



APPENDIX F – TAC, STAKEHOLDER, MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING SUMMARIES



NJTPA Freight Rail Grade Crossing Assessment Study

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2007

10:30am

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
One Newark Center, 17th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102

Meeting Summary - September 17, 2007 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting No. 1

This was the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC members, NJTPA staff and consultant team introduced themselves. The consultant team then provided an overview of the project, followed by a discussion focused on expectations, issues and considerations for the project.

The key comments included:

- TAC members confirmed that the outreach/involvement aspects of the project are also an opportunity to educate counties, municipalities and others regarding grade crossings, particularly as these discussions are anticipated to occur after the team has assembled information on the crossings, along with possible solutions. It was pointed out that such information has not been available before. The outreach meetings are also an opportunity to inform communities about Operation Lifesaver programs.
- As a clarification, the “safety” aspect of the assessment relates solely to the grade crossing. The study will not include a review of the commodities being moved on specific rail lines or truck traffic beyond the grade crossing location. Road counts, when undertaken, will only be at the grade crossing.
- It was also noted that the team’s work does not replace the work that must be conducted by New Jersey Department of Transportation diagnostic teams in terms of determining specific equipment and/or changes at a grade crossing. The NJDOT Commissioner must sign off on any grade crossing work.
- It was confirmed that the assessment should consider potential increases or additions of New Jersey Transit service on particular lines. It was noted that if passenger service is added to a rail line, then the grade crossing controls should be upgraded to recognize the different speeds of freight and passenger trains.
- It was confirmed that the train traffic projections and grade crossing assessments should consider:
 - Potential new maritime container rail shuttle train service.
 - The proposed Norfolk Southern Crescent Corridor (the team will obtain additional information on this initiative).

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- The proposed CSX Corridor of the Future, which will reach up to Washington, DC along I-95 (the team will obtain additional information on this initiative).
 - Increased container movements through the Port.
 - The selection process for improving/modifying grade crossings should, as proposed in the study, consider a phasing of improvements over time.
 - The team should check with local police and fire departments to identify grade crossings with repeated malfunctions.
 - The assessment should consider both quantitative and qualitative factors.
 - A special forum should be held to enable special interest groups to provide their input to the study.

As next steps, the team will be:

- Undertaking field work, visiting all of the public grade crossings on the four subject rail lines. If the River Line is added to the study, then the team will complete the field work on that line before the next TAC meeting.
- Conducting extensive searches for literature, relevant studies and other information for the project.
- Populating the project's GIS database with the information obtained during the field work.
- Working with NJTPA to send the agencies and the RTAC (Through Kamal Saleh), a list of the requested information for the project.
- Working with NJTPA to send the Counties on the TAC copies of the aerials of the four rail lines.

The next meeting of the TAC will be in November, 2007 (specific date and time to be determined).

A list of the meeting attendees is attached.



NJTPA Region Freight Rail Crossing and Safety Assessment Study

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting No. 1

Meeting Sign-In Sheet
 Monday, September 17, 2007
 10:30am

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
 One Newark Center, 17th Floor
 Newark, NJ 07102

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NJTPA Freight Rail Grade Crossing Assessment Study

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 13, 2007

1:00pm

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
One Newark Center, 17th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102

Meeting Summary - November 13, 2007 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting No. 2.

This was the second meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC members, NJTPA staff and consultant team introduced themselves. The consultant team then provided a status report on the project, followed by a discussion of the field work completed to date and the draft selection considerations. NJTPA staff noted that the project has been modified to now include the River Line/Northern Branch/National Docks corridor. Field work on this corridor is anticipated to occur immediately.

The key comments included:

- NJDOT staff noted that:
 - Four locations in Hillsborough are slated to have wayside horns and other improvements (such as median barriers) on the Lehigh Line.
 - The Rahway Avenue crossing in Westfield, NJ is under consideration for becoming a quiet zone.
 - The Cedar Avenue crossing, which includes both the Lehigh Line and a New Jersey Transit line, will become “one unified crossing” of 4 tracks and that the nearby traffic signal will be preempted.
 - The Perryville crossing was just improved three months ago and that substantial improvements were made to this location.
- The selection considerations should be more detailed, including a specific consideration of projected rail traffic and expanded community concerns. For example, the proximity of schools should be included.
- It was suggested that “proximity to existing grade separations” be included as a consideration and that more points be awarded when a grade crossing is further away from a grade separated crossing.
- It was recommended that the study report include an educational preamble.

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- In a response to a question regarding how much of the train traffic is port-related, CSX noted that the River Line has 30 trains a day of which 4 serve the Port. The Trenton Line has 20 trains a day of which none serve the Port.

As next steps, the team will be:

- Undertaking inventory and field reconnaissance of the grade crossing along the River Line.
- Revising the selection criteria and circulating the revised matrix for further consideration and comment by the TAC.
- Populating the GIS database.
- Collecting rail and road information from the railroads and Counties.

