

**MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 3, 2007 MEETING OF THE  
GREATER BUFFALO-NIAGARA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL  
PLANNING AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE (PCC)**

A meeting of the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council Planning and Coordinating Committee was held on October 3, 2007 at the NYS Thruway Authority, Cheektowaga, NY. The meeting began at approximately 9:35a.m.

The following GBNRTC-PCC Members or their representatives were present:

- |                  |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Gary Gottlieb | NYSDOT                |
| 2. Robert Gower  | NFTA                  |
| 3. Paul Gareis   | City of Buffalo       |
| 4. Kevin O'Brien | County of Niagara     |
| 5. Matthew Latko | NYSTA                 |
| 6. John Loffredo | County of Erie        |
| 7. Robert Curtis | City of Niagara Falls |

Others present were:

- |                       |                                          |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1. Hal Morse          | GBNRTC                                   |
| 2. Robert Wagner      | GBNRTC                                   |
| 3. Timothy Trabold    | GBNRTC                                   |
| 4. Joe Buffamonte     | NYSDOT                                   |
| 5. Christopher Church | NYSDOT                                   |
| 6. Peter Nixon        | NYSDOT                                   |
| 7. Gary Witulski      | Buffalo OSP                              |
| 8. Charles Sickler    | County of Erie                           |
| 9. Jim Seymour        | Empire State Dev./USA Niagara            |
| 10. Michael Leydecker | Buffalo Niagara Partnership              |
| 11. Nick Jerge        | Buffalo Niagara Partnership              |
| 12. Joel Guy          | Town of Amherst                          |
| 13. Brian Moore       | Bergmann Associates                      |
| 14. Frank Dolan       | Bergmann Associates                      |
| 15. Jonathan McNulty  | Senator Mary Lou Rath                    |
| 16. Thomas Frank      | Greenway Transportation Heritage Project |
| 17. Cristen Manning   | The Knoer Group                          |
| 18. Sheila Ransbottom | Fisher Assoc.                            |
| 19. Edward Stachura   | FAIR Executive Committee                 |
| 20. John Mecca        | ECHDC                                    |
| 21. James Jones       | Town of Tonawanda                        |
| 22. Gregg Merlihan    | Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.                  |
| 23. Robert Labenski   | Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.                  |

## **I. PROCEEDINGS**

### **A. Roll Call**

Mr. O'Brien called the meeting to order at approximately 9:35 a.m. At the time of roll call, five members or their representatives were present. The County of Erie, and City of Buffalo representatives arrived shortly thereafter.

### **B. Public Participation**

Mr. Frank gave a presentation on "State Parks and Green Ridership Shopping." He noted that he attended several meetings on re-licensing of the Niagara Power Project and the greenway settlement funds. The Greenway Plan has been finalized and the Village of Williamsville is preparing an application. He made note of some of the infrastructure problems in the Village. Mr. Frank added that he is preparing a package to present to Congress on a proposed National Greenway Transportation Heritage Corridor.

### **C. Approval of Meeting Agenda (10/3/07)**

*Mr. Gottlieb moved to approve the meeting agenda, seconded by Mr. Curtis, and all were in favor.*

### **D. Approval of GBNRTC-PCC Meeting Minutes (9/5/07)**

*Mr. Curtis moved to approve the meeting minutes of 9/5/07, seconded by Mr. Latko, and all were in favor.*

## **II. ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. TIP 2008-2012 Amendments**

*TIP Minor Amendment #1:* Mr. Trabold reported that TPS was recommending an action to increase the cost of the Evans Multi-Use Pathway project by \$0.442M and the Sherwood-Two Mile Creek Gateway project by \$0.271M. The federal share of these cost increases would be financed with existing CMAQ funds made available by delaying the FFY 2012 scheduled letting of the Seneca Creek Pathway project. That action would make available \$1.44M of CMAQ funding available for reallocation to the above projects and maintain the fiscal constraint of the 2008-2012 TIP. He noted both project increases would be contingent upon successful demonstration of project eligibility for CMAQ funding and the availability of the local match.

Mr. Trabold explained that a smaller CMAQ cost increase was approved at the last TPS meeting for the Town of Grand Island Bike Trail since it was within the subcommittee cost change thresholds. The project has also been let in July so the cost increase was based on an actual figure.

Mr. Gottlieb commented that the Transportation Enhancement guidelines make it clear that when you apply for a TEP funding and receive it, the sponsors are responsible for any increase in cost.

