

NORTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AUTHORITY, INC.

SUSAN M. ZELLMAN, CHAIRMAN

MINUTES **March 24, 2008**

The NJTPA Office
One Newark Center, 17th floor
Newark, NJ 07102

A. Open Public Meetings Act Compliance - Chairman Susan Zellman opened the meeting at 11:15 a.m. Marie Della Pelle advised that, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L.1975, adequate notice of this meeting had been forwarded to the Star Ledger, the Jersey Journal, the Record, the Courier News, the Asbury Park Press, and the New Jersey Herald News and posted in the Essex County Administration Building, Newark, New Jersey, and on the bulletin board of the Secretary of State, Trenton, New Jersey.

B. Salute to the Flag

Chairman Zellman led the Board of Trustees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Roll Call

Following the salute to the flag, Marie Della Pelle called the roll. Nineteen voting members were present. (Attachment 1).

D. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 14th meeting was made by Ocean County, seconded by Jersey City, and carried unanimously.

E. Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Zellman noted that the Board meeting was the first for new NJTPA Executive Director, Mary K. Murphy. She said that Ms. Murphy was intimately involved in recent collaborations with NJDOT concerning the FY 2009-2018 State Capital Construction Program. The Chairman explained that, this year, the NJTPA was asked to review and endorse a fiscally constrained, 10-year program in the same timeframe as the four-year programs of the past, which complicated the approval process. She noted that the large number of bridge projects and other new work in the draft program caused a number of important projects that have gone through the NJTPA planning process to remain unfunded.

The Chairman said that the region's allocation of state and federal funding over the 10-year period would be reduced from the historic 75 percent to 71.3 percent, due to major projects in the state's other MPO regions. She noted that NJDOT agreed to work at making up the

approximately \$400 million shortfall created by this funding situation. Chairman Zellman reported that NJDOT also agreed to include a list of the unfunded NJTPA priority projects with the draft program submitted to the state Legislature. She said projects on this list (referred to as the “Tier Two List”) will receive priority consideration for funding as it becomes available. The Chairman noted that this would be the first time the Capital Program would be submitted with such an appendix. She expressed appreciation to NJDOT Commissioner Kolluri for his attention to NJTPA concerns.

Chairman Zellman pointed out that endorsement of the Capital Program would be in the interest of meshing the priorities of the NJTPA with those of the state in advance of the NJTPA compiling the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) later in the year.

The Chairman reported that, earlier that morning, the Project Prioritization Committee (PPC) held a special meeting, and received a full accounting of the changes incorporated into the draft program since February. She noted that the list of unfunded projects was provided too late to give staff sufficient time to review and distribute to the Board before that day.

Chairman Zellman said that NJDOT indicated they will work on allocating an equitable share of funding to the region and attempt to resolve specific project issues. She noted that there were only four to six weeks in which to accomplish this task in order to prepare the TIP for Board approval in July. She pointed out that the TIP is the federally required project listing that allows the region to draw down \$1 billion dollars or more of federal transportation funding each year. Prior to approval of the TIP, the NJTPA must finalize the project mix, undergo air quality conformity analysis, and conduct a public comment period, she noted.

The Chairman announced a May 31st Board of Trustees retreat and stressed that all Trustees should attend, rather than sending representatives. She said the Trustees must set the course of the NJTPA in meeting its mission. Chairman Zellman pointed out the strong mandate from the federal government to make a positive difference on behalf of the people of the region. She said she looked forward to working with the Board, NJDOT, NJ Transit, and NJIT to see the MPO live up to its fullest potential.

Chairman Zellman invited NJDOT Commissioner Kris Kolluri to address the meeting. He congratulated the Chairman, Ms. Murphy, and the recently appointed Executive Committee. Mr. Kolluri said he looked forward to open, honest, and transparent discussion with the NJTPA, which he said represents the majority of the state’s population and deserves the respect, honesty and open dialog it desires.

