

**NYSMPO Meeting Summary – February 27, 2004**  
**State Office Building**  
**Binghamton, NY**

**Present:**

**Steve Gayle, BMTS**

**Harry Miller, HOCTS**

**Kealy Salomon, PDCTC**

**Bill Tobin, UCTC**

**John McNeill, NYSDOT**

**Aaron Frankenfeld, A/GFTC**

**Larry McAuliffe, NYMTC**

**Sarah Siwek, SJS & Associates**

**Mary Rowlands, SMTC**

**Robert Griffith, FHWA**

**John Poorman, CDTC**

**Kate Schmidt, NOCTC**

**Doug Struckle, GBNRTC**

**Fernando D'Aragon, ICTC**

**Jon Makler, SJS & Associates**

- 1) **Meeting Summary for December 5, 2003** – The meeting summary was approved without comment.
  
- 2) **Update on Reauthorization of TEA-21/AMPO** – Steve Gayle reported that Alex Taft retired as Executive Director of AMPO and is being replaced by Delania Hardy who has served as deputy for the past few years. A send-off party was held at TRB in Washington, D.C. in January. Membership is growing (approximately 180 members now) in part due to a recent batch of “defections” from NARC. AMPO is planning a board retreat this June to focus on relationships between executive directors and their boards. Regarding TEA-21 reauthorization, Steve reported good communication with Amy Chang who is on Representative Boehlert’s staff. The Senate has passed a \$318 billion bill to the chagrin of the Bush administration that had proposed \$256B. House subcommittee markup is expected in the week of March 1 and in full committee the following week. AMPO is continuing to protect the P.L. set aside increase to 1.5% currently included in the language. Some organizations have been opposed to MPO’s getting a “double bump” (1.5% and larger base on which it is calculated). It was noted that a consensus seems to have formed around a 4-year planning cycle. The AMPO Policy Conference was scheduled for March 9-11.
  
- 3) **UPWP Development** – Sarah summarized the funding details in the UPWP chart included with the agenda. Carry-over funds are being used to fund NYSMPO staff (\$120K) and the following ongoing initiatives: travel behavior study (\$100K), statewide data initiative phase two (\$100K), transportation & community design (\$100K); Developing ITS Integration (\$150K); and the following new initiatives: CMS research (\$80K), staff training (\$100K); and intercity corridors (\$100K). There was some discussion about the line item for training and it was agreed that the title should be general (as it is here) rather than divided into the two anticipated areas of focus (geodata and travel demand). ***Attached to this summary is the revised UPWP chart that consolidates the staff training into one line item and updates the available balance column.***

**4) NYSMPO Website Updating** – The discussion focused on what to include and how to keep the website maintained. It was agreed that the contact lists would be updated immediately and that regular updates would be performed in conjunction with NYSMPO meetings. The next topic was what documents should be kept on the website and which could be identified with links. Under the latter category, it was agreed that the site would link to planning documents on each of the MPO’s individual web sites. Links will also be provided to valuable sources of information, such as NHI/NTI courses. The only documents that will be provided directly on the NYSMPO web site will be the group’s products, such as SCI project outputs (reports, e.g.). Finally, the group discussed what role the site can play relative to current issues such as reauthorization. Recognizing that the website can’t be updated in real time, the group felt it should not be used as a news source. The site can include links to resources on reauthorization (or another hot topic) and any documents (such as a NYSMPO statement or press release, as appropriate) that have a sufficient shelf life. Work will commence on updating the site, adding a reauthorization section, making the site more user friendly, adding job opportunities with expiration dates, checking out the Florida MPO site, and adding as many useful links as possible.

**5) What’s New Roundtable Discussion** –

- a. FHWA-HQ Scenario Planning Initiative. Rob Griffin presented information about this new initiative coming out of FHWA headquarters. He provided a fact sheet about scenario planning and discussed the division office’s availability to provide training or workshops on the subject. Headquarters has developed case studies for regional use. The group expressed some skepticism about how scenario planning can be carried out in light of institutional and other policy constraints (i.e. the transportation conformity process). Concern was also expressed about FHWA emphasizing multiple initiatives (safety, scenarios, performance-based) that are sometimes incompatible but may not be coordinated internally.
- b. NYSDOT Finance Commission. This was an information item brought about by a press release. A NYSDOT official, Brian Pitimo, is in the process of doing outreach to MPOs about funding problems around the state. The MPOs will work to be included in the statewide study and find out how NYSDOT plans to reach out to MPOs as part of that effort.
- c. TIP-STIP Cycle. Several members of the group discussed the status of the TIP processes relevant to the 6/1/04 deadline by which TIPs must be submitted to the state in order for the STIP to be developed by 10/1. Financial constraint persists as the dominant issue; MPOs are receiving the message that state funds are being replaced by federal funds.

