

ROUTE 18
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

**COMMUNITY
PARTNERING TEAM**

CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

**COMMUNITY PARTNERING TEAM
CORRIDOR AESTHETICS TASK FORCE
MEETING NO. 1 REPORT**
December 22, 2000

DATE: December 6, 2000
TIME: 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
LOCATION: Conference Room, Middlesex County Planning Dept.,
Elks Building, City of New Brunswick, NJ

1. PURPOSE OF MEETING

To define the scope of aesthetic opportunities/enhancements for inclusion in the Route 18 Section 2F, 7E & 11H project. (Agenda attached)

2. MEETING SUMMARY

Paul Nowicki opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. He reviewed the agenda and asked for input on the goals and objectives for this Task Force. Mike Morgan listed the community issues on newsprint as follows:

- The concept of Route 18 as the “gateway” into the City of New Brunswick is important
- Retain the historic character
- Sensitivity to residential areas - mitigate the feeling of “forced out or boxed in” neighborhoods behind walls
- Take care in the choice of materials given the large number of walls and overpasses that will be visible
- Where possible select materials to enhance the area such as vegetation and berms
- Consider maintenance needed for the features
- Concern for pedestrians walking through berm areas – use attractive ‘non-friendly’ plantings to discourage pedestrians from walking through berm areas
- Discourage vandalism – certain textures are less prone to graffiti (brown&roots: heavily fluted and can grow vines)

Paul then asked the task force to identify areas for aesthetic opportunities that they feel are important. Mike noted items on newsprint regarding the following features:

- Noise and retaining walls
- Pedestrian overpasses (two solo and three as part of interchange ramps)



- Bridges at the interchanges
- Medians and guiderails (barriers must be smooth, but can be colored with veneer)
- Sidewalks and multi-use paths
- Fencing
- Railings
- Curbing
- Lighting (style with/without banners)
- Open areas
- Mini park areas
- School bus stops / NJTRANSIT and Rutgers bus stops
- Streetscape elements: benches, trash cans, kiosks, info signs
- Signage

During the discussion on features the following questions were raised:

Q – What is the grade like along Route 18?

A – There are changes in elevation from George Street the roadway is up 12 feet at boathouse road and 20 feet at commercial Avenue. A model is to be created to visualize the roadway.

Q- How much money is budgeted for these enhancements?

A- It is necessary to first determine the purpose and need for each feature and then examine the costs versus benefits of each enhancement to justify the features to be implemented.

Q – Are there any detention ponds needed?

A – No detention/retention ponds are needed, but the roadway runoff and drainage will be addressed.

Q – Does the multi-path require curbing?

A – That is a design feature which needs to be examined. For example ballads may be used to define the path from the roadway rather than a curb depending on the purpose and aesthetic look desired.

Q – How much freedom is there in the design of signage?

A – Federal guidelines do not permit any lettering on noise walls and structures. However there may be special directional signs developed for the Agnew House and Boyd Park.

Q – If the streetscape elements include trash cans, who is responsible for pick up and maintenance?

A – The City would be responsible for trash pick.

Q – How much variation is there in the design of the NJTRANSIT bus shelters and how many will there be?

A – There is a bus stop at Paulus Boulevard and at Commercial Avenue. It needs to be determined if there will be a Rutgers stop at George Street. Regarding the design of the

shelters, they are standardized, however the CPT representative for NJ TRANSIT needs to be involved with this task force to determine what flexibility in design is possible.

Paul then asked the group to think about a possible theme for the corridor aesthetics such as historic, modern or classic. He mentioned the possible tie of the arches on the bridge over the river and nautical type enhancements. A theme for the overall corridor involves creating a cohesive tapestry so there is a town center feeling.

Martine encouraged the task force members to think about other roadway corridors, which they may like or dislike to provide the design team a sense of the theme to apply. For example, the overpasses at Penn's Landing in Philadelphia or the Admiral Wilson Boulevard in the City of Camden have specific design features.

Dave Byers suggested looking at pictures of some of the roadway features recently completed in New Jersey and illustrated, such as the noise walls on Route 295 or the Route 35 Cooper's Bridge in Monmouth County. Paul noted that Gannett Fleming could provide additional images. He presented a display board illustrating a pedestrian overpass concept at Paulus Boulevard showing what it looks like with a noise wall on one side of the roadway and a vegetation berm on the other side. In addition, Mike passed around a book containing photos of noise and retaining walls completed on other projects.

