women which is part of the Rutgers' campus, and the D&R Canal. Both will not be affected by the project. However a temporary impact will occur during construction to Antilles Field which is a part of the historic site of the New Jersey College for Women.

Q – If a property is not listed on the National Historic Register, then does it still need to be considered as eligible?

A – The project study team must exam all potential historic properties and must treat eligible sites similar to those as listed on the register. The Music Building at Rutgers is potentially eligible for the National Historic Register, however the three way interchange at George Street will not impact it.

The next agenda item was a presentation on the Boyd Park extension concepts in the City Docks area. Paul presented possible Boyd Park concepts, which need to be further developed if determined to be appropriate. He recommended a task force be composed to discuss the potential facilities and options for this park expansion.

The task force will be composed of CPT members as the Boyd Park Expansion Task Force:

- Tom Loughlin (chair) City of New Brunswick
- Glenn Patterson (chair) City of New Brunswick, Planning
- Jim Campbell City of New Brunswick, Parks
- Sarah Clarke DEVCO
- Mike Heenehan Green Acres Program
- Paul Morrisett Newell Avenue Neighborhood Rep
- Frank Wong Rutgers University

The project support members are as follows:

- Dave Byers NJDOT, Landscaping
- Jay Pandya NJDOT
- Mike Morgan Gannett Fleming
- Nick Tufaro Schelinger Associates (landscape architecture firm)

Regarding the noise barriers and corridor aesthetics, Paul suggested that a task force also be created to address the potential concepts for noise barriers and landscaping elements in the corridor. The following CPT members will be part of the Corridor Aesthetics Task Force:

- Glenn Patterson (chair) City of New Brunswick, Planning
- Linda Hunter (chair) University Mews Homeowners Association
- Anna Ashkenes Middlesex County, Cultural & Heritage Commission
- Jim Campbell City of New Brunswick, Parks
- Tom Kelso Dewey Heights Area Neighborhood
- Paul Morrisett Newell Avenue Area Neighborhood
- Todd Smircina Carpenter Road Area Neighborhood
- Frank Wong Rutgers University

The project support members are as follows:

- Dave Byers NJDOT, Landscaping
- Ed Tomaszewski NJDOT, Noise
- Jay Pandya NJDOT
- Paul Nowicki Gannett Fleming
- Nick Tufaro Schelinger Associates

A review of the George Street Interchange was presented. Presently the three-way interchange option is indicated in the EA document. Paul explained that in order to create a four way interchange, there were historic architecture impacts which would have to be overcome involving the taking of the Music Building and permanent impacts to Antilles field. In addition, there are safety and operational design deficiencies, which make the exit ramp from the southbound Route 18 not feasible. He introduced another option for the exit ramp that was determined to have potential intrusion impacts to the campus and operational deficiencies. A comment was raised to look at the circulation flow to see if the Commercial Avenue entrance to Route 18 is of greater need than the entrance into George Street. The City and Rutgers asked that the project study team re-examine the traffic flow to see if the operational limitations can be overcome. It was agreed that Gannett Fleming could meet with the City and Rutgers to discuss this concern, however currently the three way interchange is acceptable to be carried forward in the process.

To address the outstanding issues as provided by the CPT members, Martine then went down the list as scribed at the beginning of the meeting. The response for each issue is indicated in parenthesis after the issue on Attachment No. 1 to this report.

NJDOT will provide a new project schedule milestone chart indicating the next steps in the process, including the Public Hearing for February. It was agreed that the Task Forces will meet at least once or twice over the next two months to discuss and develop the scope for the design work regarding Boyd Park expansion and the corridor aesthetics. The next CPT meeting is schedule for Wednesday, January 24, 2001. The action items for that meeting will be the progress of the task forces and preparation for the Public Hearing.

To close, Martine asked members for comments or feedback. The comments: progress fine, add Jim Campbell and Frank Wong to Aesthetic Corridor Task Force, need for letters from the City in support of the Route 18 improvements so Federal and State agencies acknowledge public support – give to Bill Cochran, and good to see Agnew House representative on the CPT. NJDOT thanked the CPT members for their continued support and participation. The meeting was adjourned at noon.

3. ACTION ITEMS

- Task Forces Members to meet over the next two months to discuss Boyd Park concepts or corridor aesthetics respectively.
- NJDOT and Gannett Fleming will meet with the City to discuss the Police Station site and will meet with the historic agencies and the property owner regarding the Thomas Agnew house.
- NJDOT and Gannett Fleming will meet with the City and Rutgers to review the four way interchange at George Street upon request.
- Gannett Fleming will provide project schedule with milestones chart and a new map of the Route 18 corridor improvements
- The City of New Brunswick and County to provide a letter of project support with any issues outstanding to Bill Cochran.
- Martine Culbertson will provide fax transmittals for each Task Force, confirm the members for each task force with Bill Birch, provide CPT meeting report, and confirm next meeting date.

4. NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday January 24, 2001

Time: 9:00 a.m. - Noon

Location: Middlesex County Planning Conference Room
Elks Building, City of New Brunswick

5. LIST OF ATTENDEES

ATTENDEES:

Members
Monteza Ansari
Eugenia Babiak
Julius DeSantis
Linda Hunter
Tom Kelso
Rick Lloyd
Thomas Loughlin
Paul Morrissett
Glenn Patterson
Awilda Perez
Todd Smircina
Bob Spear
George Ververides
Frank Wong
Alternates
Ed Kozack
Invited Guests
Anna Askenes
Bob Belvin
Ken Koschek
Linda LaSut
Carl Nittinger
Steering Committee
Bill Birch
Bill Cochran
Elkins Green
Paul Nowicki
Mike Morgan
Martine Culbertson
Visitors
Youssef Ben-Khayat
Jim Campbell
Tom Kalaneres
Jay Pandya
Douglas Petix
Nick Tufaro
Al Tavares
Ed Tomaszewski

REPRESENTING:

Keep Middlesex Moving, Inc.
Thomas Agnew House
Riverside Towers
University Mews Homeowners Assoc.
Dewey Heights Area Neighborhood
Johnson & Johnson
City of New Brunswick, Administration
Newell Avenue Area Neighborhood
City of New Brunswick, Planning
New Brunswick Apartments
Carpender Road Area Neighborhood
Rutgers, The State Univ. of NJ
Middlesex County Planning Dept.
Rutgers, The State Univ. of NJ

Rutgers, The State Univ. of NJ

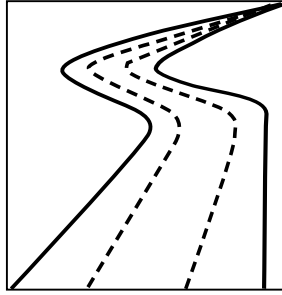
Middlesex Cty. Cultural & Heritage Commission
New Brunswick Historical Association
NJDEP, Office of Program Coordination
NJTPA
NJDEP, State Historic Preservation Office

NJDOT, Division of Project Management
NJDOT, Community Relations
NJDOT, Division of Project Management
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
M. A. Culbertson, LLC

NJDOT, Division of Project Management
City of New Brunswick
City of New Brunswick
NJDOT, Environmental Services
Dewey Heights Neighborhood
Schelinger Associates
NJDOT, Bureau of Mobility Strategies
NJDOT, Environmental Services

Report prepared by:

Martine Culbertson, CPT Facilitator



ROUTE 18
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

**COMMUNITY
PARTNERING TEAM**

CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

CPT MEETING No. 12
AGENDA

November 2, 2000

Objective: To present the project status, results of the environmental studies and review Boyd Park/City docks mitigation concepts; to discuss any outstanding CPT issues; and to establish task forces to address the corridor aesthetics and the Boyd Park expansion in the City Docks area.

I. Welcome and Overview

- Agenda and Goals
- Outstanding CPT Issues

II. Project Status and Update

- Technical Environmental Studies:
 - Socio-economics, Noise, Aesthetics, Hazardous Materials, Natural Ecosystems, Historic Architecture, Archaeology
- Draft Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Documents
- Boyd Park Impacts & Mitigation Concept
- George Street Interchange

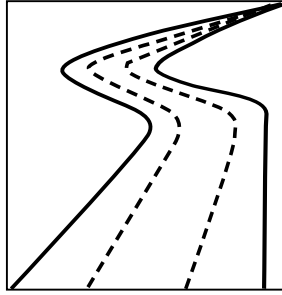
III. Address Outstanding CPT Issues

- Park Expansion Task Force – City Docks Area
- Corridor Aesthetics Task Force – Community Context
- Remaining Issues - Action Items

IV. Summary and Close

- Project Schedule: Upcoming Milestones
- Feedback/Closing Comments





ROUTE 18
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

**COMMUNITY
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CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

CPT MEETING NO. 12
REPORT ATTACHMENT NO. 1
OUTSTANDING CPT ISSUES AND ACTION ITEMS
NOVEMBER 2, 2000

- Historic Resources – received phone calls about the project schedule
(Revised project schedule with milestones will be distributed to CPT members)
- Agnew House Impacts
(Meeting will be conducted with NJDOT, Gannett Fleming, the property owner and with the State and County historic preservation and regulating agencies – see Meeting Report page 3 and 4)
- Landscaping – the timing in the process for input
(Created Corridor Aesthetics Task Force)
- Three-way versus four-way interchange at George Street
(options evaluated and presented, NJDOT and Gannett Fleming will meet with the City and Rutgers upon request – see Meeting Report page 4)
- Bikeway/Path Connection – to outside the project – Continuity
(To be considered – see Meeting Report page 2)
- Project Time Schedule – need to inform constituents
(Revised project schedule with milestones will be distributed to CPT members)
- George Street Interchange and Boyd Park Impacts
(options for George Street presented at meeting – see Meeting Report page 4 and Task Force created to address Boyd Park expansion in the City Docks area)
- Time Schedule
(Revised project schedule with milestones will be distributed to CPT members)
- Noise Walls – where, what and when
(Created Corridor Aesthetics Task Force)



- Dewey Heights exit off of Route 18 – the interchange
(Project map shows the interchange at Paulus Boulevard in the Dewey Heights area)
- Drainage – along corridor
(See Meeting Report page 2)
- Flooding – how will it be addressed
(See Meeting Report page 2)
- Route 1 and interchange with Route 18
(This issue has been listed as part of the Project Needs Statement and available for review by contacting Paul Nowicki, Gannett Fleming)