

PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME: “Sustainable Transport Solutions for Basseterre, St. Kitts”

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Introduction

This progress includes progress already reported previously in other incremental reports. Since the previous report in February 2015 when the biggest challenge identified in implementation has been the lack of local capacity in Geographic Information Systems (GIS), due to change in local personnel with the expertise after the project was launched, more attrition in personnel has occurred, as well as dissolution of the Physical Control and Planning Board. Mr. Meshach Alford is no longer working at the Department of Physical Planning and Environment. An appointment has been made to meet with the new Minister of Transport to do a briefing with the view of gaining support for the continuation of this project, particularly with respect to the marking of parking spaces, as well as the implementation of a promenade to relieve traffic congestion and develop a more livable urban center.

With persistence and hired assistance to conduct the essential commuter survey, responses were gathered, compiled, and analyzed, which is a key addition to this report since the previous report was submitted. Another key addition is the recommendations to be made from evidence and findings in the commuter survey to the newly constituted Physical Planning and Control Board. The Numerous attachments are made in support of this report. Although some documents were already submitted with the previous report, they are attached again so that they are all cumulative in report for convenience.

Product 1- Implement a Capacity Building plan, with employees in the Department of Physical Planning and Environment (DPPE) and members of community-based organizations as the target audience, to gather and analyze transportation statistics including the following activities:

1. Determine specific arrangements for collaboration and training within the Department of Physical Planning and Environment (DPPE) and CFB College from which three students would be placed on work-study assignments.
 - a. It was determined that training was essential for personnel not only in the DPPE but also from agencies/departments that collaborate with the DPPE on transportation, e.g. Traffic Department that is in charge of transportation, Public Works that is responsible for road works, Inland Revenue with respect to vehicle registration, and the Department of Statistics that is in charge of data gathering and processing. Therefore, personnel from the DPPE, the CFB College, and other departments were recipients of training relevant to the project. Participant lists will follow in attachments to the various training sessions.

2. Identify gaps and areas for improvement in institutional capacity and skills and develop capacity building strategies to address them at all levels in the research process from data gathering and analysis to implementation of changes to achieve desired and defined outcomes.
 - a. As mentioned in the Introduction (above), there was need for capacity building in GIS. The expert personnel in GIS at this DPPE vacated his position abruptly and there was need to seek substantial funding to facilitate GIS training at both the introductory and advanced levels in order to effectively pursue transportation modeling. Additionally, the function of transportation was never the responsibility of the DPPE but, instead, the Traffic Department had the primary responsibility for transportation planning, regulation, control, and traffic counts. The Traffic Department collaborated with Inland Revenue for data gathering and processing, and Public Works performed construction and maintenance of roads and streets. The DPPE made only limited reference to Transportation but without a plan and participation in this function. A strong interest was expressed in the various stakeholders for training and participation. Basic training was provided on the principles of Urban Planning with focus on transportation, as well as training on the research process with respect to survey design, data gathering, and developing relevant data bases.

3. Formulate a program to build capacity at all levels, i.e. technicians, experts, and managers in the DPPE, as well as coordinators of community-based organizations, to support recommended changes. The program will train existing personnel, such as Physical Planner, GIS Expert, Statistician, Urban Designer, Questionnaire Surveyor, and related support staff in transportation modeling and design. Existing programs that were deemed successful in the scoping process of the research should be continued and/or enhanced. These programs must include ways to strengthen the relationships between governmental organizations, community based organizations and the private sector to sensitize all groups in society about the advantages and disadvantages of commuting pattern and choice of mode, as well as incentives and disincentives to be developed under the provisions of the new transportation element of the Master Plan.
 - a. The list of stakeholders to participate in training and collaboration was developed in consultations with government officials and the business community (Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Department Heads, and Officers from the Ministry of

Sustainable Development, Traffic Department, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Tourism, Department of Statistics, and the CFB College; and the business community – Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Festivals and Events Planner, local business owners, and street vendors). Various interviews were conducted with such stakeholder for their input to the selection of participants for training and the type of training.

