

NORTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AUTHORITY, INC.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Walter Lane, Chairman
Kamal Saleh, Vice Chairman

MINUTES

June 21, 2006

I. Roll Call

Chairman Lane called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. There were 11 voting members present. Five more arrived later in the meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the April 5th meeting were approved with seven affirmative votes. Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic and Union Counties abstained. The vote was taken before arrival of the remaining five counties.

III. Review of Standing Committee Agenda Items

There were no comments concerning the standing committee action items.

IV. Action Item

Election of Members for FY 2008-2009 Subregional Studies Program Review Committee – Liz DeRuchie, Central Staff

The FY 2008-2009 Subregional Study Program solicitation package had been distributed to committee members prior to the meeting. Ms. DeRuchie noted two new features of the program:

1. The subregions would have the opportunity to meet and share ideas as a group.
2. The review committee would conduct site visits and discuss study areas, where applicable.

Upon Mr. Lane's request for volunteers for the proposal review committee, Deena Cybulski, Morris County, and John Lane, Hudson County, volunteered to participate. Walter Lane said that he and Kamal Saleh would continue the recruiting effort by contacting RTAC members directly.

V. Presentation: Strategy Evaluation

Brian Fineman, Central Staff, introduced the committee to the concept of "place types" as the foundation for identifying planning objectives and transportation objectives in the current round

of the Strategy Evaluation process. The committee was provided with a table of 10 proposed place types. Migi Lee, Central Staff, elaborated on the draft list of place types and provided examples; Keith Miller, Central Staff, discussed the methodology used, so far, to identify the place types; and Bob Diogo, Central Staff, briefed the committee on proposed Strategy Evaluation performance measures. A brief discussion ensued, during which various committee members asked questions and provided information and suggestions. The discussion was characterized by an emphasis on the data sets that would or could be utilized by Central Staff in place type identification.

Dr. Fineman emphasized the need for feedback from the RTAC as the process is developed. He also suggested conducting in-depth outreach in the fall of this year, including subregional workshops to identify local issues and gather input to feed into the regional analysis. Regarding the project schedule, Dr. Fineman said that by the end of 2006 place types and objectives would be set and needs identified. In 2007, strategies will be defined and their impact determined. Selection of strategies for application to specific place type needs will commence by summer/fall 2007. He noted that information about the NJTPA Strategy Evaluation effort will be posted on the agency's website.

VI. Information Items

1. Procedures to Address Bid Cost Overruns

Martin Hofler, Central Staff, reminded the committee that the Federal Highway Administration mandated that a process for addressing bid cost overruns be in place by September 30, 2006. He reviewed the steps taken previously that led to a short-term solution of borrowing funds from donor projects listed in reverse chronological order by authorization date. In this current process, the project with the latest authorization date is the first to donate funds to cover the cost of bid overruns.

Mr. Hofler briefed the committee on proposed changes to the Memorandum of Understanding that would delineate a long-term solution for funding bid cost overruns. He outlined a process where donor projects would be selected from the aforementioned list, but in two tiers.

The first tier to be used as donor projects would be those with authorization dates past the current fiscal year. If the amount of overruns made it necessary to select projects up for authorization in the current fiscal year, the second tier would be used. In both tiers, reverse chronological order of authorization would be used, with the additional condition that donor projects would be selected based on phase of work as well as authorization date. Donor projects would be selected in the following order:

1. Projects in design phase
2. Projects in right-of-way phase
3. Construction-ready projects

That is, the project in the design phase with the latest authorization date would be the first donor project, with the next latest design phase being the next one. If all design projects were used, the next project would be the right-of-way project with the latest authorization date, and so on.

During the ensuing discussion, committee members raised some concerns, such as the priority given to reinstated donor projects, effect on the Environmental Impact Statement of a project in design phase, validity of engineers' estimates, and the fact that a time-based method of choosing donor projects does not capture the quality of a project.

