

**The next meeting of the Central Jersey Transportation Forum will be on
Thursday, July 20th at 9:00 AM (Refreshments at 8:30 AM)
Sarnoff Corporation - 201 Washington Road, West Windsor, New Jersey**

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

**Highlights of the
Central Jersey Transportation Forum
Meeting of March 3, 2006**

Attendees (67):

Name	Organization
Caroline Armstrong	Municipal Land Use Center
Brent Barnes	NJ Department of Transportation
Sandra Brillhart	Greater Mercer TMA
Don Cammus	Citizen
Peter Cantu	Plainsboro Township
Ron Carle	Dewbery-Goodkind, Inc.
Tom Clark	NJ Transit
Edward Cohen	East Brunswick Township
Paul Cohn	NJ Department of Transportation
David Cox	Urban Engineers, Inc.
Stephen Decter	West Windsor Township
Gina Delvecchio	Michael Baker Jr. Inc.
Elizabeth Donahue	Lawrence Township
George Fallat	Mercer County
Michele Fisher	Office of Assemblywoman Linda Greenstein
Ann Frankel	Citizen
Ernie Freeman	Plainsboro Township
Tony Gambilonghi	Middlesex County
Linda Geevers	West Windsor Township
Basil Giletto	A-1 Limousine Corporate Offices
Danielle Graves	NJ Department of Transportation
Eric Grugel	DVRPC
Pam Hersh	Princeton University
Tineen Howard	NJ Department of Transportation
Howard Immordino	NJ Department of Transportation
Jack Kanarek	NJ Transit
Barry Keppard	Greater Mercer TMA
Heidi Kleinman	West Windsor Township
Walter Lane	Somerset County
Matthew Lawson	Mercer County
George Lengel	Roebing Historical Society
Donna Lewis	Mercer County
Jim Lewis	NJ Department of Transportation
Russell Like	NJ Department of Community Affairs

Jerome Lutin	NJ Transit
Alan Maiman	NJ Transit
John Manzoni	STV Incorporated
Robert Marshall	NJ Department of Transportation
Craig Marshall	South Brunswick Township
John Miller	Dewbery-Goodkind, Inc.
Alison Miller	Friends of W. Windsor Open Space
Janice Mironov	East Windsor Township
Prof. August Molnar	American Hungarian Foundation
Pamela Mount	Lawrence Township
Mary Murrio	Historic Commission
Zoe Neaderland	DVRPC
Daniel O'Connell	NJ State Legislative Board/United Transportation Union
David Parris	Penns Neck Community
James Parvesse	West Windsor Township
Robert Patten	Hightstown Borough
Pete Rayner	Greater Mercer TMA
Marvin Reed	Princeton Regional Planning Board
Dennis Rizzo	NJ Historical Commission
James Schwarzwald	NJ Transit
Don Shanis	DVRPC
Sandra Shapiro	West Windsor Bicycle & Pedestrian Alliance
Scott Shields	Bristol-Myers Squibb Company
Sandy Solomon	Princeton Borough
Lee Solow	Princeton Regional Planning Board
David Stein	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
Gene Strupinsky	Hillsborough Township
Sue Tilden	Heyer, Gruel & Associates
Ron Tindall	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
George Ververides	Middlesex County
Herman Volk	NJ Department of Community Affairs
Ken Wedeen	Somerset County
Louise Wilson	Montgomery Township

Overview

Jack Kanarek, Senior Director of Project Development at NJ Transit, described the findings of the Route 1 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Study and offered the final study to participants. As part of the Forum action plan, five adjacent municipalities had worked together on a package of short-medium term improvements for a major existing east-west corridor. The Forum unanimously endorsed the package for CR 571 and requested that similar work be done for other corridors. A variety of brief reports were presented.

