Meeting Minutes

CDTC Freight Advisory Committee
Wednesday July 16, 2014
9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Albany Port District Commission
106 Smith Blvd
Albany, NY 12202

1) **Attendees**

- Richard Stack  
  Albany Port Railroad
- Steve Ribet  
  Galesi Group
- Jared McAneny  
  General Electric Power & Water
- Eric Christy  
  General Electric Power & Water
- Maria Chau  
  FHWA
- Kristin Legere  
  The Business Council of New York State
- David Rosenberg  
  NYSDOT
- Jeff Gritsavage  
  NYS Canal Corp.
- Melody Sheahan  
  Pan Am Railway
- John McCreavy  
  SMS Rail Lines
- Jon Sherman  
  Norfolk Southern
- Pete Rea  
  NYSDOT Region 1
- Joe Landry  
  Town of Niskayuna
- Jack Madden  
  NYSDOT Freight & Passenger Rail Bureau
- Lou Esposito  
  Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association
- Tony Vasil  
  Port of Albany
- Adam Yagelski  
  NYSDOT - Office ofModal Safety and Security
- Rich Hendrick  
  Port of Albany
- Michael Franchini  
  CDTC
- Chris Bauer  
  CDTC
- Angel Sanchez  
  CDTC

2) **New Vision Funding Exercise**

A survey was distributed to the meeting attendees. Participants were asked to distribute a hypothetical $100 of transportation funding into 8 categories. The results of the survey:

- Alternative Fuels 10%
- Bicycle & Pedestrian 6%
- Freight 27%
- Intelligent Transportation Systems 7%
- Road and Bridge Repairs 30%
- Transit - Buses 9%
- Transit – Light Rail 9%
3) **Presentation**

Jack Madden, Project Team Leader at the New York State Department of Transportation’s Freight & Passenger Rail Bureau gave a PowerPoint presentation about NYSDOT’s Schenectady County Track Rationalization and Grade Crossing Elimination Project. Jack began the presentation by giving a detailed overview of current rail lines in the Capital District. He then gave a summary of the goals of the concept plan, and provided an outline of the proposed concept plan’s various project components. He described in detail the advantages and disadvantages to the various stakeholders, and potential obstacles to achieving the concept plan.

A copy of Jack’s PowerPoint presentation is attached to the meeting minutes. For more information contact Jack Madden at 518-457-3632 or John.Madden@dot.ny.gov.

4) **Long Term Items**

a. **New Visions 2040:**

Chris Bauer gave a brief overview of CDTC’s New Visions 2040 Plan update process. The New Visions 2040 plan, CDTC’s long range plan is currently being updated. Concurrently, CDTC is updating the Regional Freight and Goods Movement Plan. The recommendations from the updated Regional Freight and Good Movement Plan will be integrated into the New Visions 2040 Plan. A document was distributed with a draft Principle statement regarding Freight. The Principle statement will help to guide the development of the New Visions 2040 Plan. Chris requested the committee to review the statement and submit comments and suggestions to him via email (cbauer@cdtcmpo.org) or by calling him at 518-458-2161.

i. **Future freight vision for the region:**

Chris Bauer distributed a document with draft freight vision statements. The purpose of the statements is to guide the development of the Regional Freight and Good Movement Plan update and the New Visions 2040 Plan. Chris requested the committee to review the document and submit comments and suggestions to him via email (cbauer@cdtcmpo.org) or by calling him at 518-458-2161.

b. **Regional Freight & Goods Movement Plan:**

Chris Bauer gave an overview of the process to develop the new Regional Freight & Goods Movement Plan. A Request for Proposals was released in June 2014, with proposals due on Friday, July 11. CDTC received 4 proposals. The next step will be to evaluate the proposals, select a consultant, and begin development of the plan. Michael Franchini mentioned the importance of the role of the Freight Advisory Committee in helping guide development of the plan. Copies of the RFP were made available to the Freight Advisory Committee.
5) Member Updates  
   a. Lou Esposito (Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association) described a truck traffic concern located near the near the I-88 Exit 25 interchange (NY Route 7), in the Towns of Princetown and Rotterdam. There are truck traffic, congestion, and safety concerns due to trucks accessing I-88, The NYS Thruway, the Pilot Travel Center, and several local distribution centers. There is also a potential expansion of the Pilot Rest Area, and new distribution center(s). There was a proposed study of the interchange and surrounding areas that was unable to move forward due to local match funding issues.
   b. Dave Rosenberg gave a brief update of the development of the new Statewide Freight Plan. The plan will be coordinated with all MPOs in New York State.

