

NORTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AUTHORITY, INC.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Walter Lane, Chairman
Kamal Saleh, Vice Chairman

MINUTES

December 13, 2006

I. Roll Call

RTAC Chairman Walter Lane called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. There were 12 voting members present and three non-voting alternates.

II. Action Item

Chairman Lane opened the discussion, indicating that a change in the committee's bylaws may be needed to allow for flexibility in selection of the committee's officers. As worded, the bylaws preclude a chairman serving simultaneously with a chair of the Board of Trustees from the same subregion. The intent was to prevent a subregion from having a disproportionate share of influence in the activities of the NJTPA. During considerable discussion it was noted that the restriction would further deplete the small pool of potential candidates willing to serve as officers.

A motion was made by Somerset County, to change the word "may" to "should" in the following sentence: "A Chairperson of the R-TAC should not be occupied by a person from the same agency represented by the Chair of the NJTPA Board of Trustees." Essex County seconded the motion, which was carried with 10 affirmative votes.

III. Review of Standing Committee Agenda Items

Referring to Action Item Three on the December 18th joint committee agenda, Donna Orbach, Bergen County, commented on the high number of TIP modifications. She noted that the federal review team consisting of staff from the US Department of Transportation, also pointed out this issue during its summer 2005 certification review of the agency. She asked if efforts were made to communicate to USDOT that NJDOT requests modifications in order to maximize the efficient use of available funding. Cliff Sobel, Central Staff, said that the number of modifications has decreased significantly over the past five years. Mr. Weiner added that the modification process has been improving and said it is no longer as central an issue to USDOT. He said Central Staff will continue to monitor the situation. Karen Shannon, Central Staff, reported that staff is working on improving the quarterly project reporting system to a level where impending modifications can be detected sooner.

IV. Information Items

1. Evaluation of NJTPA Public Participation

David Behrend, Central Staff, reported that a consultant project is underway to evaluate NJTPA public participation efforts. He said the project will address two federal mandates. The first was generated by the aforementioned federal certification review. USDOT suggested that MPOs conduct evaluations of their public participation, public education and public outreach efforts. The other results from new planning regulations generated by SAFETEA-LU, which call for MPOs to expand and update their public participation plans.

Mr. Behrend reported that the October request for proposals resulted in five responses, and the proposal of Howard/Stein-Hudson was accepted by the agency. The public participation plan is expected to go before the Board in May 2007 then on to USDOT by July. Mr. Behrend said the consultant is researching best practices used by other MPOs and will evaluate mechanisms for public outreach utilized by the NJTPA and the subregions. He said the consultant will reach out to RTAC and Board members for interviews and discussions about public participation efforts. He encouraged them to be responsive and open to the consultant's questions and to share their ideas for improvement. The study will produce an official public participation plan and a working document on ways staff and the subregions can improve the process. Mr. Behrend noted that the consultant effort also seeks to formulate recommendations for improving outreach to communities identified under Environmental Justice.

Mr. Behrend said that the consultant also will evaluate the need for a citizens' advisory committee. Mr. Weiner reported that a visit was made to the Governor's Authorities Unit to request a replacement for the inactive Citizen's Representative to the NJTPA. He also said that, if the establishment of a citizens' advisory committee is endorsed by the consultant, it is desired that the new Citizen's Representative chair the committee.

3. Subregional IT Support of Technology Library Equipment

David Colón, Central Staff, reported that all subregions responded to the recent technology needs survey, and the following information was gained:

- There has been a 30 percent increase in STP-funded personnel.
- All subregions that are using GIS are using Arcview. Only one subregion is actively using MapInfo. It seems the Arcview has become a standard in the field.
- Interest in ArcInfo has been expressed by seven out of the 15 subregions.
- The majority of GIS training requested would be at an intermediate or advanced level.
- All but one subregion is using GIS for public outreach.
- One third of the subregions have some form of modeling capability.
- All expressed the intent of using the new North Jersey Regional Transportation Model, provided they receive training and assistance in the purchase of software and hardware,
- Four of the subregions expressed interest in ARCGIS software extensions such as: 3D Analyst, Network Analyst, and Spatial Analyst.

- Approximately seven out of the 15 subregions would like a personal computer for use with the new model or for GIS.

Mr. Colón reported that the Technology Library budget remains the same for FY 2008 and an initial \$4,000 per subregion is available. Unspent funds remaining after the first six months of the fiscal year will be made available on a competitive basis, the selection to be made by Central Staff and a subcommittee of the RTAC.

Mr. Colón said that in response to the subregional survey and site visits the IT division will implement a high performance server with ARCInfo software to be shared by the subregions remotely via the web.

Ms. Shannon noted that funds have been set aside for the training portion of the Subregional Support Program. She recommended that the committee convene to decide on their training topics for FY 2008. She said the NJTPA would be happy to provide the necessary resources. A wide ranging general discussion ensued.

