

Route 9D Corridor Management Plan
Technical Working Group Meeting #1

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: December 15, 2005
Time: 6:10 – 7:30 PM
Location: Garrison Union Free School
Attendees: Anne Nichter, Business Owner William Gorton, NYSDOT
David Lilburne, Emergency Services Gretchen Teal, NYSDOT
Sarah Geer, Steering Committee Chair Sandra Jobson, NYSDOT
Anita Prentice, School Board President

Meeting Summary:

I. Opening Comments and Introductions

Sarah Geer, Steering Committee Chair, circulated a copy of the revised draft Route 9D Corridor Management Plan “Vision Statement” for group review and continued refinement.

II. Review of Corridor Roadway Data

Sandra Jobson, NYSDOT, reviewed the Traffic Volume Summary, the Vehicle Accident History Summary, and Truck Origin/Destination Study Summary, and the Vehicle Speed Summary for the Route 9D Corridor.

Traffic Volume Summary

A 10-year history of traffic volumes was reviewed by the group. Traffic volumes for other regional north/south corridors were also reviewed. A vehicle count by vehicle type study conducted in May of 2005 was shared with the group. On average, 29 multi-trailer (18-wheeler) trucks use the Route 9D study area corridor a day, with an average of 4 trucks between the hours of 7:00pm and 6:00am.

Vehicle Accident History Summary

Over the three-year period from June 1, 1999 through May 31, 2002 90 accidents were reported. Accidents involving trucks accounted for 5% of the total accidents in the corridor and 3% of the personal injuries.

Truck Origin Destination Study Summary

The Truck Origin/Destination Study took place over a two day period (Tuesday, June 7, 2005 and Wednesday, June 8, 2005) from 9:00am to 3:00pm each day. On both days, four 18-wheeler trucks were survey heading north on the Route 9D corridor from the Bear Mountain Bridge.

Sarah Geer, Steering Committee Chair, pointed out that it seems that more trucks travel the corridor between the hours of 4:00am and 8:00am. The noise of these trucks during this window of time is a significant issue to the residents along the corridor.

Sarah Geer asked if statistics were available that identified the number of trucks traveling along the corridor 5 years ago and can NYSDOT predict whether or not the number of trucks driving through the corridor will increase over the next 15 years? Sarah Geer, Steering Committee Chair, also requested information on the existence of other Scenic Byways across the state with the same narrow roadway configuration and with so

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many important resources along the roadway. It was her feeling that they do not exist and that Route 9D is extremely unique, and based on that, NYSDOT should be able to restrict through trucks. NYSDOT will review other Scenic Byways across the state for comparison purposes, including truck volumes.

Vehicle Speed Study Summary

The vehicle speed study was performed on Wednesday, December 7, 2005. The posted speed limit along the Route 9D study area corridor is 40mph. The average speed recorded along the corridor was 48mph. The highest speed recorded was 78mph. 65 percent of the vehicles were exceeding the 40mph speed limit by at least 5mph.

Even though the posted speed limit was lowered in the summer of 2005, it seems as though there has been no significant change in the traveling speed of the vehicles. It's speculated that the drivers are aware that there is no enforcement of the posted speed limit, and therefore, they drive the speed at which they feel the most comfortable. It was identified that it is difficult for the police to safely pull over a car or a truck because there are no shoulders along the corridor.

The Technical Working Group requested that the information presented be e-mailed to Steering Committee members.

The group expressed concern about the accuracy of the numbers of through trucks reported in the statistics. The group asked what the point of current or historical numbers is, if what concerns us is the trend for the future. Ms. Nichter, Business Owner, commented that the increase in through truck traffic over the past three years has been exponential. For example, the Truck Origin/Destination survey found that of the 6 trucks traveling through the corridor between the hours of 9:00AM and 3:00PM on both days of the survey (3 each day), only one reported using the same route for their return trip. This point was considered absurd by Anne Nichter, Business Owner, and Sarah Geer, Steering Committee Chair, as they have reported watching pairs of trucks operated by Kennedy Trucking return south on Route 9D 1 ½ hours later empty; same driver and same truck. The group felt that the time frame in which the NYSDOT Truck Origin/Destination survey was conducted (9:00AM to 3:00PM) was inadequate because it excluded the early AM rush hour trucking. NYSDOT will investigate supplementing the Truck Origin/Destination survey to include the early AM rush hour trucking activity.

