

**REPORT OF THE TRANSPORTATION / AIR QUALITY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE OFFICE OF STATE PLANNING**

MEMBERS:

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One Transportation/Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee met three times, on April 12, April 19 and May 25 to review the draft Preliminary State Development and Redevelopment Plan. This report is a summary of the Committee's transportation and air quality concerns and presents comments and recommendations to the Office of State Planning staff. Some of the comments address general issues, while others are policy specific. Because of the overlap of transportation and air quality issues, some of the its and recommendations apply to both subject areas. In addition, the

Committee offers comments about other aspects of the Plan and the planning process

AIR QUALITY

The Need to Clarify the Air Quality Objective

The Committee believes that the Plan should clarify the objective of protecting air quality. Should the objective be to have all parts of the State in attainment of ambient standards, or to accept some areas as falling within the standards while others exceed them? The Committee believes that a goal of the Plan is to bring non-attainment areas to within ambient standards while keeping relatively pristine areas as clean as possible.

The Committee does recognize, however, that certain transportation control measures (TCM's) or traffic management techniques, while designed to facilitate traffic flow and improve regional air quality, may actually create isolated "hot spots" where the air quality would exceed accepted standards. In such cases, additional mitigation measures would be necessary for these isolated areas.

Reliance on the SIP

The Committee is concerned with air quality Policy A.2.1.1 and its accompanying Standard A.2.1.1.1. As indicated in the NJDEP comments to the State Planning Commission, the New Jersey State Implementation Plan (SIP) is the main planning and legally binding document for maintaining and improving air quality throughout the State. The SIP is specifically developed for the attainment and maintenance of National Ambient Air Quality Standards. As such, it is the recommendation of the Committee that Standard A.2.1.1.1 be dropped from the SERF, but Policy A.2.1.1 itself be retained and perhaps rewritten.

Instead of placing specific air quality standards in the Plan, the Committee ~~recommends~~ recommends that the SERF reference the SIP as the planning and regulatory document for air quality and incorporate NJDEP's comments concerning SIP-related policy concepts. Specifically, these comments cover the following areas: 1) the requirement that air quality considerations be incorporated in new development review using appropriate thresholds; 2) the need to establish a specific offsets policy for emissions from traffic generated by new development; and 3) the need for an annual fee structure.

potentially statewide, or based on specific tier groupings and air quality status, for the area in which new development is located. Since items 1 and 2 are expansions of existing concepts, and 3 is a relatively new concept, the Committee suggests that they receive a legal review by NJEEP.

The Need for Developer Contributions to TMAs

The Committee agrees that there is a need for developers to contribute to a transportation management agency (TMA) which would provide capital facilities and services to reduce overall contaminant emissions resulting from traffic generated by increased development. It is the Committee's position that TMAs would be best administered at the county level.

Transportation Contributes to Efficiency

It is the consensus of the Committee that both transportation control measures (TCM) and automobile emissions improvements are necessary in reducing air pollution. However, it is felt by some members that TOI's are not cost effective in air pollution reduction, even though they do have a positive impact on air quality. Given this, we should concentrate on reducing automobile emissions from the source. Other Committee members feel that such "hardware" strategies are just about used up and that we should concentrate on reducing vehicle miles traveled, which, in turn, will bring about improved air quality. The consensus of the Committee members is that there should be a balanced approach in achieving air quality goals. The SERF should justify TCMs on the basis of increasing the efficiency of the transportation network, and will have to rely on both TCMs and source strategies in reaching air quality goals.

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The Need to Clarify Funding Priorities for Highway Projects

The Committee feels that the language in Policy A.1.3.6 which describes the prioritization of funding for highway projects is somewhat confusing. There are two issues involved which are not being expressed clearly. First, there is the issue of funding priority by tier. Secondly, there is the issue of funding priority for maintenance and improvement projects over capacity expansions. The consensus is that better wording is needed for Policy A.1.3.6.

To some members, Policy A.1.3.6 appears to say that no state funds would be provided for highway projects in limited growth areas. The Committee stresses that this should not be the intent of the SERF since some highway improvements may need to be made in limited growth tiers so that growth areas can be better served.