The Commissioner thanked the PPC for endorsing the draft Capital Construction Program. He said he could think of no better way to mitigate recessionary effects on the state than through this infrastructure investment program. The Commissioner said that the state’s 4.8 percent unemployment is unacceptable, and the capital program “is the single most important action that we can take to show people we are serious about preserving their jobs.”

Commissioner Kolluri pointed out the importance of planning for a longer period. He said the 10-year plan shows the breadth of problems faced by the state. He acknowledged the \$6.4 billion in unfunded projects, \$4.6 billion of which will provide for the rehabilitation of the Pulaski Skyway. He said the state, with the help of the NJTPA, is trying to address a monumental task

with the proposed program. He suggested continued collaboration to ensure a program that truly reflects the fiscal constraints facing the state. Then he reminded the group that the Transportation Trust Fund will run out of money in 2011.

The Commissioner welcomed the Board, in its fiduciary obligation, to develop an honest alternative for funding transportation projects if they cannot support the Governor's proposal. The Commissioner concluded his remarks by saying he looked forward to working with the Board and its Executive Committee in the future.

F. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Murphy thanked the Executive Committee and the Board for giving her the opportunity to serve as NJTPA Executive Director. She also thanked Chairman Zellman for her support and guidance during the recent negotiations with NJDOT over the Capital Construction Program.

Ms. Murphy reported that she was visiting each subregion to introduce herself and learn about their key issues and concerns first hand. She said she had also met with the RTAC to get to know their perspective on the critical subregional programs.

Ms. Murphy highlighted some recent key Central Staff activities:

- A selection committee made up of Central Staff members and representatives of NJDOT, NJ Transit, and the RTAC recommended a consultant team for the 2009 update of the Regional Transportation Plan. Negotiations are underway and the consultants are expected to be under contract by the end of the month, and the effort will involve the full Board, the RTAC and staff.
- The three-state MPO Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was completed and transmitted to the Federal Highway Administration. The NJTPA took the lead in coordinating the finalization of the MOU as well as its joint transmittal. It was agreed that the first annual meeting of the MPOs will be held this fall. Also, Ms. Murphy met with the NYMTC Board and presented the framework for this region's RTP. NYMTC agreed to send representatives to visit the NJTPA offices and share their direction and provide insight into their own regional plan update.
- The draft FY 2009 Project Development Work Program (PDWP) was distributed to all Trustees and RTAC members for their review. Consultation meetings with NJDOT would take place later that week. The Board will take action on the PDWP in May, following final review and recommendation by the Planning and Economic Development Committee.
- The Technical Advisory Committee for the Northwest New Jersey Bus Study held its first meeting in late February. Data collection and surveying of travelers on buses and at park-and-rides is underway through the partners at NJ Transit.
- A consultant team was hired to provide training on the NJTPA's newly enhanced transportation model later in the spring. The main focus will be to train staff from the subregions in the model's capabilities, including how it can be adapted for subregional

scales. Two half-day sessions will be included: an executive overview of the model for Trustees or other interested parties and an expert session covering model specifications for experienced staff and consultants.

- The NJTPA continues to be an active participant in the New Jersey Deer Vehicle Crash Coalition. The group met in March to prepare for the fall education campaign.
- Public comments are being sought on a proposed amendment to the TIP and the accompanying Air Quality Conformity Determination. The amendment would shift funds in the current fiscal year to two projects and one program from three projects that are undergoing reevaluation or schedule changes. This amendment would allow the much-needed resurfacing of an eight-mile stretch of Route 78 in Hunterdon County to go forward more quickly. Comments on these documents will be accepted through April 15.
- A new issue of InTransition magazine was published. This edition of the national periodical features a wide range of articles, including an examination of how transportation planners are responding to the challenge of climate change; a look at the challenges of managing transportation in historic districts; a discussion of Denver's extensive rail expansion plans; and an excerpt from the book *Uncommon Carriers* by Pulitzer Prize winning author John McPhee.

G. Committee Reports/Action Items

- **Project Prioritization – County Executive Dennis McNerney, Chairman**

County Executive McNerney noted the outcome of the special meeting of the PPC that morning, as detailed earlier by Chairman Zellman and Commissioner Kolluri.

