

**NYS Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations
Meeting Summary
April 4, 2003**

Attendees:

John Poorman, Capital District Transportation Committee
Steve Gayle, Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Council
Jay Schissell, Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council
Mary Rowlands, Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council
Fernando de Aragon, Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council
Hal Morse, Greater Buffalo-Niagara Frontier Transportation Council
Larry McAuliffe, New York Metropolitan Transportation Council
Aaron Frankenfeld, Adirondack/Glens Falls Transportation Council
Erin Wrafter, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Marty Neveu, NYSDOT
Alicia Nolan, FHWA
Carolyn Bourdeaux, Sarah J. Siwek & Associates
Sarah J. Siwek, Sarah J. Siwek & Associates
Don Camph, Sarah J. Siwek & Associates

1) Welcome and Introductions

2) February 7, 2003 Meeting Summary

Hal Morse asked that the minutes be changed to reflect that he had said the three-year TIP was an “unacceptable” risk, not “acceptable.”

3) Update on the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) Activities

Steve Gayle handed out several AMPO policy documents and briefed members on the current status of the “T-3” reauthorization as well as current efforts by AMPO to reach out to Congressional staff. Key issues discussed included the timing of the reauthorization, the possibility of additional transportation funding, AMPO’s position on air quality conformity regulations, and other possible changes to TEA-21 programs in the next reauthorization. The “T-3” bill is currently still being reviewed by OMB.

Action: Sarah Siwek said that she would e-mail everyone with the Administration’s draft T-3 proposal.

4) Update on Meeting with Senator Clinton’s Office

John Poorman reported on his meeting with Ken MacIntosh, one of Senator Clinton’s transportation aides. Mr. MacIntosh had worked for many years in the Cuomo Administration and appreciated learning about the MPOs.

5) FTA-MPP (Section 5303) FY 2003 Funding

Sarah Siwek said that she had the letter written for NYSDOT to request that \$17,900 in FTA funds be set aside for the next fiscal year. These funds are going to be allocated towards a fifth workshop on “Integrated Decision-Making Training.” John Poorman said that his staff had been very impressed with earlier workshops.

In this context there was also some brief discussion on NYSDOT letting the MPOs know their Planning Funds allocation. Marty Neveu said that NYSDOT was still waiting to receive final tables from FHWA. Jay Schissell asked that Marty put dates on the tables that she sent out so the MPOs would not confuse different drafts.

Action: Sarah Siwek will e-mail John Poorman the letter to send to Marty Neveu.

6) Report on Shared Cost Initiatives

a) Advanced Technology Data Needs Study

Steve Gayle handed out the final report. There was some discussion about following up on the report and looking for some way to finance a “meta-library” of various data sources, but no resolution was reached on this matter.

Action: Sarah Siwek said that she would send copies to those members not in attendance.

b) Travel Behavior Factors Update

This project had been on hold while the Eno Institute reorganized, and USDOT figured out their funding levels available. Now, Tom Downes has been named Executive Director of Eno, and Sarah Siwek said that she had told FHWA staff that the MPOs wanted to get this project moving this spring. There was some discussion about who should be invited to such a conference and Sarah Siwek, Don Camph and John Poorman agreed to work together to come up with a list of conferees. John Poorman particularly asked that they try to find people who would be “beyond the immediate circle” of usual attendees.

Action: Sarah Siwek, Don Camph and John Poorman will draft up a list of potential conferees for the conference.

c) Integrated Community Design Study

John Poorman and staff at CDTC are having a meeting next week with Peter Plummeau about the initial list of proposed case studies.

d) Long Term Funding Needs Update

The committee members discussed which MPOs had seen final numbers for this study and were o.k with the numbers in the report. The MPOs that could “green light” the numbers in the study included: A/GFTC, BMTTC, ECTC, GTC, PDTC. Of the other MPOs, John Poorman (CDTC) wanted additional conversations with the consultants about the numbers, as did the Directors at ITCTC, NYMTC, SMTC. GBNFTC was still reviewing the numbers and no one had heard from NOCTC.

Action: Sarah Siwek will call Arlee Reno and discuss further communication with the MPO Directors.

e) GIS Training

Erin Wrafter with PDTC discussed the MPO staff work on developing the GIS workshops. They planned on five classes in different regions; 2 classes in basic programming and several more advanced classes.

They will soon have a staff meeting to try to work out where the different workshops will be located.

9) Update on TEA-21 Works Coalition Activities

Larry McAuliffe reported on the meetings of the TEA-21 Works Coalition. He will attend the Coalition meetings in New York City and John Poorman was planning to attend the meetings in Albany. Highlights of the last meeting included: discussion of the Administration’s proposal; a report from staff that the U.S. House would be focusing on programs to improve congestion; an AASHTO briefing, again with an emphasis on trying to improve congestion; and an appeal from the Governor’s office (John Faso), that everyone in the State try to speak with one voice since there was likely to be a battle over state funding allocations. In a matter important to the MPOs, it appeared that the State would support a proposed increase in funding for MPOs (i.e., the increase to a 2% draw down for planning funds).

A website for the ISTEA Works coalition has been established: www.dot.state.ny.us/istea
Also John Faso is interested in comments on the reauthorization, and he can be reached at jfaso@manatt.com .

Sarah Siwek also said that she had sent MPO materials to Nancy Ross but had not heard back from her.

10) Meeting with NYSDOT on the Reorganization

Sarah Siwek noted that the meeting with State Transportation Commissioner, Joe Boardman, was scheduled for April 21st and would be at CDTC. The meeting topic would be limited to the NYSDOT efforts at “transformation” and would emphasize the MPO Directors’ desire for an improved cooperative relationship with NYSDOT. Among committee members there was some

discussion of the nature of the transformation effort and how the MPOs saw themselves working more closely with NYSDOT in the future. John Poorman asked that as many MPO Directors as possible show up for the meeting.

Action: Everyone should try to show up for the meeting on April 21st!!

11) Long Term Funding Needs Communication Strategy

Don Camph handed out key points of discussion on the Communications Strategy. The MPO Directors discussed how to best to educate local leaders and media about the MPO's role in transportation planning, as well as about the particular needs of New York State communities. This was also discussed in the context of not knowing when "T-3" would be taken up for reauthorization.

In general, the Directors agreed that the MPO's should try to produce some educational pieces that focused on big picture issues that would be useful at both the State and the federal level. They gave priority to developing a 4-6 page document that could serve as part of a briefing packet and could give New York State officials some talking points about transportation finance and policy in New York State.

John Poorman pointed out that transportation policy really needed to be explained in the broader context of State and local finance. For instance, in New York State, local governments shoulder a high burden for transportation funding – this means that funding for infrastructure competes with programs like Medicaid. In other states, transportation finance is more centralized at the state level.

Action: Don Camph will further develop the briefing materials for the MPOs.

12) Other issues

Alicia Nolan announced that she would be taking over as FHWA's "Northern Border Coordinator," though she would be still based in Albany.

Aaron Frankenfelt announced that he had been officially appointed Director of A/GFTC and was no longer just Acting Director.

13) Next Meeting Date/Place

The next meeting was set for June 6th in Rochester.