*Mr. Gower moved to approve TIP Minor Amendment #1, seconded by Mr. Loffredo: 6 Ayes, 1 Nay (NYS DOT). Approved.*

*TIP Minor Amendment #2: Wehrle Drive: Ellicott Creek-Transit* – Mr. Trabold stated that Erie County was about to enter into court settlements of the final ROW acquisitions on this project and a reserve amount of ROW funding was requested to settle any unanticipated decisions or relief dictated by the courts. While the reserve was not anticipated to be used, failure to settle immediately would

delay the project. The requested action would reallocate funds within the project to create a \$1M reserve within the ROW Acquisition phase. The net change to the project and program would be zero.

Mr. Sickler added that this is the necessary step to get to the next level and that there are adequate funds within the budget to obtain the ROW so construction can proceed before the year is out.

***Mr. Loffredo moved to approve TIP Minor Amendment #2, seconded by Mr. Gower, and all were in favor.***

*Major Amendment #1* – Mr. Trabold stated this amendment would add three new NYSDOT projects totaling approximately \$2.02 million of federal funds to the approved 2008-2012 TIP. Fiscal constraint could be maintained since the new projects would be primarily financed with de-obligated NHS funds realized from the low bid on the Route 5, Main St., Phase 2 project. Authorization was being requested to begin a 30-day public review period and place a public notice in the local newspapers. If no adverse public comments were received, a resolution will be presented at the next PCC meeting recommending this amendment to the Policy Committee.

***Mr. Gottlieb moved to authorize the 30-day public review of Major Amendment #1, seconded by Mr. Gower, and all were in favor.***

#### **B. Property Disposition Review: NFTA Parcel on Ensminger Road**

Mr. Morse stated that per established procedures, NFTA is submitting a proposed parcel disposition for review regarding any planned TIP projects or LRP issues. The parcel is approximately .347 acres at 215 Ensminger Rd. in Tonawanda. Screening by staff indicates no plans or federally funded TIP projects would be impacted by disposition. Review by TPS recommended that PCC respond to NFTA with no concerns.

***Mr. Gower moved to approve the disposition review, seconded by Mr. Curtis, and all were in favor.***

#### **C. UPWP 2006-2008 Amendment: Resolution 2007-13 – scope increases for SPR funded activities in Freight Study and Scajaquada Corridor**

Mr. Morse stated that NYSDOT has recently made available additional State Planning and Research funds for supplement to several ongoing planning activities in the MPO. These must be reflected in the current UPWP. Resolution 2007-13 amends the UPWP to include these new funds and work scopes. The work items and costs are described in an attachment to the resolution, along with fund resource tables. If PCC recommends approval by Policy Committee, a signed resolution will be emailed to each agency, along with an electronic ballot indicating Policy members vote.

***Mr. Gottlieb moved to recommend Resolution 2007-13 for approval to the Policy Committee, seconded by Mr. Gareis, and all were in favor.***

### **III. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **A. Subcommittee Reports**

Transportation Projects Subcommittee – Mr. Sickler reported the TPS met on September 19<sup>th</sup>. The subcommittee welcomed Melissa Golen, the replacement for John Mecca who retired. The subcommittee discussed and acted upon several of the items already brought before the PCC today including the three trailway project cost increases, the new NYSDOT project additions and the NFTA property disposition notice. The next TPS meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, October 17, 2007 at 9 a.m. in the GBNRTC offices.

Administrative Subcommittee – Mr. Morse reported that the subcommittee met after the last PCC meeting. Some of the items discussed included:

- Gathering information for the next two-year Work Program, reviewing budget and spending in detail, including projections.
- No real federal funding number are available post SAFETEA-LU, will re-visit in 2009 but the agency budget appears stable for the next two years.
- Intend to proceed with budget development assuming existing staffing levels.
- Reviewed work status and possible carryover scopes.
- Will meet again within the next month or two to review draft budget and program scopes.

**B. University at Buffalo Master Plan Initiative and Longer Term GBNRTC Interface**

UB presented an overview of the comprehensive Master Plan 2020 initiative at the August meeting, and also requested an opportunity to engage the GBNRTC process. This was referred to the Administrative Subcommittee. All possible levels of involvement were offered that are currently in our Governance Framework. A copy of the “Suggested GBNRTC – SUNYAB Interface” was distributed, which includes issues, recommendation and follow-up notes from UB. It was suggested that an Advisory Group be established. PCC unanimously agreed that this approach be offered to UB.