The group also thought it was nice to have statistics, but the point was made that if we're waiting for a tragic, 18 wheeler accident to 'make our case', we will have lost the trust of the community here. The group shared the recent experience of a Kennedy truck making a wrong turn on Route 403 and ending up stuck (fully loaded) on the Garrison Landing for almost 2 hours while swarms of commuters were in the early AM commute mode. The group also made the point that if there is no place to safely stop trucks of this size and no place for them to turn around along Route 9D, isn't that a legitimate reason to limit their access? Bill Gorton, NYSDOT, did explain to the group that the size of the road (one lane in each direction with limited shoulders) represented a large portion of state highways across the state that carry the same amount of truck traffic daily and in some cases more, especially in the upstate region.

Bill Gorton, NYSDOT, and Sandra Jobson, NYSDOT, agreed with the group on how dangerous it is for the police to stop cars and trucks to enforce the speed limit due to inadequate space to pull them over. A few years ago, a state trooper was killed along I-684 while out of his patrol car giving a ticket to a motorist. The group agreed with the inadequate pull over space throughout the corridor. The group also expressed that

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without the room to pull vehicles over to enforce the speed limit and with the lack of speed limit enforcement personnel, it creates a lethal combination in a residential area with a school.

III. Review of Truck Restriction Legal Issues

Sandra Jobson gave a review of the Federal and State legal codes and laws involving truck restrictions. A common denominator among all the laws is that truck restrictions must be based on safety issues and engineering principals.

If through trucks were prohibited along the corridor, how would the commercial trucks know about the restriction, or that the corridor is a scenic road and that large trucks “don’t fit”?

In addition, the issue was brought up that it would be difficult for the police to know who is in violation (i.e., through trucks) and who is not (i.e., local delivery trucks).

The option was brought to the table that the Route 9D corridor could be changed into a County Road or a Town Road, thereby allowing more flexibility in restricting through trucks. The group requested NYSDOT members to investigate how to make the legal structures work in favor of restricting truck traffic rather than justify doing nothing about the trucks.

The Technical Working Group requested that the information presented be e-mailed to Steering Committee members.

IV. Inventory of Existing Conditions

Sandra Jobson passed out a Resource Inventory Worksheet. The purpose of the Resource Inventory is to assist the Technical Working Group in gathering and recording the existing conditions information for the corridor. An example of a final list of resources and maps taken from the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway was circulated for informational purposes.

David Lilburne mentioned that the Lion’s Club in Cold Spring conducts a Spring Cleanup for Earth Day in April. Though they usually focus on Route 301, he said they would be willing, along with the Chamber of Commerce, to include the Route 9D corridor as well. They could take advantage of this opportunity to take photos of resources identified along the corridor and finish up the Resource Inventory. Other organizations could be encouraged to participate.

V. Identify Intrinsic Qualities of Corridor

Sandra Jobson, NYSDOT, passed out an Intrinsic Quality Summary Worksheet. After the Resource Inventory (existing conditions) is completed, those identified can be organized into six intrinsic categories: Archaeological, Cultural, Historic, Natural, Recreational, and Scenic. From the Intrinsic Quality Summary, stories and themes may result based on the organization of the Resource Inventory.

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VI. Plan for January's Public Workshop I

The first Public Workshop was scheduled for Tuesday, January 24, 2006, with a snow date of Wednesday, January 25, 2006, to be held in the Garrison Union Free School gymnasium.

This workshop will focus on brainstorming "Wishes and Worries" of the participants for the corridor, and, from this, prioritizing and formulating comprehensive goals and objectives.

On Thursday, January 12, 2006, the Technical Working Group will meet in order to prepare for Public Workshop I.

The Technical Working Group members can work on creating a logo for the Route 9D Corridor Management Plan (CMP) Study. Sandra Jobson, NYSDOT, passed out a sheet with samples of logos for other scenic byways across the state. The group was encouraged to develop a logo for the corridor that would help start to build an identity for the study.

Sarah Geer suggested that all the signs along the road be consolidated as much as possible. This could be one of the goals in the CMP.