The County Executive reported that the Committee considered two action items at its February meeting. He said that the first concerned approval of a series of modifications to the FY 2008 – 2011 TIP, which was requested by NJDOT. Two projects and two programs in the TIP needed additional funding due to escalating project costs. Four projects and two programs were identified as sources for the needed funding. Mr. McNerney said that three of the projects and both of the programs no longer need the funds that were authorized in previous years. He said that the construction phase of one project, the Route 7 Hackensack River Bridge, Contract One will be deferred to FY 2011. All affected subregions concurred with the proposed modifications. The Committee recommended approval of the modifications, and no further action is required.

County Executive McNerney reported that the Committee considered another series of modifications that were proposed to provide another \$21 million in federal funding for the repair of the Pulaski Skyway. He said that this funding is in addition to \$10 million from the state, bringing the total to \$40 million. Mr. McNerney said that NJDOT identified nine projects and two programs that would be tapped for the additional funding. He said the Committee agreed to table the modifications pending clarification of how the funding from the projects and programs would be replenished. At the special meeting that morning, the Committee reconsidered the modifications and approved them, and no further action is required.

Action Item 1: Endorsement of the FY 2009 10-Year Capital Construction Program

(Attachment 2)

In response to queries from Freeholder Pasquale Lepore, Passaic County, the following points were made:

- The Tier Two list that was distributed to the PPC at the beginning of its meeting consisted of 37 currently unfunded projects in the NJTPA Region. A second Tier Two list was distributed by NJDOT during the meeting. This list included the unfunded projects for the entire state.
- Commissioner Kolluri explained that if more funding becomes available, the projects on the Tier Two list have a chance of entering the ambit of the Capital Construction Program.
- The Commissioner said that the projects on the Tier Two list would be reviewed with the Executive Committee and staff according to the management system appropriate to each project. If a project is ready to advance, if funds are available to support it, and if the Board votes for it, “it should happen.”
- Ms. Murphy said that the projects on the list, which were not yet prioritized, will be ranked based on their current project prioritization scores as well as the other considerations the Commissioner mentioned when the list is incorporated into the NJTPA’s TIP later in the year.
- It was agreed that the words “part of” were not accurate in the context of the state-wide Tier Two List accompanying the resolution. The words were removed from the list and its cover page.

Robert Bzik, Somerset County, expressed appreciation to the PPC for modifying the resolution to truly reflect endorsement of a “draft” program that will be open to additional input, discussion, and possible changes in next four to six weeks. He also expressed appreciation for the continued collaboration between the NJTPA and NJDOT to advance projects on the Tier Two list. He said he recognized the demands of fiscal constraint and the schedules and deadlines established in the Governor’s office and at NJDOT.

A motion to approve the resolution endorsing the program was made by Ocean County, seconded by NJDOT and carried unanimously.

- **Planning and Economic Development – Freeholder John DiMaio, Chairman**

Freeholder DiMaio thanked Chairman Zellman, Central Staff, and NJDOT for all their hard work on the Capital Construction Program over the last few weeks.

The Freeholder reported that the Committee considered two action items at its February meeting. The first is a proposed Amendment to Volume III of the FY 2008 UPWP that would allocate the remaining \$37,500 in Subregional Study Program funds, which became available after a previously approved subregional study was not able to go forward. He said that Bergen County requested the funding to augment their current FY 2008 River Road–Hudson Waterfront

Circulation Study, a joint effort with Hudson County. The Freeholder said that the additional funds would allow for expansion of the study area to include several more municipalities. He said the Committee recommended approval of the action, which would fully allocate the FY 2008-2009 Subregional Studies Program budget.

Freeholder DiMaio reported that the other action item concerns approval of the Fiscal Year 2009 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which outlines the transportation planning and related work to be done by Central Staff, the subregions and other agencies during the upcoming fiscal year. He said that, since the first draft in December, Central Staff incorporated comments from the state and federal transportation departments, as well as the Board and subregions. The Committee recommended approval of the Program.