1. Introduction of Attendees

Don Shanis, Assistant Executive Director for Transportation Planning at DVRPC, and Brent Barnes, Director of Planning and Development for NJDOT, spoke about the imminent retirement of DVRPC Executive Director John Coscia and NJDOT Assistant Commissioner for Planning and Development Dennis Keck. Neither of these pillars of the Forum were able to attend the meeting, so posters commemorating their many years of service were hung up for people to sign with farewell wishes. Forum participants went around the room introducing themselves.

2. November Meeting Highlights

Mr. Shanis asked for amendments to the highlights of the November 14, 2005 Forum meeting. The highlights were approved as written.

3. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Study Next Steps

Jack Kanarek, Senior Director of Project Development at NJ Transit, started with a quick review of the essence of a BRT system. Such systems allow vehicles to get off congested roads, have raised platforms like rail stations, sometimes have different vehicles than usual buses, and incorporate other amenities. He noted its success in Pittsburgh, Ottawa, and Los Angeles. BRT allows more access into communities than rail.

Each alternative outlined in the Route 1 BRT Study includes approximately 32 miles of at-grade facilities, 1.2 miles of elevated bridges or flyovers, and 22 stations. No decision has been made regarding the DINKY, though various options to enhance service are included in the alternatives.

Mr. Kanarek provided more detail about the leading alternatives, 3C and 4C, with their associated park and ride lots and ways to deal with demand for more service than the current DINKY can provide. Alternative 4C would result in an average weekday regional bus ridership of approximately 44,000 in the year 2020 as compared to the 2020 no build alternative with a ridership of approximately 27,000. The BRT would result in a reduction of some 11,000 person trips by auto per day. It would cost on the order of \$600-700 million but would likely be phased and coordinated with private developers with them helping pay for the benefits they would realize.

The next steps include further coordination with the NJDOT Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy (Rt1RGS), other major projects, municipalities, and organizations including the Princeton Medical Center and the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission. Other next steps include improving existing NJ Transit service in the corridor and developing a “brand” for the BRT system. Mr. Kanarek offered to work with DVRPC to distribute the full BRT Study report that

was expected out shortly [this was done] and possibly to have a BRT Committee meeting.

The discussion included the following points:

- Marvin Reed, Chairman of the Princeton Regional Planning Board Master Plan Committee, said he hopes the DINKY will be kept and that some of the new routes included in the BRT seem helpful.
- Peter Cantu, Mayor of Plainsboro, expressed concern that routes should serve expected major new development in his municipality.
- Mr. Barnes stressed that land use decisions will drive the success of the BRT.
- Herman Volk, Transportation/Land Use Coordinator for NJDCA, asked whether the study had modeled an alternative of compact new development as compared to existing land uses along the BRT corridor. Mr. Kanarek said he expected that to come as part of the Rt1RGS.
- Sandy Shapiro, West Windsor Bike/Pedestrian Alliance, asked if a bicyclist and pedestrian component had been considered. Mr. Kanarek said such steps had not been explored for the full BRT system at this point.

4. East-West Corridors: Action of CR 571

Zoe Neaderland, Senior Transportation Planner at DVRPC, spoke about the agreement resulting from the CR 571 east-west corridor task. This was the first result for the east-west corridors item in the Forum's Action Plan. Five adjacent municipalities along an existing regional east-west road developed a package of short-medium term improvements. Each municipality drew on their master plan circulation element and current data to develop a package that helps each meet its goals, does not cause concern for neighboring municipalities, and helps regional east-west access. The draft package was enhanced through work with Mercer County, NJ Transit, and the Forum Steering Committee. The results should not be seen as a silver bullet, but as a feasible set of improvements.

The participants in the CR 571 Working Group spoke favorably of their experience and the results. The speakers were Mayor Bob Patton (Hightstown), Mayor Janice Mironov (East Windsor), Engineer Jim Parvesse (West Windsor), and Planning Director Lee Solow (Princeton Regional Planning Board).

