

NORTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AUTHORITY, INC.

SUSAN M. ZELLMAN, CHAIRMAN

MINUTES

September 8, 2008

A. Open Public Meetings Act Compliance

Chairman Zellman opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. Marie Della Pelle, Central Staff, reported 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*. Notice was also 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, Ms. Della Pelle called the roll. Eighteen voting members were present. (Attachment 1).

D. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 28th meeting was made by Middlesex County, seconded by Ocean County, and carried unanimously.

E. Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Zellman announced that staff and consultants will conduct a series of regional visioning workshops throughout the region this fall. She said the workshops are part of the outreach for development of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The Freeholder explained that, through the use of a computerized interactive exercise at these workshops, local officials, interested citizens, and other participants will be asked to take a hard look at their priorities for land use decisions and transportation investments through 2035.

Chairman Zellman said that the interactive tool will help the NJTPA develop a sensible and sustainable regional vision for long-range transportation investment. She stressed that the RTP is

a blueprint for future transportation investment, and all projects in the region that use federal funds must be rooted in and consistent with this plan. The Chairman noted that a vision that links local land use decisions and NJTPA Board transportation planning decisions is critical to the region's future quality of life.

She also noted that the Board would receive a preview of the visioning workshops following the meeting, including viewing an introductory RTP video and getting a first look at the interactive planning tool. Freeholder Zellman encouraged the Board members to participate in the discussion.

F. Executive Director's Report

NJTPA Executive Director, Mary K. Murphy, reported on some of Central Staff's key activities since the Board's July meeting. She said that, in addition to developing the visioning exercise and scheduling workshops throughout the region, staff and the RTP consulting team have been working on other tools for informing the public about the RTP update and garnering public input:

- The Plan 2035 section of the agency's website, www.njtpa.org, now hosts an online survey that is gathering public input on transportation priorities and related information.
- A moderated message board (or blog) is providing a forum for discussion of key regional transportation planning issues.
- A video introduction to the plan will be available online soon.
- The consultants are producing several short public service announcements—featuring members of the Executive Board—that will help set the stage for plan outreach.
- A full-color postcard that invites the public to participate in the online survey is available for distribution throughout the region.

Ms. Murphy reported that staff is also engaged in extensive technical analysis for the plan. She said that the project team has been compiling and analyzing data on demographics, travel demand, and other key factors that determine regional transportation needs. They have also been taking a close look at the region's critical funding needs.

Ms. Murphy reported that a Strategy Refinement study had begun recently. The report follows up on the Strategy Evaluation that was developed over the past two years to examine the region's overall access and mobility transportation needs. She said that the effort identified many areas where the region could effectively employ strategies such as park-and-ride lots, highway operational improvements, and bus rapid transit. Ms. Murphy said that Strategy Refinement will focus on 30 areas and provide more detail and direction for potential transportation improvements. She said that the NJTPA and consultant, PB Americas, will conduct the effort in concert with the development of the long-range plan, and any potential project concepts will be tied into the vision that is outlined in the plan. Ms. Murphy reported that a kick-off meeting was held on August 6th, and Staff will meet with others from each subregion to share input this fall. She said that a Technical Advisory Committee is being formed to assist with the project, which will be completed during spring 2009.

Ms. Murphy also reported that the NJTPA's Project Prioritization Committee approved several modifications to the Transportation Improvement Program since the last Board meeting. The modifications included seven transit program funding changes and 12 modifications to highway projects. She noted that all the changes maintained fiscal constraint and did not require action by the Board.

Ms. Murphy said that reauthorization of the federal surface transportation law is one of the key items on the September 24th agenda for the annual meeting of the group of five MPOs who coordinate transportation planning activities in the greater New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut region. She said staff is working with NJDOT on a Liberty Corridor agenda that also will focus on reauthorization.

G. Freight Initiatives Committee Report and Action Item – Freeholder Peter Palmer, Chairman

Freeholder Palmer reiterated to the Board that in July the Freight Initiatives Committee unanimously recommended approval of a resolution supporting the submission of the Freight Rail Crossing Assessment Study report to NJDOT for their review and appropriate follow-up. He recalled that, at the last Board meeting, the Trustees were briefed on the study and its recommendations, and the draft report was distributed for Trustee review.