6) Upcoming Events and Meetings  
   a. Freight Advisory Committee quarterly meetings schedule:
      i. 10:30 am on the third Wednesday of January, April, July, and October
      ii. Next meeting: 10/15/14
   
   b. 8/6/14 at 9:30am, CDTC Offices: Planning Committee
      9/4/14 at 3:00pm, CDTC Offices: Policy Board

7) Port of Albany Boat Tour  
   Tony Vasil and Dave Williams from the Port of Albany provided a one hour informative boat tour of the Port of Albany and Port of Rensselaer.
Bottom Line Up Front

- NYSDOT is asking the CDTC to provide us a letter of support for the Concept Plan. The CDTC letter, and other Stakeholder letters, will be included in an Application to the Federal Government (TIGER-7, Rail Line Relocation, HSIPR, other) for a Planning Grant. **This grant does not commit to construction**, but will analyze the concept, develop alternatives and costs within the concept, select an alternative, conduct Environmental work and Preliminary Engineering so as to prepare a viable project construction package.
- **At some point in the future**, this construction package would be the basis for an Application for construction funding.
Agenda

- BLUF – Bottom Line up Front
- Overview of Rail Lines in Capital District
- Goals of the Concept Plan
- Outline of Concept Plan
- Advantages & Disadvantages to Stakeholders
- Obstacles to achieving the Concept Plan
- Summary, Conclusion and Questions

Goals of the Concept Plan

- Insure international competitiveness of GE Generator and Turbine Plant-Schenectady
- Improve efficiency of the passenger and freight rail network
- Improve safety by eliminating highway/railroad grade crossings where possible
- Eliminate vertical and horizontal restrictions to highway vehicle traffic flow by removal of railroad bridges
- Improve quality of life in Schenectady and enhance access to the Mohawk River by elimination of the Canadian Pacific Railway embankment which divides the city
- Provide additional developable property in Schenectady and in Glenville
Crated Refurbished Generator Rotor on 12-axle flatcar KRL 370386

HP (High Pressure) and IP (Intermediate Pressure) Steam Turbine on 12-axle flatcar KRL 370385

16-axle, Depressed Center Flatcar GEX 80000; Load Limit 1,170,000 lbs

20-axle, Depressed Center, Moveable Gooseneck Flatcar GEX 80003; heaviest loads
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General Electric

Advantages
• Insures that CPR retains a competitive route for loads to Port of Albany ( up to 550,000 pounds gross weight) to CSXT (up to 606,000 pounds gross weight)
• Allows GE to reduce costs of shipping turbines to Port of Albany by CSXT through use of GE-owned railcars vs. lease of 3rd party specialty railcars

Disadvantages
• Does not address GE's projected need for future gross railcar weights of 1,000,000 pounds shipped to Port of Albany

City of Schenectady

Advantages
• Removes 5 low and narrow railroad bridges over city streets.
• Closes and eliminates two highway/railroad grade crossings
• Removes railroad embankment which separates rest of City from Riverfront
• Provides up to 30 acres of former CPR land for development, a portion of which is directly across from the former ALCO property
• Increases the development potential of existing small parcels of land adjacent to railroad embankment

Disadvantages
• If Schenectady METROPLEX acquires any of the 30 acres of CPR property, the City may lose property tax revenue.
Town of Glenville