The revised Draft Evaluation Criteria and Ranking Matrix is attached for comment by the TAC.

The next meeting of the TAC will be in **January 23 from 10 to 12**. A list of the meeting attendees is attached.



NJTPA Region Freight Rail Crossing and Safety Assessment Study

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting No. 1

Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Tuesday, November 13, 2007

1:00pm

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
One Newark Center, 17th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102

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NJTPA Freight Rail Grade Crossing Assessment Study

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 23, 2008

10:00am

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
One Newark Center, 17th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102

Meeting Summary – Jan 23, 2008 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting No. 3.

This was the third meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC members, NJTPA staff and consultant team introduced themselves. The consultant team then provided a status report on the project, followed by a discussion of the field work completed to date and the draft selection considerations. Among the work completed since the November TAC meeting:

- The team visited, documented and photographed all of the grade crossings on the River Line/Northern Branch/National Docks corridor.
- The team began 24 hour in-person observations of selected grade crossings to obtain information, such as number of trains, number and duration of gate activations, and road activity.

Information from this field work included:

- Pedestrian issues are more frequently present on the River Line/Northern Branch. For example, many crossings have sidewalks on either side of the grade crossing. Schools, shopping and residential activities abut many of these locations.
- Examples of the observations to date, such as:
 - The St. Pauls Avenue crossing, there were 33 movements. Gate closure durations ranged from 35 seconds to over 12 minutes. Rail operations at Croxton Yard and marine activity at the Hackensack River Bridge can affect the movement of trains over this crossing. The location had a fair amount of pedestrian traffic throughout the day but was not high volume – about 100 pedestrians in a 12 hour period.
 - The Route 601 crossing is affected by a temporary slow order on the track about one mile away from the crossing. This slow order resulted from undercutting a bridge to obtain doublestack clearance heights further down the line. As a result of subgrade problems the track cannot be maintained at normal speed (50 mph). Accordingly trains are held to operate at 30 mph instead. Replacing the bridge and changing the railroad roadbed could bring train speeds back up to 50 miles/hour, reducing the gate closure durations at Route 601 and other nearby crossings.

In addition, there is an equipment detector near the grade crossing that may cause trains to stop on the 601 crossing to inspect their cars. Relocation of the detector further away from the Route 601 crossing could shift the train stop location off of the crossing.

- The Cedar Avenue crossing had about 100 gate activations, the highest number of activations of all crossings sampled, because both Conrail and NJ Transit lines cross at this location. Eight (8) different train speeds were identified at this crossing, based on the track in use, type of train and direction. Space between the two sets of track has led to cars being stuck between the two railroad rights of way when the gates are activated.

The key comments included:

- At the St. Pauls Avenue location, NJDOT has a roadway project that will essentially turn the grade crossing into a tunnel. When the project is completed, the crossing will be upgraded to quad gates and flashing lights. The railroads have indicated that they would like this grade crossing eliminated and may want to double track the right-of-way. However, pedestrian access needs to be maintained. The consultant team has suggested that one option would be to “trench” the rail right-of-way in this area.
- Solutions should be considered for each crossing, as well as at the corridor or systems level.

TAC members each completed forms indicating their opinions of the weight for each selection consideration. The issues/solutions matrix was distributed for TAC members to review.

As next steps, the team will be:

- Compiling the weights for the selection criteria indicated by TAC members and formulating averages.
- Assessing all of the grade crossings using the selection criteria and weights.
- Ranking the grade crossings.
- Completing the field observations.
- Revising the Issues/Solutions matrix based on comments received from the TAC.
- Populating the GIS database.
- Collecting rail and road information from the railroads and Counties.

The next meeting of the TAC will be in **February 27 from 10 to 12**. A list of the meeting attendees is attached.

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1/23/08

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1/23/08



NJTPA Freight Rail Grade Crossing Assessment Study

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 27, 2008

10:00am

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

One Newark Center, 17th Floor

Newark, NJ 07102

Meeting Summary – Feb 27, 2008 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting No. 4.

This was the fourth meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC members, NJTPA staff and consultant team introduced themselves. The consultant team then provided a status report on the project, followed by a discussion of the 15 grade crossings that emerged from the selection considerations.

Among the work completed since the January TAC meeting:

- The team completed 24 hour in-person observations of selected grade crossings to obtain information, such as number of trains, number and duration of gate activations, and road activity.
- The GIS database is moving towards completion. The team showed screen shots of the detailed information included in the database.
- The issues/solutions matrix was revised to reflect comments received from the TAC. The team noted that grade separation is not the only solution; a full range of solutions exist depending on the issues at specific crossings.
- The team met with the NJDOT diagnostics team.
- The team ranked all of the grade crossings included in the study based on the detailed information obtained, the field work, and the weightings developed as a result of the last TAC meeting.