- b. Presentations were made by Dr. Naraine, Mr. Alford, and other personnel from the DPPE with background in Urban Planning, Strategic Planning, Research Process, Surveying, and Data Gathering.
4. Implement programs formulated, based on items 1 and 2 (above), as well as direct training on selected software (Cube) to all participants (Physical Planner, GIS Expert, Statistician, and Urban Designer; and one regional expert in transportation planning; this should include the utilization of local or regional experts in the Caribbean and/or Latin America where replication of the project concept is targeted.
 - a. Mr. Alford participated in specialized training in Florida facilitated by international experts on Transportation Planning, one of whom was later hired to provide a training course to participants in St. Kitts. The training outline is attached.
 - b. Regional experts from University of the West Indies, Department of Geomatics and Engineering, to facilitate specialized training to participants in St. Kitts. The training outlines are attached.
 - c. Training by a hired transportation expert from the United States, partially financed by the Ministry of Sustainable Development, was conducted on Transportation Planning using the Cube Voyager model.
 5. Implement training programs for 2 personnel in the Statistics Department of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and 2 personnel in the DPPE to build capacity on how to monitor and evaluate the effects of continued and newly implemented programs, and make adjustments to policies and programs, based on results on monitoring and evaluation or new impacts due to changes in the phenomenon and/or impacts of intervention.
 - a. The Commuter Survey Instrument was designed in collaboration with the DPPE and Department of Statistics so that personnel would grasp the need to outline objectives from which variables and questions are defined and formulate. Models from other municipalities overseas were also looked at as reference in designing the instrument for St. Kitts. As well, the Transportation Expert from the United States, mentioned in item 4 (c) above, gave some guidelines and sample survey instruments to assist in Commuter Survey Instrument for St. Kitts. Once tested, the instrument was further modified, and when it was actually implemented there was compelling feedback that it had to be further modified and re-implemented based on extremely low and incomplete responses.
 - b. The Commuter Survey was completed and supplemented with interviews of key persons in the community (survey instrument and interview schedule of questions are attached). The analysis of the survey and interview responses are presented separately as a part of the recommendations to the Physical Planning and Control

Board for consideration of inclusion in the National Physical Development Plan with Transportation as an element.

Product 2- Review existing transportation legislation and policies, and describe and analyze them for good and/or ineffective practices and provide a report

- a. This was done at the beginning of the project implementation as a part of the scoping/research process to determine the need for transportation planning. A report was provided in this regard as justification for this project (copy is attached).

Product 3- Identify factors influencing mode share and design a database with the relevant variables/data fields and provide an analytical framework or model

The model selected is the 4-Step Model, based on the context of St. Kitts and recommendation by external expert transportation consultant. Areas of focus were for theoretical underpinnings of the comprehensive 4-Step Model are: Trip Generation, Trip Distribution, Mode Choice, and Trip Assignment. For the purposes of data gathering, a questionnaire instrument is designed to gather commuter data by household. While it is recommended by the transportation expert, based on the characteristically small size of the St. Kitts population and commuters and this beginning stage of transportation planning, that St. Kitts begins with Trip Generation. However data for the 4-Step model should be gathered while the commuter/household survey is conducted to avoid “survey fatigue” and having to implement another survey for additional data. This would minimize cost in the long-run.

The commuter survey was completed and data analyzed, and the findings are presented as an attachment to this report. Due to initial implementation of the survey and extremely poor response numbers, the instrument was revised and re-implemented.

Product 4- Gather data from existing reports and statistical records to derive characteristics and trends in mode share of commuters and provide analysis and report

Essentially, there is relatively low preference for biking as a mode choice, while there is strong preference for modifying parking arrangements and implementing a promenade in the urban center. It should be noted that the relatively low preference for biking is not unusual, given that this mode type was promoted mainly by incentive policy and public provision of facilities conducive to biking in other parts of the more developed economies of the world where biking was introduced for the purpose of traffic calming, changing mode share, and development of livable cities. Lesser developed economies show quite different characteristics with a greater percentage preference for biking compared to more developed economies. Therefore, the relatively low preference for biking in St. Kitts represents a significant interest in this mode share, perhaps indicative of a lesser developed economy. Note, however, there is a growing percentage ownership of automobile and solo driving, i.e. one person in an automobile. A separate report of the analysis and findings is presented as an attachment to this report.

Product 5- Develop a database of transportation statistics to be hosted, updated and maintained in the DPPE to inform policy and forecast needs to avoid potentially costly mitigation measures using the software Cube. The data gathered will encompass commuting and parking patterns such as travel distance, frequency and routes, as well as commuter characteristics and preferences/choices of mode share to be derived from traffic counts, surveys and national census. The software will be networked within the Ministry of Sustainable Development in which the DPPE is a governed. Information on traffic and parking conditions will be posted Online.

Product 6- Conduct surveys and interviews of commuters and businesses in the urban area of Basseterre. The same persons will be interviewed periodically, if they agree or are reachable, to monitor change in behavior and perception over time. New commuters and businesses will also be interviewed and categorized accordingly.

Interviews were conducted with business owners, street vendors, and public officials. However, it is anticipated that the evidence of the commuter/household survey would yield data that can be presented at a public forum, once the survey and analysis are completed by April 2015.

