The meeting opened with introductions and an overview of the I-87 Multimodal Corridor Study and an update of its status by the project team. It was also explained that the purpose of the workshop was to receive input and guidance from participants on ways to improve freight movement and security in the corridor, emphasizing that the meeting would be an informal roundtable discussion rather than a formal presentation by the project team. The results of this workshop and the other five sessions scheduled for the same three-week period will feed into the final corridor study report that will be prepared during Phase 2 of the project.

The following sections summarize key points of the group’s discussion and highlight issues to be explored more fully during Phase 2. An agenda for the meeting and sign-in sheets are included as Attachments A and B.

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

**Truck Safety & Inspection**

*Long-Term Goals*

- A permanent inspection facility south of the Champlain/Lacolle border crossing is a critical need.
  - Currently, inspections are conducted at rest areas or comfort stations that have limited on-site capabilities or provisions for commercial vehicle detention or impoundment. The use of rest areas is also problematic in that it mixes commercial vehicles with passenger vehicles.
  - The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has a ten-site “target list” (including the Champlain/Lacolle site and nine others) of permanent inspection facility sites that would handle complete vehicle screening, including weight inspections and driver and safety inspections. This facility, coupled with ITS capabilities such as optical identification of license plates and transponders, would reduce the need for in-transit inspections, thus decreasing travel time for trucks.
- Utilize current ITS capabilities to their full capacity.
- There are a number of factors prohibiting full deployment of ITS capabilities, including funding constraints, limited state and federal agency coordination, and a lack of universality of equipment and standards.

- Greater transponder penetration into truck fleet would be very helpful, with license plate optical identification used as an alternative.

- Federal regulations to require permanent transponders would eliminate repeat inspections. Also, the ability to use the same transponder for all programs (e.g., E-ZPass, the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) program, the North American Preclearance and Safety System (NORPASS), etc.) would be a benefit, along with the sharing of information among programs and agencies.

- New York is currently the only state in the northeast with an operational Level I Commercial Vehicle Information Exchange Window (CVIEW) electronic credentialing and safety compliance system, making it difficult to form a consortium with other states.

- A new Mark-4 Transponder is being created which is compatible with both NORPASS and the PrePass system. This transponder may also be used to access the computer system in a vehicle, as it is fixed to the vehicle’s electrical system.

- The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has been involved with NYSDOT and the New York State Police in the early phase of development and implementation of electronic credentialing and screening equipment. Widespread deployment is not available due to lack of funds.

- Currently, inspections information collected along the Northway by the New York State Police is uploaded via cell phone. This is especially problematic in the High Peaks Region, as cell phone coverage is generally minimal or non-existent.

- The Thruway has a more “captive audience” than the Northway, and the data collected from vehicle screening along the Thruway tends to be that of well-run long haul operators. Therefore, data collected on the Thruway may not provide an accurate cross-section of travelers along the entire I-87 corridor.

- The One Stop Credentialing and Registration (OSCAR) system contains four credentialing elements for every vehicle operating legally in New York State.

- The ability of the proposed statewide Information Exchange Network (IEN) to serve as a communications platform for all electronic data distribution in the state should be examined.

- Inter-agency cooperation.

- NYSDOT and the New York State Police both expressed a need for increased cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (Customs)
and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). Redundant commercial vehicle checks are occurring at the border and then again in close proximity on I-87 southbound because of non-existent or limited communication/information transfer between federal and state agencies.

- **The group re-iterated the benefit of improved wireless communication in the corridor, especially when sharing real-time information with other sites and agencies. The availability of an existing fiber optic “backbone” along I-87 was discussed, along with the private-sector marketability issues that are delaying further use of this infrastructure.**

- **Improved weigh stations and equipment (in addition to a permanent inspection station).**
  - Sufficient and accurate weighing equipment is essential. Weigh-in-motion (WIM) sites currently exist in several locations along the corridor; however, truck drivers have developed methods of straddling the plates to ensure an inaccurate reading. Also, weigh stations need to be strategically placed where trucks cannot use alternative or bypass routes. In order to achieve a higher percentage of overall vehicle screening, weigh stations are needed in some locations on bypass routes as well.
  - Optical identification, working in conjunction with automatic data collection systems such as WIM, could be a means of accomplishing a greater capture and enforcement percentage.
  - Virtual weigh stations would be extremely beneficial given current staffing limitations. These systems would be located off-highway and would record information while no one is there. Enforcement of overweight vehicles would be done via letter, using a photograph and identification information on the vehicle.

**Short Term Goals**

- Currently, there are only 35 state-level inspectors for the entire state. More personnel are needed for increased coverage and to expand inspections to parallel/bypass routes. NYSDOT and the State Police are working with local law enforcement to increase coverage on parallel routes.

- Use decommissioned rest areas as temporary location for inspections.

- Better marketing of the FAST program is key. In order to encourage trucks to use the FAST programs, perhaps there should be dedicated lanes where possible. However, the lane must be long enough to benefit trucks during high-congestion times.

**Other Issues**

- How are Truck Inspection responsibilities shared between the New York State Police and NYSDOT?
NYSDOT performs the safety inspections, while the State Police are responsible for the enforcement of safety and weight inspections. NYSDOT cannot issue tickets to violators.

- What are the different levels of inspections?
  - There are several different inspection levels. Level 1 includes full vehicle and driver inspection. Level 2 includes a walk around inspection, and Level 3 is driver inspection only. Since September 11, 2001, NYSDOT has been required to increase the number of Level 3 inspections; however, the agency tries to maintain a balance of vehicle and driver inspections. NYSDOT acknowledges the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) safety inspection for a 3-month period.

- Any program must provide a balance between highway safety and homeland security.

**Rail Freight Inspections**

- Currently, all southbound trains crossing the U.S.-Canada border at Rouses Point go through the Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System (VACIS), which x-rays rail freight cargo. Sidings and other improvements are needed at the border to prevent lengthy delays as trains wait for inspection, especially if rail traffic increases.

- The possibility exists to perform cargo inspections at either end of the trip rather than at the border; however, this would require Customs officials at each of the end points, as well as some form of sealed container program.

- Intermodal facilities must be provided to accommodate increases in water-borne freight at the Port of Albany.

**ATTACHMENTS**

A. Workshop agenda
B. Sign-in sheets