The key comments regarding the grade crossing rankings included:

- At the two crossings shared by the NYS&W and CSX, private roads have been constructed to “work around” closures of the public roads during gate activations. These work-around roads reduce the impacts of the gate activations.
- In response to a question raised by a TAC member, it was noted that the Tingley and Inman Avenue crossings on the Lehigh Main are proximate to each other but differ in terms of key characteristics, such as road traffic levels and proximity of adjacent roadways/driveways.
- While discussing observations regarding pedestrian accommodations on the River Line, it was noted that when NJDOT redoes a grade crossings, the agency extends the roadway

pavement three-to-four feet beyond the roadway limits for pedestrians. Railroads may not have a similar policy, but this could be discussed.

- In response to a question raised by a TAC member, the study team will review the top 15 crossings with the NJDOT diagnostics team in detail and incorporate information on forthcoming modifications into the descriptions of the crossings used in the discussions with municipalities.
- In response to a question raised by a TAC member, the study team noted that none of the top 15 crossings came near the possible maximum score of over 460. This puts the crossings in perspective.
- Some existing transportation projects may need to be re-evaluated because of additional benefits identified as a result of this study. For example a proposal to upgrade the signal system on the Port Reading Secondary could reduce the duration of some gate closures by expediting train movements.
- In response to a question raised by a TAC member, the study team noted that potential corridor-level programs of improvements are being reviewed by the team. For example, a series of crossings on a particular rail line may exhibit the same issue and could be grouped into a program of improvements. The study is not considering the creation of a new rail corridor outside of the existing rail right of ways in the State.

Comments regarding the upcoming stakeholder and public information meetings included:

- TAC members suggested a variety of formats for these meetings. The team noted that the current plan for the public meeting is to have displays of information and slide shows of the photos, with five “stations” where comments related to specific rail lines can be left. These comments can be written by hand. NJTPA staff will explore the availability of computers to permit participants to type their comments. The public meeting is currently scheduled for April 17 from 4 to 7 PM. The public outreach meeting format and content will be reviewed based on the TAC comments and further discussions with NJTPA staff.
- NJTPA staff will refine the list of invitees to the stakeholder meeting. This meeting will be held before the public meeting.
- TAC members noted that NJTPA must consider what will come after this study – what will the next steps be for the grade crossings emerging from the selection process?

As next steps, the team will:

- Prepare maps of each line for circulation to TAC members.
 - Review and revise the public meeting format and content based on the TAC comments and further discussions with NJTPA staff. NJTPA staff will be the host agency for the public meeting and will need to announce it in papers.
 - Work with NJTPA staff to schedule the stakeholders meeting, as well as the format for this meeting.
 - Undertake and complete discussions with the municipalities for the top 5 crossings. The TAC members from Bergen, Middlesex and Somerset Counties were asked to facilitate the holding of these meetings, including, if possible, holding the discussions at the County offices.
- Complete the GIS database.
 - Work on the draft final report for this project, which will include problem statements for the top 5 grade crossings (excluding the 69th Street grade crossing).

The final meeting of the TAC will be **April 23 from 10 AM to 12 Noon**.

A list of the meeting attendees is attached.



NJTPA Region Freight Rail Crossing and Safety Assessment Study

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting No. 4

Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Wednesday, February 27, 2008
10:00am

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
One Newark Center, 17th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102

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NJTPA Freight Rail Grade Crossing Assessment Study

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY MAY 8, 2008

10:00am

**North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
One Newark Center, 17th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102**

NJTPA Freight Rail Crossing Assessment Summary of May 8, 2008 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

This was the final meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC members, NJTPA staff and consultant team introduced themselves. NJTPA staff and the consultant team thanked the TAC members for their input and comments over the course of the project.

NJTPA and the team then reviewed the April 1 Stakeholder Meeting and April 17 Public Information Center. A number of questions were raised regarding Inman Avenue at the April 1 meeting. With the information collected and analyses performed to date, these questions appeared to be addressed in a satisfactory manner and the stakeholders at the meeting seemed pleased with the project. Similarly, attendees at the April 17 Public Information Center appeared satisfied with the information presented. A representative of the Bergenfield Police Department attended, seeking additional information related to pedestrian crossings and stopped trains. Written comments received at the Center related to the establishment of quiet zones in Somerset County.

The remainder of the meeting focused on the final report and deliverables of the Project. These include:

- The draft final report (provided to the TAC members on a CD).
- The draft problems statements for the five top ranked crossings.
- The GIS database.

TAC members were asked to provide their comments on the draft report and problem statements by May 16.

The consultant team reviewed the problem statements with the TAC members, including the format and the information included. The discussion that followed focused on who would be responsible for acting on the problem statements. NJDOT noted that the recommendations included in a problem statement would dictate where it would go in “programming” or indicate if the NJDOT Diagnostics Team would take the lead. The TAC also discussed who would undertake the cost for certain modifications. NJDOT will work with NJTPA and the consultant team to review this language in the problem statements.

