

**Ellsworth Surface Transportation and Recreation Center
Planning Committee Meeting
10/5/2009
Minutes**

Attending: Jim Fisher, Janet Toth, Jef Fitzgerald, Bruce Mattson, Michelle Beal, Fred Michaud, Tom Crikelair, Tom Testa, Michele Gagnon

Introductions

Jim summarized some of the case studies that we were considering last December

Tom Testa added:

- North Carolina – Ashville
- Bedford Depot - MA

Tom Crikelair – need to look at the user groups

- Cape Cod Intermodal Center
- North Dakota – rail facility users – importance of proximity

Jim noted that FOA conducted a Transit in the Parks study several years ago that speaks to gateway communities

Michele – raised the question about how much time we should spend looking at other examples.

- Canadian examples may also be pertinent – rural, scattered populations
- E.g. New Brunswick – PEI – puts information center at the rail stations in the interior streets

Jim – summarized some considerations

- Modes
- Recreation
- Amenities
- Proximity and access
- Patterns of Use and Users

Tom – fundamentals of transit planning

- Who are the customers?
- How to mix uses without losing focus?
- What are the right bullets?
- Rail Users
 - Arrived by car, transit, tour buses, trail
 - Needs of users
 - Tom Testa: Marketing potential for this rail corridor
 - Historic importance of passenger service on this rail system
 - Example of Adirondack Rail facility – starting small and building out
 - Excursion services

- Commuter services to Bangor
 - Capturing the middle market – middle class visitors are willing to stay in Ellsworth, travel to destinations
- Trail Users
 - Walking, biking, skiing, ATV, snowmobile,
 - Arrived by car, transit, tour buses, trail
 - Seasonality
 - Michele
 - Trail will not be a success without a significant trail head in Ellsworth
 - People want a safe, secure, amenity and information rich place to start
 - Eye-catcher
 - ATV Users – primarily on weekends – may be directed to long term parking at Washington Junction
- Visitor information and services
 - Destination information
 - On site businesses and abutting land uses
 - Pedestrian connection to local businesses
 - Michele – Flagship for new development in Ellsworth – creating a new activity center and lifestyle image in Ellsworth
 - Spontaneous visitation
 - Families looking to alternative recreational activities
 - A large parking lot won't attract these people
 - Tom – suggests that park and ride and commuter parking may need to be in a different location depending on
 - Janet Toth
 - Visitors looking for rest areas
 - Not always connected to a town
 - Jef – does this function fit in a central facility?
- Park and Ride
 - Ride-share
 - Van pool
 - Informal v. GoMaine
 - Flexibility of site size and design
 - Does this site need to be mixed with other users, especially tourists?
 - Tom – Ellsworth needs a more civilized park and ride facility
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- Tour Buses
 - Will they stop at this facility? Will an originate from Ellsworth?
 - How does location affect their choices?
 - Local attractions – Main Street, LL Bean, historic sites
- Bus Commuters
 - Last year 164 commuters from Ellsworth to Jackson Laboratory
 - Parking behind the Maine Coast Mall
 - Growth is likely as fuel prices rise
 - Janet – would Jax (or other major employers) contribute to creating and maintaining park and ride facilities for commuter buses?
 - Other services – West and DTI travel to Bangor daily, but not for the most part for daily work commutes

- Van pools
- Medical trips – cancer, diabetes, methadone and other regular treatment regimes
- Need ready access to this facility
- Providers
 - Downeast Transportation
 - West Transportation
 - Bar Harbor – Bangor shuttle
 - Concord Trailways, Greyhound
 - WHCA
 - Other - Regional transportation providers
 - Hospital to Hospital
 - Retirement Communities
- Barriers
 - Local match
 - Un-proven demand for services

Public Participation Process

- How do we involve these transportation providers and major user groups?
- Tom – standard should be

Design Considerations

- Does this facility become too crowded with users?
 - Is the core mission obscured by park and ride and other commuter services?
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- Is this facility part of a master plan that stimulates growth into the interior – parallel to High Street?
- Storm water has to be considered
- Will the facility provide year round services? What services will be seasonal?

Locations

- Site close to tracks at Blue Seal Feed
- Former Irving Gas Station
- Maine Community Foundation
- Lucky Marr property – Main Street Extension and Oak Street
- Washington Junction – trucks and trailers for trail
- Park and ride behind Mardens

Announcements

- Trail Opening Wednesday October 28th Machias – Lee Tollen Center close to the
- Acadia All American Road extended to Ellsworth Town Line

Next Meeting: Jim will schedule next meeting – Early November