**Advantages**
- Grade separates the restored Sand Bank Track on a railroad bridge over a four-lane Freeman’s Bridge Road
- Closes and eliminates the Freeman’s Bridge Road, the Stratton Air Guard Base grade crossings, and 1 private crossing
- Closes and eliminates the vertical and horizontal highway restriction of the railroad bridge over CR-29 / Maple Ave
- Removes the PAR railroad embankment between Freeman’s Bridge Road and the new Sand Bank Connection which improves the development potential of adjacent property
- Grade separates Maple Ave over the restored Sand Bank Track OR closes Maple Ave at restored Sand Bank Track and replaces it with “NEW” Maple Ave on PAR ROW

**Disadvantages**
- Restores freight train operation to approximately 6,500 feet of track in Town where no trains have operated in about 30 years

Village of Scotia

**Advantages**
- Few residences adjacent to the restored track on the AMTK ROW

**Disadvantages**
- Restores freight train operation to approximately 3,600 feet of track in the Village where no trains have operated in about 30 years
- Does not address the village’s concerns about the posted load condition of the Sunnyside Road bridge over the AMTK ML and the restored Sand Bank Track

Town of Rotterdam

**Advantages**
- Potential for highway clearance improvements at Curry Road and Helderberg Ave

**Disadvantages**
- Does not address Town’s concerns about closed trail crossing of PAR at Scrafford Lane

Schenectady County

**Advantages**
- Reduces the transportation cost for GE-Schenectady and potentially makes the facility more competitive and retains/grows jobs
- Provides the opportunity for METROPLEX IDA to support the redevelopment of 30 acres of former CPR property in downtown Schenectady
- Provides the opportunity for Schenectady County to acquire the CPR Mohawk River Bridge and integrate it into the County Trail System

**Disadvantages**
- Acquisition cost for PAR ROW from Air National Guard crossing to Freemans’ Bridge Road crossing for “NEW” CR-29 / Maple Ave
- Additional maintenance cost for approximately 6,700 feet of this new two-lane highway
Stratton Air National Guard Base

Advantages
• Closes and eliminates the highway / railroad grade crossing at the entrance to the Air Base, which addresses a safety hazard

Disadvantages
• Would have to revisit plans with Schenectady County for the redesign of the CR-29 / Maple Ave entrance to the Air Base

Galesi Group

Advantages
• Elimination of the railroad embankment across the street from the ALCO property, which eliminates a physical and visual barrier to the rest of the City, may enhance the development of the ALCO site and adjacent properties.

Disadvantages

Amtrak

Advantages
• Would allow northbound departures from SDY Station to immediately accelerate to 50 MPH vs. the current 15 MPH and 30 MPH (2.5 miles)
• Potential revenue source to AMTK for sub-lease of northern half of ROW to CPR

Disadvantages
• CPR is adamant that new track in AMTK ROW be under CPR Train Dispatcher control
• CSXT may require AMTK to sub-lease northern half of ROW to CPR for operation and maintenance
• CSXT may insist upon share of sub-lease revenue

Canadian Pacific Railway

Advantages
• Cost avoidance by not having to replace 5 railroad bridges to retain GE turbine and generator business
• Reduction in maintenance costs by closure & removal of two grade crossings and removal of approx. 2.5 miles of track and signal system
• Maintenance savings by sale of Mohawk River Bridge
• Revenue from sale of approximately 30 acres of land in downtown Schenectady
• Closure & removal of PAR bridge over FML removes a vertical clearance restriction

Disadvantages
• CSXT has discretionary authority to approve or not approve the extension of CPR’s trackage rights authority in the corridor by 7,000 feet
• CPR pay additional trackage rights fee to CSXT for extension
• CPR pay lease fee to AMTK/CSXT for operation and maintenance of new CPR track
• Host 1 additional PAR eastbound and 1 additional PAR westbound train on FML
### CSX Transportation

**Advantages**
- Seven railroad bridges on the AMTK ML and two railroad bridges on the Carman SD will be upgraded to modern freight standards
- Retain/grow GE turbine and generator business by allowing GE to reduce shipping costs by use of GE-owned railcars rather than 3rd party leased cars
- Possible revenue source for additional CPR trackage rights fees and AMTK sub-lease part of ROW to CPR

