

Report from the Berkshire Transportation Advisory Committee to the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization

~ From the Meeting Held on January 18, 2007 ~

Summary of Items Discussed

- A discussion was held regarding the financial constraint component of the RTP as it relates to the Recommended Project List. It was noted by BRPC staff that Recommended Projects are “expansion” in nature, whereas there is another “pool” of regional funding for “preservation – operations and maintenance” projects.

A follow-up discussion was held regarding the start-to-end nature of transportation projects – from studies to recommended project to design to implementation. Questions were asked about project plan readiness (how long it takes for a project to be considered “ready” for inclusion on the TIP).

- A discussion was held regarding the 2007 RTP Recommended Project List:
 - A comment was made that it would be more efficient if recommended projects GTB-1A and GTB-1B were done concurrently.
- A discussion was held regarding the 2007 RTP Recommended Study List:
 - A comment was made that not enough is being done to explore the feasibility of expanded passenger rail service inside Berkshire County and to surrounding regions – and that a study to address this should be done sooner than later. This led to a proposed amendment to the existing Recommended Study list (*as noted in next section*).
 - A comment was made that, if feasible, there should be a study to address the pending transportation needs of Berkshire County’s aging population.
 - A comment was made regarding the accuracy of the current BRPC regional economic forecast model, given that other economic projections for the county are at odds with the results of the BRPC model.
- The TAC recommends that the MPO request the State to undertake a statewide study to expand passenger rail service.
- The next TAC meeting was scheduled for Thursday, March 1st at 5:30.

Majority Report on Issues Brought to a Motion

- The Minutes of the December 14th, 2006 TAC Meeting were approved unanimously by the TAC.

- The RTP Recommended Project List was unanimously approved as amended:
 - Combine projects GTB-1A and GTB-1B and place under “Short-Term” projects.
- The RTP Recommended Studies List was approved as amended:
 - Remove “Rail (Amtrak): Rail Alternatives Study” from “Long-Term” section of list; replace with a “Passenger Rail Needs Study” – to be placed in “Short-Term” section of list.

Minority Report on Issues Brought to Motion

No minority dissenting opinions were expressed.