

# **NORTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AUTHORITY, INC.**

## **PROJECT PRIORITIZATION COMMITTEE**

*FREEHOLDER SUSAN ZELLMAN, CHAIRMAN*  
*COUNTY EXECUTIVE DENNIS McNERNEY, VICE CHAIRMAN*

### **MINUTES**

**February 26, 2007**

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#### **I. Roll Call of Members**

Committee Chairman Susan Zellman, Freeholder, Sussex County, called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m. There were 10 voting members present.

#### **II. Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 18<sup>th</sup> joint meeting was made by Bergen County, seconded by Middlesex County and carried with nine affirmative votes. Ocean County abstained.

#### **III. Action Items**

##### **1. Approval of the FY 2008 Capital Construction Program (CCP)**

Martin Hofler, Central Staff, gave a brief overview of the development process for the CCP and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the benefit of new committee members. The draft CCP was received from NJDOT and NJ Transit in January and analyzed by Central Staff. Mr. Hofler said more than 100 comments and inquiries were received after the draft was distributed to the subregions in early February. He noted that most issues were resolved and all questions answered. Teams from NJDOT and NJ Transit also met with various subregions at the NJTPA offices on February 16<sup>th</sup>.

An addendum to the CCP was distributed to the Committee members. It contained changes made up to that time. Mr. Hofler said four projects were added to the original draft; construction for one project was advanced one year; the FY 2007 funding level of one project was restored; and the FY 2008 funding level for two projects was increased. The addendum also included technical corrections.

Mr. Hofler noted that the program will receive an additional \$25 million, the disposition of which will be determined by the Board of Trustees in March. Cliff Sobel, Central Staff, said that the \$25 million was a line item for projects in the Liberty Corridor planning area that had not yet been allocated to specific projects. (A portion of the line item funds will be allocated to two projects in the TIP, thus releasing funds that can be utilized for other projects.) Mr. Hofler discussed the process for determining what additional projects would be funded when more funding become available. He said that in developing this roster of projects, the length of time

that delayed projects have lingered in the TIP due to fiscal constraint would be considered. He also said the list of local lead projects in the original draft would remain the same.

Sue Dziamara, Hunterdon County, expressed her county's serious concerns about a one-year delay for a Route 78 resurfacing project, and she requested that the Edna Mahan Frontage Road project on Route 78 be restored to the TIP. Mr. Hofler suggested a meeting under the NJTPA's critical project monitoring program to work out a way to advance the Frontage Road project in FY 2007.

Walter Lane, Somerset County, thanked the NJTPA and NJDOT for making changes for which the county had asked, but he expressed concern over some high priority projects that have been "continually slipping" over several years. Mr. Hofler reiterated that the length of time a delayed project has been in the TIP will be given first consideration if additional funding becomes available.

It was noted that NJDOT and NJ Transit requested an extension of the deadline for submitting the CCP to the state legislature from March 1<sup>st</sup> to March 30<sup>th</sup>. An extension had not yet been granted at the time of the meeting.

A motion to endorse the draft Capital Construction Program was made by Middlesex County, seconded by Bergen County and carried unanimously.

2. Approval of the Revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the NJTPA, NJDOT, and NJ Transit on Procedures to Amend and Modify the NJTPA TIP/STIP

Ann Ludwig, Central Staff, reported that staff worked with NJDOT, NJ Transit, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization to develop proposed revisions to the MOU, which was last updated in 1999. Ms. Ludwig explained that in recent years construction costs have increased up to 30 percent across the state, often causing cost overruns that require modification of the TIP. She noted that in the past year, the PPC had to consider 13 of the 16 modifications of projects in construction. She said the proposed revisions to the MOU would have reduced that number to five by increasing thresholds required for Committee action. The MOU also would decrease the time required to process modifications. Ms. Ludwig stressed that the revisions do not change the modification process, just the threshold of dollar amounts, per phase of work, that require committee action.

During the ensuing discussion the following was noted:

- The revisions also included enhancements to the project reporting process and reflect the SAFETEA-LU requirement changing the TIP from a three-year to four-year program of projects.
- Modifications for amounts under \$500,000 would be approved at the discretion of the NJTPA Executive Director with subregional concurrence. Any controversial projects would be forwarded to the PPC for consideration.
- The revision of the MOU was for processing purposes only and deals only with construction cost increases.
- The process for amending the TIP was not changed.
- Project status reporting had been enhanced, including the opportunity to schedule meetings with NJDOT and NJ Transit project managers to discuss project readiness.

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Hudson County, seconded by Hunterdon County and carried unanimously.

### 3. Approval of a Series of Modifications to the FY 2007-2010 TIP

Eve Chamberlain, Central Staff, reported that NJDOT requested a series of modifications that would provide additional funding to support the changing requirements of three current projects:

- The Route 78, Union/Essex Rehabilitation project needs an additional \$4.7 million for final design, which was delayed until FY 2007;
- The Route 7, Hackensack River Bridge (Wittpen Bridge) project in Hudson County needs \$1.5 million for right-of-way acquisition; and
- The Route 206, CSX bridge replacement in Somerset must be authorized for final design in FY 2007 (\$1.3 million) in order to remain on schedule.

Ms. Chamberlain said four projects were proposed as funding sources:

- The Route 440, Southbound, I-95 Interchange to South of Kreil Avenue resurfacing project in Middlesex County – This will be funded with state funds, leaving \$4.8 million in federal funds available to be reprogrammed;
- Routes 35 and 36, Eatontown, Monmouth County – The county has requested that the project be delayed. Final design funds are being reprogrammed into FY 2008; and
- Route 9, Green Street Interchange, Middlesex County and the Route 9, Bay Avenue/Cedar Street drainage improvements – Final design authorizations are scheduled for September and December 2007, thereby allowing funds to be reprogrammed without adverse effects.