**Disadvantages**
- Extension of CPR trackage rights in the corridor by 7,000 feet helps a competitor
- Extension of CPR trackage rights could explicitly require CSXT to acknowledge NS trackage rights on CPR on this 7,000 foot extension (helps a bigger competitor)

### Pan Am Railways

**Advantages**
- Reduction in maintenance costs by closure & removal of three grade crossings, two railroad bridges and removal of approx. 3.2 miles of track
- Revenue of sale of abandoned railroad ROW

**Disadvantages**
- Additional trackage rights fees for operation of more trains on CPR FML
- Additional cost to maintain track and signal system for connection to Sand Bank Track and FML

### Norfolk Southern Railway

**Advantages**
- Minor reduction in equipment maintenance costs due to reduction in wear through fewer curves on Sand Bank Track route vs. FML route (both routes 2.5 miles)

**Disadvantages**
- CPR may increase trackage rights fees to contribute to CPR’s share of capital cost of project

### NYSDOT

**Advantages**
- Improves the efficiency of the State’s freight rail network
- Improves the efficiency of AMTK’s Adirondack and Ethan Allen Service by increasing train speed and potentially increasing AMTK revenues
- Increased revenues potentially reduces NYSDOT PRIIA S-209 costs for subsidized service
- Reduces passenger and freight train interference

**Disadvantages**
-
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- Potential Obstacles to the Concept Plan

Summary, Conclusion, and Questions

Potential Obstacles to the Concept Plan

- CSXT has not yet agreed to extend CPR’s trackage rights on the AMTK Main Line by 7,000 feet
- Cost sharing among the Stakeholders of the approximately $3m Planning Grant in relative proportion to the benefits to each Stakeholder
- Availability of Federal grant programs and State funds towards cost of Planning Grant

Contact Information

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Freight & Passenger Rail Bureau
NYS Department of Transportation

(W) 518-457-3632

Email: John.Madden@dot.ny.gov
Schenectady County Track Rationalization & Grade Crossing Elimination Project

[Concept Plan]

Presentation to the Capital District Transportation Committee Planning Committee, July 2, 2014

John V. Madden, P.E.
Freight & Passenger Rail Bureau
NYS Department of Transportation

Contact Information:

John V. Madden, P.E.
Freight & Passenger Rail Bureau
NYS Department of Transportation
50 Wolf Road, POD 5-4
Albany, NY 12232

(W) 518-457-3632
Email: John.Madden@dot.ny.gov
PHASE 3 - REHABILITATE TWO CSXT RAILROAD BRIDGES ON CARMAN SUBDIVISION

Data Source: NYSDOT GIS Data Base
Freight & Passenger Rail Bureau
25 June 2014
BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT:

- NYSDOT is asking the CDTC to provide NYSDOT with a letter of support for the Concept Plan. The CDTC letter, and other Stakeholder letters, will be included in an Application to the Federal Government (TIGER-7, Rail Line Relocation, HSIPR, other) for a Planning Grant. **This grant does not commit to construction**, but will analyze the concept, develop alternatives and costs within the concept, select an alternative, conduct Environmental work and Preliminary Engineering so as to prepare a viable project construction package.
- **At some point in the future**, this construction package would be the basis for an Application for construction funding.

CONCEPT PLAN PHASES:

**Phase 1 – Restore Sand Bank Track Route and Retire CPR Freight Main Line in Schenectady**

Construction

Reconstruct a signalized CPR track on the north side of the AMTK ROW from the Schenectady Passenger Station to the connection to the former Sand Bank Track. **[Dotted Red line]** Probably on the Schenectady side, construct a connection track from the AMTK Main Line to the new CPR track, so AMTK trains can access the CPR track for Adirondack and Ethan Allen Service.

Reconstruct the Sand Bank Track as a signalized Main Track. Begin at-grade south across Maple Ave and construct a new highway bridge **[Green Triangle]** carrying Maple Ave over the reconstructed track. Start the track up grade up so as to cross over Freeman’s Bridge Road on a railroad bridge. **[Green Square]** Plan for a span long enough to allow four highway travel lanes under the bridge and plan for a two track bridge (with only one track initially).