Product 7- Develop a Transportation Plan as an element of the Master Plan Framework or NPDP for St. Kitts-Nevis which will emphasize the use of non-motorized transport modes (bicycling and walking) to achieve a shift in transportation mode share and implement facilities in a sector of Basseterre, the Capital City, as a demonstration of the possibilities towards a more sustainable urban center from which enhancements can be patterned.

Components are done for the Transportation Element of the National Physical Development Plan, e.g. streetscape, baseline data from commuter survey, including mode share, survey and interview data for promenade concept and physical work to be done, parking analysis and physical work to be done, mapping of streets, etc.

3.2. No later than twelve (12) months from the date of signature of the Agreement by the representatives of both Parties, the Institution shall submit to the GS/OAS and to GS/OAS' satisfaction, a final technical-financial report of the Project ("Final Report") in conformity with Article I (paragraph 1.1), and Annex 2 of this Agreement. The Final Report shall include the progress made on the products planned in the proposal as these are defined in Annex 1 including the following activities:

Product 8- Under the Capacity Building Program, implement training programs at all levels in the Ministry of Sustainable Development and its DPPE to:

1. Disseminate information to all stakeholders, such as Ministry of Tourism, Traffic Department, Ministry of Public Works, and Chamber of Industry and Commerce: Completed, and information is included in attachments to report.
2. Determine techniques to monitor changing patterns and failures of existing policies and programs, as well as the concept that is being introduced.

(Still pending)

3. Forecast trends and potential problems relating to the phenomenon and plan for likely future changes.

(Still pending)

4. Develop an analytical framework and toolkit for replication/implementation of the concept to other urban centers in the Caribbean and Latin America with similar demographics, consumer and commuting patterns, development status and technological status, and environmental conditions. It is typical that SIDS and many Latin American countries do not take a proactive “planned” approach but rather react to “organic” growth of transportation networks and traffic management.

(Still pending)

Product 9- Location and Design of parking facilities, bicycle lanes, and curb cut-outs. These would include public and private parking lots, street parking, sidewalks with access for bicycles, streets that may be redesigned to accommodate bicycle lanes, These features will be identified in particular areas of the urban center and located on a map for review and redesign to enhance parking arrangements, bicycle commuting, and pedestrian activities.

Based on preliminary work and presentation of a photo-collage of the streetscapes in the urban center (see attached file) and consultations with the Minister of Tourism and business owners in the area, it was indicated that Fort Street is the suitable place for a promenade, bicycle parking, street vending, widening of sidewalk, and bicycle lanes. The Minister of Tourism and Head of the Festivals Planning Committee have requested that the project team proceeds with the widening of sidewalks for restaurants, cafes, and street vendors/kiosks who are already serving local customers and tourists on the sidewalks. Widening of sidewalks would involve the covering of drains to make them sub-drains. It would also require marking of lanes for bicycles. The Public Works Department is agreeable to perform the work, but funds are needed for materials.

Product 10- Implement the newly developed Transportation Plan to introduce a Parking Facility and Bicycle Lane and Curb Cut-Outs in a section of the Urban Center (as a demonstration). The scope for a “promenade” will be explored and proposed to achieve traffic

calming in the most dense commercial and retail area of the urban center, while seeking to encourage more bicycling and pedestrianism, business activities, socialization, and recreation.

The survey and interview findings, as well as the streetscape analysis, field observations, and parking analysis support the concept of a promenade and conditions that would support biking.

Product 11- Monitoring & Evaluation Framework. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Transportation Plan to determine the shift in mode share.

(Still pending)

Product 12- Community Outreach. Introduce awareness activities through public service announcements, bulletins, and press releases by providing information about the benefits of bicycling and pedestrianism in urban centers, with explanations of incentives and disincentives to sensitize commuters

Several media activities were done to sensitize the public about this project. However, the findings from the survey and the actual plan of the promenade and transportation element are needed before further outreach can be undertaken in collaboration with the Control and Planning Board.

Conclusion

This project has faced significant issues with unexpected lack of capacity due to staff attrition and has accomplished tremendous work in capacity building. There was further loss of focus during pre-national election activities and post-national election activities, resulting in yet further loss of capacity with dissolution of key stakeholders. With the extensive data that has been gathered through various survey, interview, field activities, and mapping, there is now compelling evidence of interest in transforming the urban center of Basseterre to a more livable city. Despite the protracted process under the circumstances, this project is strongly positioned for further implementation and realization of the concept initially proposed, and the Project Team Leader is determined to seek ministerial and other support to accomplish the work that is yet to be done.

End of Report