

Minutes

Outer Banks Transportation Task Force

Demand Management Subcommittee

The Demand Management Subcommittee met at the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce on February 9, 2006 at 8:30AM.

Attending were Ben Cahoon, Erin Burke, Greg Loy, Cheryl Byrd, John Walsh, Bill Fenner, Mike Hejduk and Sue Cotellessa. The meeting was chaired and minutes were kept by Ben Cahoon.

Not present were Linda Hess, Lori London, Carolyn McCormick, Brandon Shoaf, David Webb and Tim Wilson.

Ben Cahoon and Cheryl Byrd provided background on the work of the Task Force and set forth the purpose of the subcommittee.

Visitor perceptions of the traffic problems were discussed. Most present had some anecdotal evidence of visitor dissatisfaction caused by "traffic". It was resolved that results of studies by the Realtors, Visitor's Bureau and others should be obtained to better inform the subcommittee about the nature, location and times of traffic difficulties.

It was noted that 80% of change-over still occurs on Saturday. The effect of shifting some of that change-over to Friday or Sunday (or of even shifting it by a few hours) was discussed at some length.

The effect of weather on traffic was discussed. The proverbial rainy Thursday Aquarium surge was cited as one example. Shopping and the search for other entertainment venues contribute to traffic during rain.

The fundamental infrastructure and development patterns of the Outer Banks and their effects on traffic were discussed. Traffic is concentrated on two north south routes due to the absence of radials, beltways or a true limited access bypass. Geography precludes those alternatives.

The need for better incident management was identified. Traffic generally flows until there is an accident. Emergency responders should be trained (and there should be jurisdictional cooperation) to rapidly establish alternate patterns of traffic flow. This should go beyond simply directing traffic. The effects of speed and signage on traffic incidents were discussed. Erin noted that Manteo is developing a "wayfinding" system including signage for the benefit of visitors.

Alternatives like more frequent mile markers (down to the tenth of a mile) and street numbers on road signs were discussed.

It was resolved that traffic flow data should be obtained from DOT to identify problem areas and times. Knowing when visitors arrive and move around will be important to the work of this subcommittee.

Moving the point of check-in to the other side of the bridge was discussed. It was resolved that the Realtors should be intensively involved in all discussions about change-over and check-in (place, day, time, etc.) since they know the market, owners and renters. A worksession with the subcommittee and a representative group of Realtors was proposed and will be pursued.

Also discussed briefly were:

- Use of scooters.

- Lack of pedestrian accommodations (sidewalks or crosswalks) in many otherwise attractive "nodes".

- The desire among some visitors for rentals of shorter duration.

- Resistance to change of change-over days and times.

- Availability of housecleaning crews on alternative schedules.

The absence of local or regional charter trips, water taxis and indoor recreation.

The following resource needs were identified:

Visitor survey results.

DOT traffic studies

Maps and aerials

A list of stakeholders in the subcommittee's work should be identified.

It was resolved that prior to the next meeting a list of committee goals and timelines, a mission statement and an end date for work should be established.

It was resolved that a representative from Kitty Hawk should be identified and invited.

The next meeting was set for March 9, 2006 at the Chamber at 8:30AM.

In this organizational meeting the initial discussions of the subcommittee often overlapped the missions of other subcommittees. By copy of these minutes those subcommittees are advised of our comments. BC