As an example of the considerations in responsibilities, pre-emption of traffic signals in the vicinity of a grade crossing was discussed. If the pre-emption is within 200 feet, then the analysis is within the purview of the Diagnostics Team. Beyond 200 feet, then local approval and support is needed. In the case of one grade crossing, the Diagnostics Team is recommending the

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installation of a “force off loop,” rather than the pre-emption of the traffic signal, and NJDOT will pay for the project.

Additional comments related to the draft report and products included:

- Include a discussion of corridor or “multi-crossing” solutions.
- Add a chapter that summarizes interesting observations from the field work.
- The full database will be given to the Diagnostics Team in electronic form.
- The GIS database, which started with a base originally developed for NJDOT will be given to NJDOT.
- The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey requested a copy of the GIS database from NJTPA.

NJTPA staff then discussed the next steps for the project.

- The Final Draft Report and Problem Statements will go to the members of the NJTPA Freight Committee for their comment and for their approval of a Board Resolution to accept the project’s findings and products.
- The Report and Resolution would then be discussed and voted on at the July NJTPA Board meeting.

NJTPA and the consultant team again thanked the TAC.

A list of the meeting attendees is attached.



NJTPA Region Freight Rail Crossing and Safety Assessment Study

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting No. 5

Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Thursday, May 8, 2008

10:00am

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
One Newark Center, 17th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102

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NJTPA Freight Rail Grade Crossing Assessment Study

MUNICIPAL COORDINATION MEETING

Montgomery Township

THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2008

Summary of March 20, 2008 Meeting with Montgomery Township

The Route 601 grade crossing on the CSX single-track Trenton Subdivision was the subject of this meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to have a fact-based discussion regarding the crossing, as well as identify any local initiatives and considerations that should be included. NJTPA staff and the team provided an overview of the study, which included a description of the purpose, rail freight lines covered, information collected and assessed, rankings and the issues and solutions matrix. The group discussed the selection considerations in detail, along with the specifics of the Route 601 crossings. A map of the crossing location, photos from the field inspections, the ranking sheet for the Route 601 crossing, and a diagram of rail operations in the vicinity of the crossing were used to facilitate the discussion.

Among the unique issues at the crossing that were discussed:

- Previous railroad work to increase clearances for doublestack traffic has disturbed track beneath the Camp Meeting Avenue Bridge in Skillman and has resulted in a reduction of maximum operating speeds from 50 to 30 MPH on a “temporary” basis. This chronic condition has resulted in trains operating at slower speeds across Route 601 and other grade crossings, blocking these crossings for extended periods of time and creating more noise as trains accelerate and decelerate.
- There is a Train Inspection Detector proximate to the crossing. When the detector senses a problem with the train, the train may stop blocking the crossing while the crew undertakes the mandatory safety checks. It may be possible to relocate or eliminate this detector to help avoid this situation.
- The existing gates at the crossing were designed for a two-track operation. It may be possible to move the gates closer together now that one track has been removed.

The key questions and comments included:

- What were the other top crossings that arose from the ranking process? The team provided a listing.
- What were the rankings of other crossings in Montgomery Township? The team went through the rankings and described why each crossing received a particular score.
- The bridge in question is one-lane and scheduled to be replaced in the near future. NJDOT will study the bridge replacement in 2009-2010. It may be possible to engineer the replacement structure to be higher. This would allow the railroad to address the subgrade issue and eliminate the “permanent temporary slow speed” order. The County will follow up with NJDOT on the matter. In particular, the group felt that the bridge replacement’s cost-benefit assessment should consider the potential value of reducing gate closure times at Route 601 (reducing delays and congestion, as well as improving railroad operational efficiency).

- Freeholder Palmer noted that a longer term solution could be the full grade separation of this crossing. The need for a grade separation would be increased if the line is double tracked for new transit service and/or additional freight service.
- The Township noted that the police department keeps records of blockages at the 601 crossing.
- The Province Line Road grade crossing was noted as lacking the constant warning elements that are a prerequisite for either wayside horns or the establishment of a quiet zone.

The list of the meeting attendees is provided below.

| MONTGOMERY TWP TAC PRESENTATION | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| THURSDAY MARCH 20, 2008 9:00 AM. | | | |
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| Bill Hynick | TAC Committee | 609-924-5044 NH316 | whynick@NJTRANS.com |
| Tammy Baratta | Montgomery Twp PIO | 908-359-8211 x207 | tbaratta@montgomery-nj.us |
| Cecilia Birge | " | 609-445-2271 | cbirge@BirgeGroup.com |
| John Rea | McDonough + Rea (Twp Traffic) | 732-529-2076 | jrea@mnttraffic.com |
| GAIL SMITH | MONT. TWP | 908 359 8211 | GSMITH@TWP.MONTGOMERYNJ.US |
| SID PALIUS | MONT. TWP - TAL | 908-874-7820 | sidpalus@ptstud2.net |
| ANDREW PERRY | MONT. TWP POLICE - TRAFFIC | 9083593222 | APERRY@POLICE.MONTGOMERY.NJ.US |
| William Sheppard | ATLANTIC RAIL SERVICES | (856)983-7226 | SHEPPAR@AOL.COM |
| Walt Lane | Somerset Cty | 907 291-7021 | |
| DAVE DAWSON | NJTPA | 473-639-8432 | DDAWSON@NJTPA.ORG |
| ANNE STRAUSS-WIEDER | A. STRAUSS-WIEDER, INC | 908 664 5144 | ASW@AS-W.COM |
| PETER PALMER | SOMERSET CO | FOR 2317030 | Palmer@co.somerset.nj.us |