A motion to approve the modifications was made by Bergen County, seconded by Hudson County and carried unanimously.

### V. Discussion Item: Summary of the New Jersey Association of Counties Commissioned Report, “Local Aid Perspective of the Transportation Trust Fund”

Frank Scarantino, Ocean County, President of New Jersey State Association of County Engineers (“the Association”) presented the findings of a recently released report commissioned by the New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC) entitled: “Local Aid Perspective of the Transportation Trust Fund.” He also distributed a letter that the engineers’ association sent to Governor Corzine the previous week. The letter urges the Governor to revisit the recommendations of the Transportation Blue Ribbon Committee to increase local aid to \$300 million annually. It also asks the Governor to “address the drastic short fall of local aid to the counties in a manner that would better fund the unique burden of maintaining and replacing local bridges.” Mr. Scarantino asked the NJTPA to support the Association’s position.

Mr. Scarantino noted that the counties and municipalities in the state have an immediate annual need of \$200 million for road resurfacing and over \$200 million for reducing the bridge rehabilitation and replacement backlog. The current \$175 million Local Aid funding from the state Transportation Trust Fund (evenly split between municipalities and the counties) is well

under the \$300 million annual level recommended by the Blue Ribbon Commission. The share of local aid has been reduced from 18 percent of annual appropriations in 2001 to 11 percent in 2007.

Mr. Scarantino stressed that local bridge maintenance is the highest priority, because counties are responsible for over 7,000 county and municipal bridges while NJDOT is responsible for fewer than 2,400 bridges. It was noted that prior bridge bond funding had been exhausted and additional funding is now needed to avoid a serious future problem. Mr. Sobel inquired about the resurfacing need, which was also highlighted in the report. Mr. Scarantino indicated that an overall local aid funding increase to \$300 million would address road resurfacing.

Joseph Ettore, Monmouth County Engineer and Vice-Chairman of the Association underscored the problem of insufficient bridge funding which could result in future bridge weight restrictions or closings. He further noted that any increase in funding needs to be long-term in order to properly plan the necessary design, utility relocation, and bid preparation work in advance. After considerable discussion by Committee members on the importance of sufficient local bridge funding, Freeholder William Barham, Monmouth County suggested that the Association compile a listing of bridges under county jurisdiction that are in serious need of repair or replacement, along with a five- to 10-year implementation plan. He said such documentation would help the Governor's office better understand the need for additional funding.

After further discussion, a motion was made by Middlesex County to request that the Association compile a listing of bridges under county jurisdiction that are in serious need of repair or replacement over the next 10 years. This listing will serve as further documentation of the growing issue of local bridge needs as set forth in the NJAC report. Upon compilation of this listing, the report will be submitted to the NJTPA. It was agreed that this issue will be discussed at the April RTAC meeting and a resolution of support will be considered at the April PPC meeting for recommendation to the Board of Trustees in May. The future resolution would identify the need to increase the overall level of local aid for both resurfacing and bridge improvements but focus on the immediate need to obtain alternative funding sources to address the local bridge issue. The motion was seconded by Ocean County and carried with eight affirmative votes. NJDOT and NJ Transit abstained.

## VI. Other Item

After a brief discussion, it was agreed that Central Staff would collect and share information concerning the proposed privatization of the state's infrastructure assets, such as the New Jersey Turnpike.

## V. Next Steps

1. A meeting that would focus on the restoration of the Edna Mahan Frontage Road project to the FY 2007 TIP, as requested by Hunterdon County. (A meeting of representatives from Hunterdon County, Union Township, Central Staff, and NJDOT was subsequently scheduled.)
2. Central Staff to compile information concerning the privatization of public infrastructure assets.

In addition, the Association of County Engineers is to provide the Committee with a list of bridges in need of repair and replacement along with information on the amount of funding needed to cover the work.

### III. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Middlesex County, seconded by Bergen County and carried with unanimous verbal acclaim at 12:45 p.m.

**Project Prioritization Committee  
ATTENDANCE  
February 26, 2007**

<b>V O T I N G M E M B E R S</b>	
Freeholder Susan Zellman, Chairman	Sussex County
Freeholder William Barham	Monmouth County
Farouk Ahmad	Bergen County
John Lane	Hudson County
Sue Dziamara	Hunterdon County
George Ververides	Middlesex County
Frank Scarantino	Ocean County
Liza Betz	Union County
Rich Roberts	NJ Transit
Jerry Mooney	NJDOT
<b>O T H E R S</b>	
Tom Drabic	Sussex County
Jim Berzok	NJDOT
John Lane	Hudson County
Naomi Hsu	Jersey City
Cheryl Brennan	NJDOT
Thomas A. Wospil	NJDOT
Howard Immordino	NJDOT
Walter Lane	Somerset County
Sharon MacLean	Hunterdon County
Joseph Ettore	Monmouth County
Deena Cybulski	Morris County
Kamal Saleh	Union County
Tom Davis	Passaic County
Gerrald Rohsler	Morris County
Michael La Place	Passaic County
Ken Alosio	Bergen County
Joel Weiner	Central Staff
Karen Shannon	Central Staff
Cliff Sobel	Central Staff
Martin Hofler	Central Staff
Ann Ludwig	Central Staff
Eve Chamberlain	Central Staff
Mary Ameen	Central Staff
David Behrend	Central Staff
Beverly Morris	Central Staff