- d. Pan-American Conference. This conference is being hosted in the Albany area and for is the first time the conference is being held in North America. The conference is September 26-29 and session proposals are due 2/29, making it essentially impossible for NYSMPO to be engaged in that aspect. The steering committee is interested in NYSMPO endorsement of, involvement in, and particularly sponsorship of the conference. Steve Gayle talked about the prospect of ITE participation and how NYSMPO could possibly work with the State chapter of ITE on any involvement. The group decided to wait and see how the agenda shapes up and what regional participation is before doing making a decision to participate. The discussion will continue at April meeting.

## 6) Shared Cost Initiatives

- a. Statewide Data Initiative. The NYSDOT roll-out of the highway data store has been delayed. Jon has drafted a letter for Steve Gayle to send to NYSDOT expressing the group's enthusiasm for a secure internet connection to the data store when it becomes available. On a parallel track, the remainder of Wilbur Smith's contract from phase I will be used to inventory the data archives established by each of the state's regional ITS architectures. The task will produce a technical memo on how these archives relate to possible strategies for incorporating operational data into planning processes.
- b. Travel Behavior Study. Sarah mentioned that this project needs to proceed in order to the partnering with FHWA occurs and that the funds must be obligated this Federal fiscal year. Sarah and Don will work with John Poorman to set forth a game plan for initiating this project.
- c. Transportation and Community Design. The project is moving along slowly, and contract issues have been resolved.
- d. GIS Training. Kealy distributed a list of upcoming trainings, including the dates and locations (below). This was followed by a discussion of TRANSCAD training that is being made available to MPOs that have bought the software. That training is to be held in Syracuse May 24-28 and is open to MPO staffs. Sarah will develop a memo on NHI/NTI course offerings, especially for the travel demand training idea. She will also look into training on estimating Greenhouse Gas emissions.

### Upcoming GIS Trainings

- Intro to Arc 8: 5/12-14 in Syracuse
- Intro to Arc 8 II: 6/16-18 in Syracuse
- Cartographic Design in Arc 8: 8/4-5 in Albany
- Intro to Arc Objects with VBA: 10/4-8 in Syracuse
- Arc Objects with VB/VBA: 11/17-19 in Albany

e. ITS Study. John Poorman reported no news on this topic.

f. New Projects

- Syracuse will host CMS research; CDTC will continue hosting the community design project; PDTC would host the geodata training (and travel demand or other training if they are grouped); BMTS will continue hosting the statewide data initiative.

7) **NYMTC GHG Analysis** – Larry McAuliffe briefed the group on a project that was conducted by a summer intern who has returned to graduate school at Yale in industrial management. The analysis produced an inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG), indicating that transportation is the largest sectoral source with about a third of emissions and would be larger were it not for abundant walking and transit in New York City. The three key variables are VMT, fuel efficiency, and the carbon content of fuel. Because of life-cycle accounting, it is important to note that alternative fuels such as compressed natural gas and electricity are not better in terms of GHG because the emissions simply occur upstream. This may benefit local and regional pollutants, but not carbon dioxide. The report identified important control measures that the region has begun to implement, ranging from HOV lanes to Hybrid-Electric fleet conversions. Larry identified school buses as a key opportunity area for Hybrid Electric expansion. A report has not yet been published but Larry will distribute summary to the group.

8) **Open Discussion** –

- a. Steve Gayle mentioned a consultant who has developed an economic model based on outputs of the travel demand model. There was considerable doubt about compounding the travel demand forecast's error and the fact that the travel forecasts are based on an economic projection in the first place.
- b. Fernando raised the issue of performing Functional Class updates. One part of the discussion hinged on the substance of reviewing classifications. The central issue, however, was comprehending the delays occurring in the process, which are apparently attributable to NYSDOT's portion of the review process and not FHWA. It was noted that MPOs can program funds contingent on NYSDOT and then FHWA approvals of new functional class updates.
- c. Sarah raised the issue of nonattainment designations. Syracuse is headed toward a designation despite an appeal to be designated "unclassifiable" due to data problems. DEC had requested a non-classifiable designation for Rochester but EPA may make a nonattainment designation.

- d. FHWA Planning Awards- Sarah reported that Steve Gayle was nominated for an award by the MPOs for his leadership in planning at the state and federal level.

**9) Upcoming Meetings and Locations** – The group agreed to the following meeting dates and locations for the balance of the year.

- **April 2 in Utica**
- **June 11 in Syracuse**
- **August 6 in Binghamton**
- **October 8 in Utica (THIS IS ONLY TENTATIVE DEPENDING ON WHETHER THE MPOS PARTICIPATE IN THE PAN-AMERICA CONFERENCE).**
- **December 3 in Albany**