NJTPA Freight Rail Grade Crossing Assessment Study

MUNICIPAL COORDINATION MEETING

City of Edison and Middlesex County

THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2008

Summary of March 27, 2008 Meeting with the City of Edison and Middlesex County

The Inman Avenue grade crossing on the Norfolk Southern/Conrail Lehigh Line was the subject of this meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to have a fact-based discussion regarding the crossing, as well as identify any local initiatives and considerations that should be included. NJTPA staff and the team provided an overview of the study, which included a description of the purpose, rail freight lines covered, information collected and assessed, rankings and the issues and solutions matrix. The group discussed the selection considerations in detail, along with the specifics of the Inman Avenue crossing. A map of the crossing location, photos from the field inspections, the ranking sheet for the Inman Avenue crossing, and a diagram of rail operations in the vicinity of the crossing were used to facilitate the discussion.

Among the unique issues at the crossing that were discussed:

- There were three accidents at the crossing, the second highest in the study area. However, one was a suicide attempt and one involved a car apparently deliberately left on the rail right of way. The third accident involved a traffic incident and resulted in a car being pushed onto the right of way.
- It was noted that 44 trains used the line during the 24 hour observation work undertaken by the team.
- Edison, Middlesex County and the State are investing nearly \$1.5 million to install quad gates and center islands, as part of a quiet zone initiative.
- The Lehigh Line was recently upgraded to a two-track operation in the area, which helped improve the fluidity of train movements and reduced the total duration of gate closures by allowing simultaneous train movements to occur at Inman Avenue and Tingley Road crossings in Edison.
- A new traffic signal has been installed near the crossing at the Panettoni/CVS development site and was required as a condition of the development. Edison would like to have the traffic signal pre-empted. The traffic signal has been installed but is not yet active. The traffic signal will likely be under the control of Middlesex County as Inman Avenue is a County road, with Edison paying the electrical bills for the signal.
- It was noted that the total gate closure time over a 24 hour period was one hour, 32 minutes and 40 seconds. The average gate closure duration was two minutes, six seconds, and the longest gate closure duration was three minutes, 50 seconds. This contrasts with statements by some interest groups indicating that the gate closures amount to several hours daily. It was noted that one of the purposes of the NJTPA study was to provide an objective database for all of the 64 grade crossings in the region.

The key questions and comments included:

- With Muhlenberg Hospital closing, JFK Hospital will be the only one in the area. There is increased concern that blockages on Inman Avenue could affect access to JFK.
- CMX is working for Edison on the quiet zone improvements. Edison asked to receive information on the crossing from the study as soon as possible so that it can be incorporated into their work. It was noted that the draft report is anticipated to be completed at the end of April. One of the potential enhancements, the addition of cantilevered flashers to improve visibility, may be assessed as part of the quiet zone work by Edison's consultant.
- The NJTPA study appears to independently validate Edison's and the County's investments in the quad gates and center islands.
- Edison would like a copy of the ranking sheet for the Tingley Road crossing.

The list of the meeting attendees is provided below.

| Edison - Inman Ave | | March 27, 2008 9:30 AM | |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Name | Affiliation | Phone | E-Mail |
| Scott Parker | Jacobs Engineering | 973 267-0535 | SCOTT.PARKER@ JACOBS.COM |
| John A. Medina | TWP OF EDISON | 732 248-7248 | jmedina@edisonNJ. org |
| Richard Willett | MICOLONGA | 732-745-3283 | |
| TED MATTHEWS | NJTPA | 973-637-8404 | tmatthews@njtpa. org |
| ANNE STRAUSS-WIEDER | ASW INC | 908 654 5144 | ASW@AS-W.COM |
| William Sheppard | Atlantic Rail Services | (856) 983-9226 | sheppa1@arso.com |
| GEORGE M. VERVERIDES | MCPD, NENE | 732-745-3093 | FAX 732-745-2201 |



NJTPA Freight Rail Grade Crossing Assessment Study

MUNICIPAL COORDINATION MEETING

Woodbridge Township

THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2008

Summary of March 27, 2008 Meeting with the Woodbridge Township

Saint Georges Avenue (SR 35) grade crossing on the Conrail Port Reading Secondary Track was the subject of this meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to have a fact-based discussion regarding the crossing, as well as identify any local initiatives and considerations that should be included. NJTPA staff and the team provided an overview of the study, which included a description of the purpose, rail freight lines covered, information collected and assessed, rankings and the issues and solutions matrix. The group discussed the selection considerations in detail, along with the specifics of the St. Georges Avenue crossing. A map of the crossing location, photos from the field inspections, the ranking sheet for the St. Georges Avenue crossing, and a diagram of rail operations in the vicinity of the crossing were used to facilitate the discussion.