Acquire sufficient property to construct a more gradual curve to connect the new CPR track on the AMTK ROW to the former Sand Bank Track ROW. **[Red Dotted Line]** The previous curve was sharp and limited to 10-15 MPH; the new curve should be designed for at least 50 MPH passenger/30 MPH freight speeds. The curve would start up a grade as soon as after passing under Sunnyside Road **[Green Triangle]** and connect to the elevated Sand Bank Track before crossing on the bridge over Freeman’s Bridge Road. [No changes to or rehabilitation of the Sunnyside Ave Bridge is needed for the project.]

Replace (or rehabilitate if feasible) the northernmost spans of the AMTK Main Line bridges **[Yellow squares]** in Schenectady over:

Union St,
Eire Blvd,
Green Street,
Front Street and the
Mohawk River,
Inspect and rehabilitate the AMTK stone arch bridges [Yellow octagons] over Iroquois Street and Collins Creek.

Rehabilitate to Cooper E-80 for a minimum of 315,000 pound gross railcar weight (or higher as determined in discussion with GE).

**Retirement and Removal (after above is constructed and in service):**

Retire and remove the track and signal system of the:

AMTK connection track from AMTK ML to CPR FML (0.4 miles over Union Street and Pine/Center Streets)

CPR Freight Main Line from Schenectady Station to and over the CPR Mohawk River Bridge

Retire and remove the following railroad bridges in Schenectady:

AMTK connection track over Union Street
CPR over:
Union Street
Pine Street/Center Street
Pine Street Pedestrian Tunnel (currently gated and locked at both ends)
North Jay Street; and
Nott Street

Close and remove the following highway/railroad grade crossings:

Seneca Street
Maxon road Extension

**CPR Offer Former ROW and Adjacent Property for Sale**

CPR could offer for sale and development the approximately 30 acres of land in the City of Schenectady consisting of the ROW and adjacent property. The elevated embankment could then be removed and the elevation of the property returned to street grade.

**CPR Offer Mohawk River Bridge for Sale**

CPR could offer for sale their Mohawk River Bridge. The county of Schenectady, the City of Schenectady and the Town of Glenville could integrate this river crossing into their planned trail system.
Phase 2 – Construct PAR Connections to CPR Sand Bank Track and Freight Main Line; Retire PAR Rotterdam Branch in Glenville

Construction

Construct a new connection track in the south end of the project area [Dark Red dotted line] from PAR just east of the PAR railroad bridge over the AMTK Main Line, downgrade to parallel and connect with the restored Sand Bank Track prior to its bridge crossing over Freeman’s Bridge Road. [Green square]

Construct a new connection track in the north end of the project area [Dark Red dotted line] from PAR just east of the PAR railroad bridge over the CPR Freight Main Line downgrade to connect with the FML north of Mohawk Yard.

Both the southern and northern connections to the FML will be signalized interlocking under control of the CPR Train dispatcher.

Retirement and Removal (after above is constructed and in service):

Retire and remove the track (there is no railroad signal control system) of the PAR Rotterdam Branch from the Sand Bank Connection at the south end to the FML Connection at the north end. [Black line]

Close and remove the following highway/railroad grade crossings:

PAR crossing of Freeman’s Bridge Road
PAR crossing of a private dirt drive entrance east of the Freeman’s Bridge Road crossing
PAR crossing of the entrance road to Stratton Air National Guard Base

Retire and remove the following railroad bridges in Glenville:

PAR railroad bridge crossing over CR-29 Maple Ave; this bridge has both horizontal and vertical restrictions to highway traffic.