The issue of funding priority for maintenance projects over capacity expansions has drawn such debate within the Committee. Some Committee

members feel that we should maintain what we have first before expanding the highway system. Other Berbers can agree with that in theory, t«t feel that such a policy say be detrimental to economic development efforts in designated growth areas.

To address the issue of funding prioritization, the Committee recommends that KJDCff's suggested revision of Policy A.I. 3. 6 be adopted. Specifically, KJDOT agrees with the SERF that State funding for the maintenance and improvement of existing highway facilities should have a higher priority than State funding for capacity increases. However, KTOOT recommends that prioritization for maintenance and improvement should be based on engineering standards and not be dictated by the tier location of the required investment, as stated in the SCRP. For capacity increase improvements, NTOT suggests that State funding be directed to projects serving statewide needs and the growth management objectives of the SEEP. Recognizing that some improvements may traverse limited growth tiers, KTOT recommends that, when this occurs, the improvements promote the compatibility of the highway with the growth management objectives of the limited growth tier by incorporating appropriate access controls and adjoining land use regulations.

The Need to Identify Appropriate Transit Options for Suburban Areas

The feasibility of public transportation in the suburbs is being studied in many areas as a way of addressing traffic congestion. Many suburban work settings make public transportation infeasible. Walks would be too long or bus routes too circuitous. The mode type chosen in a given area will depend mostly on the development density of that area. As such, the Committee recommends that the Office of State Planning work closely with NJDOT in identifying density standards and mode types which can be applied to suburban New Jersey.

Incorporate Independent Authorities in the State Planning Process

The recent widening proposals for the New Jersey Turnpike and Garden State Parkway have focused attention on the impacts of large scale projects by New Jersey's independent authorities. Ifeny t litre; such projects are in direct conflict with plans and prugidiib of state, county and local agencies. For example, the widening of a major highway facility, such as the Turnpike, will have a major traffic impact on the roads which feed it. When such projects occur without coordination with the NTOOT, there can be a major upheaval in that agency's capital program as there may be no plans to address the added demand which will be placed on the feeder roads when the mainline widening is completed. But this often is of no concern to the independent authority since its mandate nay not allow for off-facility improvements.

The Committee sees these inconsistencies in Tmnratps as a problem which should at least be recognized in the SERF. The Committee recommends that the State Plan encourage the independent authorities in New Jersey,

inclining bi-state agencies, to coordinate their efforts with the state planning process.

The Need to Address Airport and Port Issues

The Committee feels that the SERF has been silent on airport and waterborne transportation needs in New Jersey. Since airports and ports are catalysts for economic development, statewide as well as locally, the Committee recommends that the SERF address their needs as well as the issue of associated land uses.

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Incorporate Population and Employment Projections in the Plan

For meaningful transportation and air quality planning, the Committee feels that there is a need for explicit population and employment projections in the SDRP. Projections should be done at least on a countywide basis, however, municipal projections would be needed for corridor studies. It is the consensus of the committee that these projections be monitored by the Office of State Planning to determine if the Plan is working.

The Need to Limit the Number of Corridor Centers

The Committee supports the concept of corridor centers and finds it an exciting way to accommodate suburban growth. However, Committee members are concerned that too many corridor centers may be designated during the Cross-Acceptance process. There is fear that there will be a proliferation of strip development if too many are chosen. It is recommended by the committee that only a selected few economic subcenters be designated since the corridor centers will probably lose their importance if hundreds of them are chosen. It is also recommended that older towns be considered for corridor center designation.

The Need to Institutionalize the Technical Advisory Committees

The Committee would like to see the institutionalization of the State Plan's technical advisory committees. It is felt that there is a need to have the major actors from each of the planning disciplines present to advise the State Planning Commission and its staff throughout the planning process.

The Need to Improve the Plan Format

Recognizing that the StRP is still in draft form, the Committee stressed the need for good graphics and formatting for the version that will be released for the Cross-Acceptance process. Some suggestions include: a summary matrix describing the tiers for Volume 1; facts to be included with