Among the unique issues at the crossing that were discussed:

- In addition to the characteristics of the surrounding land uses and roadway traffic, this crossing's rating was affected by the duration of the gate closures at this location. It was noted that the total gate closure time over a 24 hour period was 10 minutes, 56 seconds. The average gate closure duration was three minutes, 39 seconds, and the longest gate closure duration was five minutes, 11 seconds. It was noted that one of the purposes of the NJTPA study was to provide an objective database for all of the 64 grade crossings in the region.
- Of the three trains a day that currently were observed using this line, one moved during the peak periods and one moved in the middle of the night.
- The team noted that the speed of the train affects the duration of the gate closures. Currently, the Port Reading Secondary line has no signals, meaning that trains must move no more than 30 MPH.
- The team also noted that this crossing is proximate to railroad Yard Limits where train speed is restricted to 15 MPH. While this territory is located east of nearby Rahway Avenue, the speed of trains crossing Saint Georges Avenue may also be reduced to some degree as they accelerate or decelerate to comply with this speed restriction. Acceleration and deceleration also contributes to noise generation.
- It was also observed at night that an eastbound train was held short of Saint Georges Avenue awaiting clearance to proceed. This practice results in trains taking additional time to accelerate and cross Saint Georges Avenue at grade. Stopping trains in proximity to residential areas has also resulted in community complaints listed on the website for Woodbridge Township.

The key questions and comments included:

- It was noted that St. George's Avenue is a state road (Route 35). Rahway Avenue is a county road and Blair Road is a municipal road.
- The duration of gate closures is the biggest issue at this crossing. A five minute closure can cause significant traffic delays depending upon the time of day. The Township noted that trains are observed as moving very slowly in the area.
- Noise was the second key issue. To that end, the Township is investigating the establishment of quiet zones at St. George's Avenue, Blair Road, and Rahway Avenue.
- Adding a signal system to the rail line would be a way to increase train speed and reduce gate closure times. It was noted that the cost/benefit analysis for investing in the signal system may not have previously considered the benefits of reducing gate closure times along the rail line and the resulting reductions in congestion, delays and noise.
- It was noted that a discussion with Conrail could lead to trains being held away from the residential neighborhoods.
- A study by Maser for the Township indicated that the cost of installing quad gates at the St. George's Avenue crossing would be \$300,000. The Township provided a copy of the Maser study to NJTPA and the study team.
- The team also noted that the train speed on the Chemical Coast line is also currently 30 miles per hour. Improvements to track connections between the Chemical Coast and the Port Reading Secondary Tracks could potentially improve speeds in the Woodbridge Township area and reduce train movements.
- The Woodbridge Avenue crossing was also discussed. The location had 27 activations observed during the 24 hour period, primarily due to switching for the Motiva plant. It was also noted that there is a marina accessed via this location. However, alternative routes are available to access the marina if this crossing is blocked. While Motiva is currently building new tracks on their property, the impact (if any) on switching operations is unclear but could be studied in an effort to reduce crossing activity.

The list of the meeting attendees is provided below.

| Name | Organization | Phone | Email |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--|
| Bask Patel | Woodbridge | 732.602.6047 | Bask.patel@twp.woodbridge.nj.us |
| Scott Parker | Jacobs | 973.267.0555 | Scott.parker@jacobs.com |
| Anne Strauss-Wieder | A. Strauss-Wieder, Inc. | 908.654.5144 | asw@as-w.com |
| Bill Sheppard | Atlantic Rail Services | 856.983.9226 | sheprail@aol.com |
| George Ververides | Middlesex County | 732.745.3013 | |



NJTPA Freight Rail Grade Crossing Assessment Study

MUNICIPAL COORDINATION MEETING

Middlesex Borough and Middlesex County

THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2008

Summary of March 27, 2008 Meeting with the Middlesex Borough

The Cedar Avenue grade crossing of the Lehigh and Raritan Valley Lines was the subject of this meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to have a fact-based discussion regarding the crossing, as well as identify any local initiatives and considerations that should be included. NJTPA staff and the team provided an overview of the study, which included a description of the purpose, rail freight lines covered, information collected and assessed, rankings and the issues and solutions matrix. The group discussed the selection considerations in detail, along with the specifics of the Cedar Avenue crossing. A map of the crossing location, photos from the field inspections, the ranking sheet for the Cedar Avenue crossing, and a diagram of rail operations in the vicinity of the crossing were used to facilitate the discussion.