**C. Possible Multi-Year Project Development Request – NYS Legislative Initiative**

Mr. Morse distributed copies of an MTA Congestion Pricing Proposal that New York City is interested in and a summary of the Laws of New York – 2007, Chapter 384. State legislation relative to the NYC congestion pricing initiative also requires that the Commissioner of Transportation submit, by 3/31/08, to the Governor and State Legislature a five-year capital program for state and local highway and bridge, rail and port, aviation and non-MTA transit through March 31, 2014. Plan must include system wide goals and objectives for capital spending, capital funding by year, and estimate of sources of capital funding, and selection criteria. Mr. Morse added that this could evolve into a specific state/local project list.

**D. New Studies Startup Status: I-290; Regional Signal Systems; Robert Moses Parkway**

Mr. Morse stated that the following studies are in the startup phase:

I-290: new counts on 290, Kensington, Scajaquada, etc. being collected to verify model post tolls. Still expecting near-term start with demographics, etc.

Signal Systems: Desire to integrate all other studies and upcoming capital projects; one remaining is NYSERDA study. Draft results expected in the next few weeks. RFP draft to incorporate and proceed.

Scajaquada Corridor: Remaining issues regarding design study appear resolved among Cambridge, Bergmann, NYSDOT and GBNRC staff. NFTA approved contract modification for Cambridge, need NYSDOT release of SPR funds.

A draft traffic scope is being prepared on the Robert Moses Parkway study. Project consists of studying reconfiguration of the Parkway north to Route 104. Mr. Curtis requested that he be informed of any informational data on this project. Mr. Gottlieb added that a meeting will be set up with the City, NYSDOT and the consultant for State Parks.

**E. TRANSIMS Deployment in Niagara Frontier – Work as of September**

Mr. Morse stated that the FHWA sponsored TRANSIMS deployment uses our basic TRANSCAD model. It primarily focuses on truck movements, but includes all traffic including

Buffalo-Niagara Regional and Canadian border systems. Copies of "Buffalo-Niagara Deployment Project Status through September 30, 2007" were distributed as a result of a recent meeting and discussed.

**F. UPWP Development: Projected work completion, base scopes and request for new**

Mr. Morse distributed copies of "GBNRTC Work Program Status" which included the work items (Long and Short Range Planning, Project Level Studies TIP, Comprehensive Planning and Other Activities), and its status in the current UPWP and the projected status in the next UPWP. New planning initiatives or studies by GBNRTC members were requested.

**G. Long Range Plan: Projects of Regional Significance Development Process**

Mr. Morse distributed a revised list of Regional Priority Transportation Projects, which noted sponsors, description, schedule, and estimated cost. Possible projects, interfaces, and issues were discussed.

**IV. STATUS REPORTS/INFORMATION**

**A. Member Agency Reports**

Mr. Curtis reported that envelopes have been opened for the Lockport Bridge. The apparent low bidder is 3% below the engineering estimate.

Mr. Gower reported that bids have been opened for the construction of the new terminal at the Niagara Falls Airport. No results as of yet.

Mr. Gottlieb reported that construction plans are out for the Southtowns Connector Phase I, Fuhrmann Blvd., and the Buffalo Outer Harbor. Bids are expected to be opened on December 14<sup>th</sup>. A public hearing will be held on the Peace Bridge on October 11<sup>th</sup> in Buffalo and October 12<sup>th</sup> in Fort Erie.

Mr. O'Brien reported that due to a couple of fatalities on Niagara Falls Blvd. last month, the Niagara County Legislature approved a resolution to the State to move up the Route 62 construction project on the TIP and reduce speed limits and add signals on certain intersections. A public meeting will be held on October 4<sup>th</sup> on this project.

**B. Director's Report**

Mr. Morse reported on the following:

- Participated in the Regional Blueprint that ESDC was sponsoring. Focused on the next state budget and regional needs, i.e. infrastructure, innovation, intellectual capital, international investment.
- BNP: Development of transportation priorities for Regional Agenda, working to flow form LRP and TIP
- "Good Going" program is continuously evolving; working with NFTA's marketing department.
- Presented at the Environmental Summit on September 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Local projects meeting will be held next week. Will compile success rate for the last fiscal year.
- Self-Certification completed in letter from NYSDOT to FHWA/FTA.
- A letter was sent from NYSDOT to FHWA requesting that UPWP work through March 31 be accepted as complete, with satisfactory performance demonstrated.

- Attended RPPM/MPO directors meeting last week. Discussed challenges in the state budget and last cycle of STIP.
- Current STIP still not in place.

**Mr. O'Brien noted that the next meeting is scheduled for November 7, 2007 at Erie County Public Works Department.**

*Mr. Gottlieb made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 a.m., seconded by Mr. Gareis, and all were in favor.*