PAR railroad bridge crossing over the CPR Freight Main Line north of Mohawk Yard and south of Glenridge Road; this bridge caused a vertical restriction over the CPR FML which prevented the raising of the track. This railroad vertical restriction, in turn, resulted in the construction of the CPR railroad bridge over Glenridge Road at a sub-standard vertical height (10’-9”) causing a highway restriction there.
PAR Offer Former ROW for Sale

PAR could offer for sale and development the land in the Town of Glenville consisting of the ROW and adjacent property. The elevated embankment west of Freemans’ Bridge Road could then be removed and the elevation of the property returned to the grade of the adjacent property owners.

Phase 2 Alternate – “New” Maple Ave

This possible alternative would require that a governmental entity purchase the PAR ROW from the vicinity of the Air National Guard highway/railroad crossing to the crossing of Freemans’ Bridge Road. The governmental entity could then utilize this ROW to construct a “New” Maple Ave connection [Thick Medium Red line] to Freeman’s Bridge Road. This connection could then allow the closure of Maple Ave at its crossing by the Sand Bank Track and eliminate the design and construction cost of a highway bridge to carry Maple Ave over the restored Sand Bank Track.

Phase 3 – Rehabilitate Two CSXT Railroad Bridges on Carman Subdivision

Replace (or rehabilitate if feasible) the northernmost spans of two of the CSXT Carman Subdivision bridges [Yellow squares] in Rotterdam over: Helderberg Ave, Curry Road

Rehabilitate to Cooper E-80 for a minimum of 315,000 pound gross railcar weight (or higher as determined in discussion with GE). Intent is to allow GE to use their GE-owned railcars with the closer axle spacing instead of leasing 3rd party railcars.

STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CONCEPT PLAN

General Electric: Insures that CPR retains a competitive route for loads to Port of Albany (up to 550,000 pounds gross weight) to CSXT (up to 606,000 pounds gross weight); Allows GE to reduce costs of shipping turbines to Port of Albany by CSXT through use of GE-owned railcars vs. lease of 3rd party specialty railcars

City of Schenectady: Removes 5 low and narrow railroad bridges over city streets; Closes and eliminates two highway/railroad grade crossings; Removes railroad embankment which separates rest of City from Riverfront; Provides up to 30 acres of former CPR land for development, a portion of which is directly across from the former ALCO property; Increases the development potential of existing small parcels of land adjacent to railroad embankment

Town of Glenville: Grade separates the restored Sand Bank Track on a railroad bridge over a four-travel-lane Freeman’s Bridge Road; Closes and eliminates the Freeman’s Bridge Road, the
Stratton Air Guard Base grade crossings, and 1 private crossing; Closes and eliminates the vertical and horizontal highway restriction of the railroad bridge over CR-29 / Maple Ave; Removes the PAR railroad embankment between Freeman’s Bridge Road and the new Sand Bank Connection which improves the development potential of adjacent property; Grade separates Maple Ave over the restored Sand Bank Track OR closes Maple Ave at restored Sand Bank Track and replaces it with “NEW” Maple Ave on PAR ROW; Restores freight train operation to approximately 6,500 feet of track in Town where no trains have operated in about 30 years

**Village of Scotia:** Few residences adjacent to the restored track on the AMTK ROW; Restores freight train operation to approximately 3,600 feet of track in the Village where no trains have operated in about 30 years

**Town of Rotterdam:** Potential for highway clearance improvements at Curry Road and Helderberg Ave when the bridges are replaced

**Schenectady County:** Reduces the transportation cost for GE-Schenectady and potentially makes the facility more competitive and retains/grows jobs; Provides the opportunity for METROPLEX IDA to support the redevelopment of 30 acres of former CPR property in downtown Schenectady; Provides the opportunity for Schenectady County to acquire the CPR Mohawk River Bridge and integrate it into the County Trail System; Acquisition cost for PAR ROW from Air National Guard crossing to Freemans’ Bridge Road crossing for “NEW” CR-29 / Maple Ave

**Stratton Air National Guard Base:** Closes and eliminates the highway / railroad grade crossing at the entrance to the Air Base, which addresses a safety hazard

**Galesi Group:** Elimination of the railroad embankment across the street from the ALCO property, which eliminates a physical and visual barrier to the rest of the City, may enhance the development of the ALCO site and adjacent properties