Among the unique issues at the crossing that were discussed:

- Cedar Avenue crossing had the most train operations observed in a single 24-hour period – 100 trains (57 passenger and 43 freight trains). Trains at this location can travel at one of eight different speeds, ranging from 30 to 80 miles per hour maximum, depending upon track, direction and type of train.
- The greatest concern is the space between the two sets of two tracks at this location. Vehicles were observed stuck between the two sets of tracks.
- The team noted that the total gate closure time over a 24 hour period was two hours, 20 minutes and 45 seconds, second only to 69th Street in North Bergen. The average gate closure duration was one minute, 24 seconds, and the longest gate closure duration was four minutes, 26 seconds with simultaneous train movements noted in several instances.
- The team noted that during the 24 hour observation period, there were 39 gate closures during the peak travel periods and 22 closures during the nighttime period from 11 PM to 6 AM.
- The team noted that a Train Inspection Detector is located about a mile from the Cedar Avenue grade crossing on the Lehigh Line. When activated, this detector could result in freight trains blocking the grade crossing while their crews walk and inspect the train before proceeding.
- Closure of River Road for a drainage project result resulted in diversion of additional traffic via Cedar Avenue.

The key questions and comments included:

- Middlesex Borough had pursued the development of a train station at this location, which is on the New Jersey Transit Raritan Valley Line. However, New Jersey Transit has indicated that insufficient ridership exists to develop the station.

- New Jersey Transit would like to install a third track through this area (and the Cedar Avenue location) for a new express service. The addition of this track is likely to exacerbate conditions noted at this crossing.
- The group discussed a possible “corridor” solution to Cedar Avenue -- combining the New Jersey Transit and Lehigh Line rights of way into a single elevated line extending from Bound Brook (which would be tied to eliminating a grade crossing in that town on the Port Reading Secondary) to beyond grade crossings at South and Mountain Avenue crossings. It was noted that New Jersey Transit is the lead agency for undertaking the grade separation at 69th Street and could potentially play a similar role should the corridor solution be pursued.
- A plan, subject to DEP approval, to extend William Avenue to Cedar Avenue could alleviate some of the traffic conditions at the grade crossing. However, a plan to redevelop the Lincoln Boulevard area could bring additional traffic to the grade crossing area. Creation of the rail corridor noted above could allow the existing Lehigh Line right-of-way to be redeployed as a roadway.

The list of the meeting attendees is provided below.

| Name | Organization | Phone | Email |
|---------------------|---|--------------|--|
| Catherine Britell | T&M Associates/Middlesex Borough Engineer | 732.671.6400 | cbritell@tandmassociates.com |
| Scott Parker | Jacobs | 973.267.0555 | Scott.parker@jacobs.com |
| Anne Strauss-Wieder | A. Strauss-Wieder, Inc. | 908.654.5144 | asw@as-w.com |
| Bill Sheppard | Atlantic Rail Services | 856.983.9226 | sheprail@aol.com |
| George Ververides | Middlesex County | 732.745.3013 | |



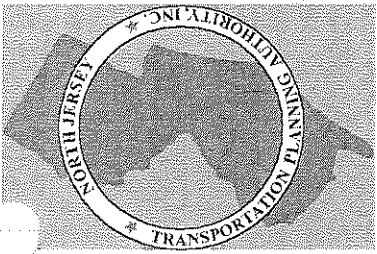
NJTPA Freight Rail Crossing Assessment Study

Public Information Center

Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Thursday April 17, 2008 - 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm
 North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
 One Newark Center, 17th Floor
 Newark, NJ 07102

| Name: | Agency/Affiliation: | Phone #: | E-Mail: |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Walter Lane | Somerset City | 609 533-6601 | wlaney@somersetnj.com |
| Michael GRIFFIN | Montgomery-Twp. etc | 908 319 4084 | sgriffin@montgomery-twp.com |
| Greg Rindge | Montgomery-Twp. | 908 319 4084 | grindge@montgomery-twp.com |
| William Duench | Rte 206/207 Rd | 801 387-4000 | wduench@duench.com |
| Tom DeBrie | Sussex Cty Planning | 973 574-0500 | tdebrie@sussexnj.com |
| Bobby Johnson | NJ Transit | (973) 482-3370 | bjohnson@njtransit.com |
| Richard Nasta | NJ Transit | 973 491 7600 | rnasta@njtransit.com |
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NJTPA Freight Rail Crossing Assessment Study

Public Information Center Comment Submission Sheet

- General Comment
- Comment Specific to a Rail Line or Crossing. Please indicate line or location:

Comment(s): * I identify for citizens and local municipal politicians - why owns the problem - NJ DOT - County local govt.
* I identify for citizens/political officials where pressure and follow-ups should be applied.
* I identify steps in process so follow-up can be done at appropriate time and to proper person/dept.