Jerry Mooney, NJDOT, pointed out that the federal sponsors often authorize projects with bids exceeding estimates, when the difference is not excessive. He noted that other MPOs have raised the threshold amounts for bid overruns that call for implementation of a formal bid overrun process. He also said that TIP modifications are often used to reallocate funding among projects when necessary.

Mr. Hofler noted that the proposed MOU for the region contains the sorts of thresholds mentioned by Mr. Mooney. Karen Shannon and Cliff Sobel, Central Staff, pointed out that, at a meeting of FHWA, NJDOT, and the state's MPOs, it was agreed that the NJTPA Board of Trustees clearly embraced establishing a formal long-term process for funding projects with bid cost.

2. Recommendation to Suspend Solicitation for the FY 2007 NJTPA Local Scoping Program

Sascha Brathwaite, Central Staff, explained that the program has been so successful that there are more projects accepted into the program than can be funded. Ms. Brathwaite said that Central Staff recommends a one-year suspension of solicitation for new projects so that the \$2 million set aside for the Local Scoping Program can be used as contingency funding to cover any shortfalls and/or bid cost overruns for projects that have or are about to graduate from the program. Ms. Brathwaite said that Central Staff also recommends a reassessment of the program in order to find ways to address the growing shortfall. She suggested that a subcommittee be established that would include county engineers and others to help tackle this issue.

3. Request for Proposals for Walkable Community Workshops

Ron Tindall, Central Staff distributed copies of the request for consultant proposals that was just released. He said the proposals are due July 13th and will be reviewed by a group of RTAC members. He asked the committee members to contact municipal traffic safety officers for pedestrian issues that could be included in the workshops. He also asked them to recommend two to three locations each in their counties. One subject location per county would be selected for a workshop. Mr. Tindall said that the state will provide crash data through December 2005, and Central Staff will modify the data for the subregions' use in selecting locations. Mr. Tindall noted that one goal of the project is to enable the subregions to conduct their own Walkable Community workshops in the future.

4. NJTPA Website Redesign

Mark Solof, Central Staff, reported that a consultant has been engaged for a seven-month project to redesign the NJTPA website. He said a questionnaire would be e-mailed to RTAC members for their input regarding their experience while using the website.

VII. Next Meeting

- The next meeting of the RTAC was scheduled for Wednesday, August 16th at 10:30 a.m.
- On Tuesday, July 18th, RTAC members are invited to attend the NJIT presentation on the Travel Ways study, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

R-TAC ATTENDANCE
June 21, 2006

V O T I N G M E M B E R S	
Walter Lane, Chairman	Somerset County
Kamal Saleh, Vice Chairman	Union County
Donna Orbach	Bergen County
James Bartell	Essex County
Sonia Frontera	Governor's Office
John Lane	Hudson County
Ken Bogen	Hunterdon County
Douglas Greenfeld	Jersey City
George Ververides	Middlesex County
Sayed Moafi	Monmouth County
Deena Cybulski	Morris County
David Antonio	City of Newark
Jerry Mooney	NJDOT
Michael Lysicatos	Passaic County
Steve Brown	PANYNJ
Peter Vaughan	Warren County
O T H E R S	
E. Wesley Day	Union County
Naomi Hsu	Jersey City
Tiffany Robinson	Ocean County
Laura Kirby	Somerset County
Chris Helms	Bergen County
Tom Drabic	Sussex County
Curt Lavalla	Office of Smart Growth
Massiel M. Ferrara	Hudson County
Karen Shannon	Central Staff
Cliff Sobel	Central Staff
Brian Fineman	Central Staff
David Stein	Central Staff
Hamou Meghdir	Central Staff
Ron Tindall	Central Staff
Mark Solof	Central Staff
Veronica Alcon	Central Staff
Sascha Brathwaite	Central Staff
Bob Diogo	Central Staff
Keith Miller	Central Staff
Lois Goldman	Central Staff
Martin Hofler	Central Staff
Beverly Morris	Central Staff