The Freeholder said that the Committee met again on August 19th. At that meeting, a representative from NJDOT briefed the members on the Rail Freight Assistance Program component of the Fiscal Year 2009 State Rail Plan. He explained that the primary objective of the program is to support economic activity in the state by providing a strong, multi-modal transportation system that makes rail service available and effective for as many businesses as possible. The \$10-million-per-year program assists rail freight carriers with improvement projects including the rehabilitation or installation of various types of track. The Freeholder noted that all projects seeking funding from the program must have the support of the affected municipalities in order to go forward.

Freeholder Palmer said that the Committee also heard from a representative of the National Association of Industrial & Office Properties (NAIOP), who presented an overview of the challenges and opportunities facing this important sector of the region's economy. He said that despite capital market shrinkage, inflation of the cost of building materials, and a complex regulatory environment, industrial and office property development is still occurring. He said that this is due to such factors as municipalities' need for ratables, an increase in available land due to decreased land speculation, and the fuel-cost-driven need for proximity to ports and cities.

Freeholder Palmer also noted that the issue of "quiet zones" at rail crossings was transferred from the Planning and Economic Development Committee to the Freight Initiatives Committee, as reported at the meeting. Staff has started production of a guide for municipalities seeking "quiet zone" designation from the Federal Railroad Administration. The guide will assist municipalities in navigating the complexities of the federal application process.

Freeholder Palmer announced that as part of the RTP update, the Committee will host a roundtable discussion in October of the major freight issues facing the region. He noted that Nation's Port Chairman Jack Lettiere would lead the discussion.

Action Item: Approval of Submission of the Freight Rail Crossing Assessment Study to NJDOT, NJ Transit, Conrail, CSX Corp. and Norfolk Southern Corp. for Review and Appropriate Follow-Up (Attachment 2)

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

H) Public Participation

Stewart Weiss, Inman Railroad Committee, voiced opposition to the Lackawanna Cutoff project, which had its Minimal Operable Segment to Andover incorporated into the current RTP by the Board in June. He said that the project was an unnecessary expense. He also suggested that the NJTPA request federal funds to build a dedicated high-speed freight rail line in the state. Concerning the Rail Freight Assistance Program that Chairman Palmer discussed earlier, Mr. Weiss said that \$10 million per year is insufficient for meeting the region's goals.

Tom Drabic, Sussex County Planning Department, responded to Mr. Weiss' remarks about the Lackawanna Cutoff by pointing out that the project will address the severe congestion problems on Route 80 by providing increased opportunities for transit ridership.

I) Time and Place of Next Meeting

Chairman Zellman announced that the next meeting of the NJTPA will be held on Monday, November 10th at 10:00 a.m., at the NJTPA offices at One Newark Center, Newark, NJ.

J) Regional Transportation Plan Visioning Workshop

Marge Quinn, DMJM Harris, provided an overview of the scenario planning tool referred to earlier by Chairman Zellman. The introductory video about the RTP update was played for the Trustees. With the aid of a slide presentation, Ms. Quinn walked the Trustees through the interactive exercise that will be used by workshop attendees throughout the region.

Kathy Stein, Howard/Stein-Hudson, facilitated a forum for Trustee input about the workshops and interactive exercise. First, Ms. Stein, asked for general comments from the Trustees about the scenario planning tool they had just seen. The Trustees offered some topics for consideration, including:

- Land use decisions over the next 25 years—Will decisions about land use continue to be made at the municipal level rather than at the regional level?
- Financing required rights-of-way for future projects—Will the region be able to afford it?

- Evacuation plans, especially for highly congested areas, should be included in the plan.
- How can we best provide planning information to participants, most of whom may not understand much of the planning process and the data on which it is based.
- Urban density issues should be given significant consideration.
- The plan must address current problems as well as those anticipated for the future.

Next, the Trustees were asked how they envisioned the workshops unfolding in their individual subregions. It was noted that:

- Visioning for a 25-year horizon will be difficult for many participants. A mechanism is necessary for helping them shift their perception and make a 25-year mental leap, especially in rural areas where there may be greater resistance to change.
- Add immediacy to the workshops, making it clear that the participants' input is needed to guide decisions for the next few years as well as outer years.
- Make sure that the public and stakeholders understand how their input will get factored into planning process.
- The facilitators must maintain control of the discussions.