It was suggested that the theme for New Brunswick be of a classic, colonial "red brick" style consistent with the region. Such a style is not likely to become "out of date" and out of favor in the future as some more modern designs could. A member mentioned the old Johnson and Johnson building or some of the Rutgers buildings. A comment was made that this is an opportunity to bring a special look to New Brunswick. It may be possible to add visual enhancements to the noise walls or pedestrian overpass at Paulus Boulevard as the "gateway" to New Brunswick. The project team did remind the task force that the standard green directional signs would be placed at certain positions and those must meet the standard requirements.

Paul then reviewed the areas on the map, which are presently identified as open space areas. It was suggested that the one near Paulus Boulevard should provide parking spaces for Raritan Gardens, which currently lacks adequate parking for residents. For the area near the Carpenter Road cul-de-sac, it was recommended to remain just landscaped. For the Newell Avenue/Phelps Avenue area with the berm design, it was recommended to use attractive plantings, however select those that discourage walking through and that a railing or fence may be affective to prevent cutting the corner of the streets. Sidewalks are also needed in that area.

A question was raised as to whether the material for the walls could improve the acoustic noise reflection. Ed Tomaszewski, the noise specialist for NJDOT, responded that certain materials are more effective than others, but the final material to be used is subject to community support.

To summarize, Paul noted the following items for the next task force meeting: noise contour maps, additional input on possible theme for the corridor, and examples of possible features for the corridor. Martine encouraged the task force members look on the web, cut out magazine images, or think about other areas of the country where there is design they like or don't like so the project design team can understand the aesthetic look the task force would like to pursue. To close, the task force agreed to meet in early January prior to next CPT meeting scheduled for late January.

3. ACTION ITEMS

- Task Forces Members to consider possible theme for the corridor, identify any design features they favor and to provide comments to Gannett Fleming so they can incorporate possible renderings for the next meeting.
- NJDOT and Gannett Fleming will obtain further rendering and design concepts for the next task force meeting.
- Mike Morgan will provide and distribute task force meeting report via email and Linda and Glenn will confirm next meeting date and place with Gannett Fleming and other task force members.

4. NEXT MEETING

Date: Tuesday, January 9, 2001
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
Location: Conference Room, Middlesex County Planning Dept.,
Elks Building, City of New Brunswick, NJ

5. LIST OF ATTENDEES

Attendees:

Anna Ashkenes
Jim Campbell
Linda Hunter
Paul Morrisett
Glenn Patterson
Todd Smircina

Representing:

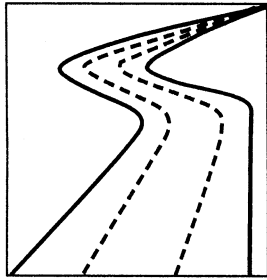
Middlesex County Cultural Heritage
City of New Brunswick, Parks
University Mews
Newell Avenue Neighborhood
City of New Brunswick, Planning
Carpender Road Neighborhood

Paul Nowicki
Mike Morgan
Martine Culbertson
Youssef Ben-Khayat
Jay Pandya
Ed Tomaszewski
Dave Byers
Cindy Bloom-Cronin

Gannett Fleming, Inc.
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
M. A. Culbertson, LLC
NJDOT, Div. of Project Mgmt.
NJDOT, Environmental Services
NJDOT, Noise
NJDOT, Landscaping
NJDOT, Landscaping

Report prepared by :

Martine Culbertson, CPT Facilitator



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**CORRIDOR AESTHETICS TASK FORCE
MEETING NO. 1
AGENDA
December 6, 2000**

Objective: To define the scope of aesthetic opportunities/enhancements for inclusion in the Route 18 Section 2F, 7E & 11H project.

I. Welcome and Introductions

- Agenda Review
- Meeting Goals

II. Corridor Aesthetic Enhancements

- Community Issues - Prioritize
- Areas for Aesthetic Opportunities
- Develop Route 18 Theme – “Gateway Concept”

III. Summary and Close

- Action Items
- Feedback / Next Meeting