2. Update on the Development of the Draft FY 2008 Subregional Transportation Planning Program (Vol. II)

Liz DeRuchie, Central Staff, explained that the STP solicitation was delayed pending receipt of the requirements for the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSTP), which was incorporated into the solicitation. This gave the subregions less time to respond with their proposals. Ms. DeRuchie said that she had received responses from seven of the 15 subregions thus far. Ms. DeRuchie said that in 2008 the subregions will continue to work on emphasis areas such as enhancing public participation, and the CHSTP.

3. 2008 JARC Program and the Coordinated Human Transportation Services Plan

Ms. DeRuchie explained that the CHSTP will expand upon and enhance the current JARC program in 2008 and now must include population groups not previously included. The plan will identify transportation-disadvantaged populations in the region, assess current levels of service, identify service gaps and make recommendations to improve transportation services to these populations. The regional plan must include regional trends, analyses and recommendations. Ms. DeRuchie emphasized that the counties will receive assistance from the NJTPA, NJ Transit, and the Voorhees Institute for the effort.

Later in the meeting, Ms. DeRuchie outlined the next steps for the subregional implementation of the plan.

1. Identification of a representative in each county to coordinate the effort,
2. Completion of a survey already distributed by NJ Transit, and
3. Utilization of a self-assessment tool on the part of the counties.

Ms. DeRuchie and Anna Magri, NJ Transit, fielded various questions from the floor. A workshop will be held following the February 14th RTAC meeting to facilitate the process and standardize it as much as possible.

Ms. DeRuchie announced that development of the next update of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is underway and asked for the committee's support in the public participation component. She noted that the subregions have done this very well in past. She announced that a new component – visualization – would be added to the plan. David Stein, Central Staff, explained that visualization is a new term USDOT has added to its requirements for planning. He said visualization is essentially a program to make better use of graphic information to facilitate the public's understanding of the transportation planning process. He said that, beyond visualization, it is hoped that a visioning program will be implemented. He said deeper understanding is needed concerning important issues such as the impact of limited funding other issues. Mr. Stein said input from the general public is needed in order to make sure the plan addresses long-term issues as well as provide projects and programs for immediate implementation.

During the wide ranging general discussion that ensued, Liza Betz, Union County, noted that the STP Program requirements have expanded over the years requiring more resources on the part of subregional staffs. There was general agreement when Ms. DeRuchie suggested consultation with the RTAC before the STP solicitation is issued for next year.

Mike Lysicatos, Passaic County, pointed out that carrying out the visioning process is a sizable undertaking and expressed concern that current budgets are not adequate to support proper execution. Ms. Shannon, Central Staff, said there is a consultant effort for the RTP development and visioning task in Volume I of the UPWP and \$500,000 to \$600,000 allocated for it. She said the subregions are not expected to handle the entire effort. Rather, they are being asked to coordinate with the consultant as part of the STP program. Mr. Lysicatos pointed out that each county has different issues and efforts and should therefore have more ownership of the visioning sessions, as opposed to a "cookie cutter" process for implementation. Cliff Sobel, Central Staff, said that the RTAC is expected to help shape the visioning and visualization outreach scope of work. Chairman Lane suggested the formation of an RTAC subcommittee to achieve consensus on approaches to the plan.

4. FY 2008 – 2009 Subregional Study Program Vol. III

John Lane, Hudson County, reported that applications received for the program exceeded available funding by \$421,000. He said some of the applications were reduced in order to ensure that each subregion would have at least one application. He thanked Central Staff and the review committee for their efforts. A brief general discussion ensued.

5. Other Items

Martin Hofler, Central Staff, announced that an enhanced NOTIS system would be up and running on the internet shortly. He said it will be updated monthly. Mr. Hofler also said that the Critical Projects Program would be starting soon, and each county would be allotted two projects for particularly close monitoring.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

R-TAC ATTENDANCE
December 13, 2006

V O T I N G M E M B E R S	
Walter Lane	Somerset County
Kamal Saleh	Union County
Michael Lysicatos	Passaic County Planning
Donna Orbach	Bergen County
Douglas Greenfeld	Jersey City
George Ververides	Middlesex County
David Antonio	Essex County
Peter Vaughan	Warren County
Deena Cybulski	Morris County
John Lane	Hudson County
Tom Drabic	Sussex County
Ken Bogen	Hunterdon County
N O N - V O T I N G A L T E R N A T E S	
Jennifer Friedberg	PANYNJ
Tiffany Robinson	Ocean County
Ken Snapp	NJ Transit
O T H E R S	
Robert Bzik	Somerset County
Liza Betz	Union County
Chris Helms	Bergen County
Brian Wahler	NJ Turnpike Authority
Anna Magri	NJ Transit
Gene Wilk	NJ Turnpike Authority
Joel Weiner	Central Staff
Karen Shannon	Central Staff
Cliff Sobel	Central Staff
Martin Hofler	Central Staff
Dave Behrend	Central Staff
Dave Colón	Central Staff
Tracy Lockhart	Central Staff
Liz DeRuchie	Central Staff
Beverly Morris	Central Staff