Optional: Name: Michael GRAY Phone Number: 609-333-0005 Email: MW GRAY36@fatmedia.net
Address:

Comments may also be submitted by Friday, April 25, 2008. Mail to:
North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
One Newark Center, 17th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102
Attn: Ted Matthews

NJTPA Freight Rail Crossing Assessment Study

Public Information Center Comment Submission Sheet

- General Comment
- Comment Specific to a Rail Line or Crossing. Please indicate line or location:

Comment(s): Request copies of Report for Montgomery Township

of

Michael GRAY

36 Moores Grove Ct

5 Killman, NJ 08558

MR GRAY 36 @ partimed.com.net

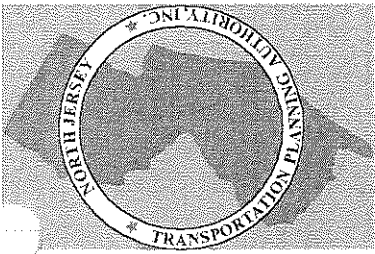
Optional: Name:

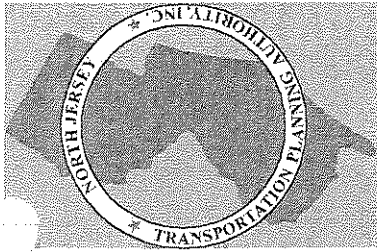
Phone Number:

Email:

Address:

Comments may also be submitted by Friday, April 25, 2008. Mail to:
North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
One Newark Center, 17th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102
Attn: Ted Matthews





NJTPA Freight Rail Crossing Assessment Study

Public Information Center Comment Submission Sheet

- General Comment
- Comment Specific to a Rail Line or Crossing. Please indicate line or location:

West Trenton Line - 601 to Penna Line

Comment(s): - 4 crossings

Be sure to examine situation comprehensively - Grade
improvement at Comp Meeting Rd Bridge / Bridge replacement

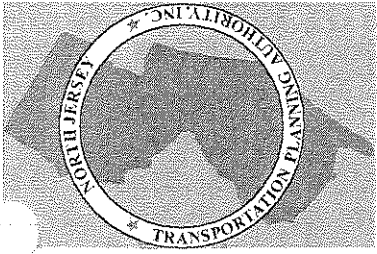
Area Needs surrounding crossing improvement: 3 crossings within 1 mile, 4 within
2 mls. Rail Line ~~Constant Warning Time~~ (CWT)

J.E. → Speed improvement leads to switch upgrade, allows lower
cost quiet zones across the area

Optional: Name: Michael Gray Phone Number: 609 333-0005 Email: MGRAY36@post.net.nj.us

Address: 36 Moores Grove Ct
Skillman, NJ 08558

Comments may also be submitted by Friday, April 25, 2008. Mail to:
North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
One Newark Center, 17th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102
Attn: Ted Matthews



NJTPA Freight Rail Crossing Assessment Study

Public Information Center Comment Submission Sheet

General Comment

Comment Specific to a Rail Line or Crossing. Please indicate line or location:

West Trenton Line

Comment(s): Request DOT to evaluate "Quirk" "Kurb" ^{state wide}

Flexi-Medical Strip system for quiet zone / communities

application in Montgomery / NJ. (The need a NJ DOT position)

2) Evaluate Economic Benefit for CSX if

improvements are made at RT 601. Request

CSX to support or provide funds for other

Montgomery Grade Crossing improvements at

Spring Hill, Providence, & Hollow

Optional: Name: Grey Renger

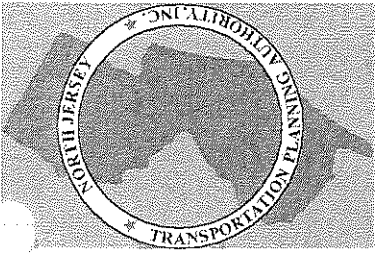
Phone Number:

908-319-4064

Email: SaferTrainCrossing

@yahoo.com

Comments may also be submitted by Friday, April 25, 2008. Mail to:
North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
One Newark Center, 17th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102
Attn: Ted Matthews



NJTPA Freight Rail Crossing Assessment Study

Public Information Center Comment Submission Sheet

General Comment

Comment Specific to a Rail Line or Crossing. Please indicate line or location:

West Trenton Line

Comment(s):

After connecting Camp meeting Road Bridge
The Trains will be able to travel faster.
As a result, we should upgrade the
constant warning time system on Princeton,
Spring Hill, Hollow + Rt 601 crossings. This
will make quiet zone implementation
easier

Optional: Name: Greg Renger

Address:

908 319 4084

Phone Number:

Email:

Safer Train Crossings CR
CR

Comments may also be submitted by Friday, April 25, 2008. Mail to:
North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
One Newark Center, 17th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102
Attn: Ted Matthews