Finally, Ms. Stein asked the Trustees for suggestions for customizing the workshops to better fit the particular needs of their areas. They made the following suggestions:

- The interactive tool should include a financial model of the past and future 25 years and illustrate the correlation between the kinds of transportation projects people want and their ability to pay for them, i.e. with gas tax and road toll increases.
- Bicycle/pedestrian issues should be added as a topic.
- Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) rules should be inserted.
- The addition of tolls to more roads should be considered.
- Highlands issues should be highlighted.
- Having available "Rule of Thumb" cost estimates for new highway construction or transit improvements would help inform the workshop discussions.

Four computer stations were available in the conference room for anyone who wanted to "test drive" the interactive scenario tool after the meeting.

L) Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m. by unanimous verbal acclaim.

Attachment 1

**NORTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AUTHORITY, INC.
ATTENDANCE RECORD
September 8, 2008**

The following people were present:

VOTING MEMBERS/ALTERNATES

STAFF & OTHERS

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

Sonia Frontera

NJDOT

David Kuhn

NJ TRANSIT

Richard Roberts

PANYNJ

Richard Roper

Frank Marsella
Lou Venech

CITIZEN'S REPRESENTATIVE

Not Represented

BERGEN COUNTY

Hon. Dennis McNerney

Donna Orbach

ESSEX COUNTY

Not Represented

VOTING MEMBERS/ALTERNATES (Cont'd)

STAFF & OTHERS

NEWARK

Mehdi Mohammadish

Fernando Rubio

HUDSON COUNTY

Hon. Thomas DeGise

John Lane

HUNTERDON COUNTY

Hon. Matthew Holt

Sue Dziamara

JERSEY CITY

Hon. Michael Sottolano

Naomi Hsu
Doug Greenfeld

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

George Ververides

Tony Gambilonghi

MONMOUTH COUNTY

Hon. Bill Barham

Joseph Ettore
Nora Shepard

MORRIS COUNTY

Hon. Gene Feyl

Gerald Rohsler
Deena Cybulski

OCEAN COUNTY

Richard E. Lane

Ralph Patterson
Frank Scarantino

PASSAIC COUNTY

Hon. Pasquale Lepore

Michael Lysicatos

VOTING MEMBERS/ALTERNATES (Cont'd)

STAFF & OTHERS

SOMERSET COUNTY

Hon. Peter Palmer

Robert Bzik
Walt Lane

SUSSEX COUNTY

Hon. Susan Zellman

Tom Drabic

UNION COUNTY

Hon. Chester Holmes

Liza Betz
Kamal Saleh

WARREN COUNTY

Hon. John DiMaio

David Dech

OTHER AFFILIATE AGENCIES (NON-VOTING)

NJTP

Brian Wahler

OTHER ATTENDEES

Glenn Scotland – NJTPA Legal Counsel
Bob Anderson, RHA Engineering
Melissa Budsock, HSH
Scott Giering, HSH
Leon Goodman, Institute of Transportation Engineers
James Greller, Hudson County Improve. Agency
Jim Hess, DMJM Harris
Andy Kamilaris, Dewberry
Eric Kohlsaar, AMEC
Don Kuser, Roe & Associates
David Liebgold, NJMC

OTHER ATTENDEES (Cont'd)

Gene Little, KS Engineers
Ron Lotrecchio, Stantec Consulting
Charles McManus, Stantec Consulting
Bill Neary, KMM, Inc.
Scott Parker, Jacobs Engineering
Yogesh Patel, Wilbur Smith Associates
Margaret Quinn, DMJM Harris
William Redl, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Hon. Robert Roe, Roe & Associates
William Sheppard, Atlantic Rail Services
Kathy Stein, HSH
Chris Stokes, Stokes Advertising
Ray Tomczak, HNTB
Matthew Touhny, Stokes Advertising
Stewart Weiss, Inman RR Committee
Anne Strauss-Wieder, A. Strauss-Wieder, Inc.
Hong Yuan, NJMC

NJTPA CENTRAL STAFF

Mary K. Murphy

Cliff Sobel
Karen Shannon
Martin Hofler
Mary Ameen
Marie Della Pelle
Brian Fineman
David Behrend
Beverly Morris
Mark Solof
Tracy Lockhart
Hamou Meghdir
Liz DeRuchie
Ted Matthews
Lois Goldman
Ted Ritter
Amy Magnuson
Jakub Rowinski