The Freeholder also reported that staff briefed the Committee on the draft North Jersey Regional Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. He explained that the federally mandated plan takes a regional look at special transportation services for the region's elderly, disabled, low-income and rural residents. The Freeholder announced that two public meetings would be held that week: March 26 from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Middlesex County Planning Board offices in New Brunswick and March 27 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the offices of the Housing Partnership in Dover, Morris County. The Freeholder noted that the Committee will make a recommendation on the final draft at its April meeting, and the plan is expected to be forwarded to the Board for final approval in May.

Freeholder DiMaio reported that staff updated the Committee on the NJTPA's analysis of the Highlands Council draft Master Plan. He explained that staff developed the analysis of various transportation-related aspects of the Highlands plan and incorporated input from the RTAC. He said that the final document, which constitutes the NJTPA's official comments on the master plan, was sent to the Highlands Council on February 27th. The Freeholder said that staff will work with the Council and the Board of Trustees as the plan is finalized and the Council begins to develop more detailed procedures for project screening and implementation. He said that the NJTPA will continue to push for implementation of key transportation projects in the Highlands as appropriate.

Action Item 2: Approval of an Amendment to Volume III of the FY 2008-2009 UPWP Subregional Study Program to Reallocate Residual Funds (Attachment 3)

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

Action Item 3: Approval of the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
(Attachment 4)

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

- **Freight Initiatives – Freeholder Peter Palmer, Chairman**

Committee Vice Chairman, Freeholder Daniel Sullivan reported on the activities of the Freight Initiatives Committee. He said the December meeting focused on the Truck Rest Stop Study

which was presented to the Board in January. He announced that the next meeting will be held March 31st.

Freeholder Sullivan highlighted recent freight-related staff activities:

- Committee Chairman Palmer and NJTPA staff were asked to participate in Commissioner Kolluri's Blue Route Task Force, which is charged with evaluating the New Jersey Large Truck Access Network and developing a new network that will restrict roadways that cannot safely accommodate these vehicles, yet still provide necessary access to terminals, customers, food, fuel and rest. This task force is an outgrowth of the recently adopted state routing regulations for large trucks.
- NJTPA hosted the NationsPort Annual meeting on January 22nd. NationsPort Chairman Jack Lettiere called on the well-attended gathering to work with them as they develop a strategic plan for the New York/New Jersey Port.
- Following the NJTPA Truck Rest Stop Study, staff worked with the I-95 Corridor Coalition and NJDOT on their application to the Federal Highway Administration for funding of truck rest areas and related improvements. This effort, being undertaken as part of FHWA's Corridors of the Future initiative, relied heavily on the findings of the NJTPA study and similar efforts undertaken by states and MPOs in the I-95 corridor.
- Staff met with officials of USDOT's Maritime Administration, including its administrator. They are working to develop waterborne services in the New York/New Jersey harbor. Two such services being pursued are car float operations by the New Jersey Rail Carriers, and the reconstruction of the pier at Raritan Center to establish short haul barge services to support distribution activities.
- Committee Chairman Palmer and NJTPA staff participated in the meetings of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Freight Committee and the New Jersey Shortline Railroad Association; the NJTPA hosted the latter.
- Finally, the Technical Advisory Committee for the NJTPA Grade Crossing Study met twice since December. The study has entered the analysis phase and is on schedule for an April 30th completion. A public meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 17th.

J) Public Participation

A motion to open the meeting to public participation was made by Jersey City, seconded by Passaic County and carried unanimously.

Tom Drabic, Sussex County, stressed the importance of including a project's readiness for construction, right-of-way acquisition, or final design phase in the criteria for advancing projects on the Tier Two list.

K) Time and Place of Next Meeting

Chairman Zellman announced that the next meeting of the NJTPA will be held on Monday, May 12 at 10:00 a.m., at the NJTPA offices at One Newark Center, Newark. She reminded the Trustees of the May 31 retreat at Raritan Valley Community College.

L) Adjournment

At 12:00 p.m. a motion to adjourn was made by Middlesex County, seconded by Hunterdon County, and carried by unanimous verbal acclaim.