The Forum discussed the project and then voted unanimously to endorse the package as a regional priority for implementation. The discussion included the following points:

- Alison Miller, Friends of West Windsor Open Space, recommended addressing missing sections of sidewalks. A discussion ensued regarding safety concerns for bicyclists and pedestrians on shoulderless sections of the roadway.
- Considerations for senior citizens and people going to the hospital are important.

- The idea of narrowing the whole of CR 571 to a uniform two lanes was raised. It was clarified that this task is not a total redesign of the corridor but rather a bringing together of widely acceptable small-medium scale refinements.
- George Fallat, Traffic Engineer for Mercer County, agreed to come to the next CR 571 working group meeting to continue discussion of potential minor operational improvements.
- Various people said that while this project does not solve the major problems, it is productive and similar work should be done on additional corridors.

5. **Brief Reports**

a) Update on NJDOT Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy

Danielle Graves, Principal Engineer at NJDOT, briefly presented a PowerPoint of key findings, issues to date, and work on a Smart Growth scenario. She said the next steps include Smart Growth scenario development, regional assessment, and regional strategy development.

Mr. Barnes stressed that it will have to be joint effort of all the participants in the Forum; for example, others will need to be creating transit-oriented places for the BRT to succeed. Ms. Graves explained that they are still discussing the specific format of a regional agreement. Mr. Cantu wanted to know how this work is integrated with cross-acceptance. He stressed that municipalities need predictability. Mayor Louise Wilson (Montgomery Township) requested the source data on markets used in the presentation.

b) Cross-acceptance

Mr. Volk said DCA is posting responses to comments received and revising the timeline. He noted that Plainsboro and only a few other municipalities have submitted plans for endorsement, but doing so opens a cadre of benefits. He recommended inviting the new Executive Director, Eileen Swann, to speak.

George Ververides, Director of Middlesex County Department of Planning, said it is important that the state come back to the counties to renegotiate before the plan goes further.

c) MLUC Integrated Land Use and Transportation: Next Steps

Caroline Armstrong, Municipal Land Use Center at the College of New Jersey, described four meetings that had been held and the planning underway for a Smart Land Use and Transportation Leadership Institute. She distributed a survey on the latter and requested everyone return it to her. She said MLUC is creating a DVD summarizing the four workshops that will end up on their web site.

d) Progress Report on Forum action Plan

Ms. Neaderland encouraged participants to see the grid showing progress on the Forum's action plan, included in the folders each meeting. Participants suggested focusing the next meeting on Land Use and Transportation.

Changes in the Planned Projects Status Report, distributed every other meeting, were described. Efforts continue to make it more useful in reaching the goals of the Forum, with new tables on pipeline 4 projects and distinguishing projects in study and development from those advancing to construction or implementation.

Mayor Wilson said the information on page 21 shows the current US 206 rather than the bypass project and had an incorrect figure for funding. [Follow-up determined that the funding was as posted on the NJTPA web site, but that was out of date; map and funding to be corrected for next edition]

6. Dialogue

Mr. Reed said the Forum should address the US 206 Bypass, SR 92, and the connection between the two. He said the charette held focusing on roundabouts for the US 206 corridor study in the Princetons was wonderful, however that planning does not match with the traffic that will be coming from a major new expressway—the US 206 bypass. Others noted that the US 206 corridor studies are due out soon. There was a suggestion to bring the consultant involved in the charette to the Forum. Mayor Cantu added that the growing warehouse traffic in the region needs highways. Creating a new committee to study the Medical Center and other major development impacts was also suggested.

Mr. Reed also said the Vaughan Drive connector and Millstone Bridge need to get done. He said the Princeton Medical Center would need to have the bridge done on a five year schedule, which will require accelerated effort.

Ron Tindall, Principal Planner for North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, noted that executive summaries and copies on CD of their updated regional transportation plan, "Access & Mobility 2030," were available on a table for those who wanted copies.

Next Steps

It was agreed that DVRPC would notify Forum participants of the next meeting date.