

**The next meeting of the Central Jersey Transportation Forum
will be **September 22nd at 1:00 PM**
Hillsborough Township Municipal Building
379 South Branch Road
Hillsborough, New Jersey 08844**

**ONE PAGE OVERVIEW
Central Jersey Transportation Forum
April 1st, 2009 Meeting**

Introductions

There were approximately 76 participants, including representatives from eight municipalities, four counties, two MPOs, one TMA, and various agencies and organizations (for-profit and non-profit). Barry Seymour, Executive Director at DVRPC, and Don Shanis, Deputy Executive Director at DVRPC, welcomed participants and thanked South Brunswick Township for hosting the meeting.

Funding Transportation Projects

- > Tom Wospil, Director of Capital Investment Planning and Development at NJDOT, provided information on the near-term financial situation at NJDOT and on the economic recovery package.
- > Liberty Corridor Board Member, Somerset County Freeholder, and NJTPA Board Member Peter Palmer gave a presentation on the \$88 million Liberty Corridor improvements package secured by Senator Menendez, including details about projects in the Route 1 Corridor.

Light on the Housing Horizon

Chris Sturm, Senior Director of State Policy at NJ Future, gave a presentation about the Smart Housing Incentives Act, which is a voluntary program designed to create incentives for municipalities to zone for compact housing in appropriate locations.

Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy (R1RGS) Update

Danielle Graves, Principal Engineer of NJDOT's Bureau of Statewide Planning and Jim Hess of AECOM Transportation provided an update on the progress of the R1RGS. The first round of subarea meetings is complete and input from these meetings is being synthesized to formulate a desired future transportation network for the regional transportation model to evaluate. The second round of workshops, scheduled for mid-May, will work on refining the regional land use vision.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Products and Updates

- > Jack Kanarek, Director of Project Development at NJ Transit, gave an update on the Route 1 BRT, including forecasts for 2025 and near-term implementation strategies.
- > Tom Marchwinski, Director of Systems Planning at NJ Transit, provided an update regarding the New Brunswick BRT study efforts.

Meeting Summary Central Jersey Transportation Forum April 1, 2009 Meeting

ATTENDEES: over 76 participants – Please advise if you attended but are not on the list.

Municipalities			
Bill	Neary	Mayor & Executive Director	East Brunswick Township, KMM
Theodore	Chase	Chair	Franklin Township Planning Board
Mike	Costello		Monroe Township Environmental Committee
Edward	Cohen	Transportation Specialist	Monroe Township
Peter	Cantu	Mayor	Plainsboro Township
Les	Varga	Director	Plainsboro Township Planning and Zoning
James	Begin	Zoning Board of Adjustment	Princeton Borough
Anton	Lahnston		Princeton Borough Traffic and Transportation Committee
Marvin	Reed	Chairman - Master Plan Committee	Princeton Regional Planning Board
Frank	Gambatese	Mayor	South Brunswick Township
Craig	Marshall	Planning Director	South Brunswick Township
Ron	Schmalz	Public Affairs Coordinator	South Brunswick Township
Alison	Miller		West Windsor Parking Authority
Linda	Geevers	Council Member	West Windsor Township
Heidi	Kleinman	Council/Planning Board Member	West Windsor Township
Shing-Fu	Hsueh	Mayor	West Windsor Township
Pat	Ward	Coordinator of Community Development	West Windsor Township
Gail	Yazersky	Principal Planner	City of New Brunswick
David	Parris		Penns Neck Community

Counties			
Matthew	Lawson	Transportation Planner	Mercer County Planning Department
Carol	Barrett	Chairperson - Committee of Engineering & Planning	Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders
Tony	Gambilonghi	Supervising Planner for Transportation	Middlesex County Department of Planning
George	Ververides	Director	Middlesex County Department of Planning
Anthony	Gamallo	Senior Transportation Planner	Monmouth County Planning Board
Joseph	Fishingier	Principal Engineer	Somerset County Engineering Division
Walter	Lane	Principal Planner	Somerset County Department of Planning

Freeholder Peter Palmer represented Somerset County and the NJTPA Board.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations			
Jesse	Buerk	Intern	DVRPC
Zoe	Neaderland	Manager, Transportation Safety & Congestion Mgmt.	DVRPC
Kelly	Rossiter	Regional Planner	DVRPC
Barry	Seymour	Executive Director	DVRPC
Don	Shanis	Deputy Executive Director	DVRPC
Ted	Matthews	Director, Freight Planning	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
Peter	Palmer	Freeholder, Board Member	Somerset County, NJTPA Board

Other Regional Bodies			
Glenn	Reibman	Director of Policy and Planning	Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission
Sandra	Brillhart	Executive Director	Greater Mercer TMA
John	Cimino		Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce, CMX Engineering
Basil	Giletto	Chair of Transportation Committee	Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce
Bill	Beetle	Project Coordinator	Municipal Land Use Center - The College of New Jersey
Anneli	TerryNelson	Community Advocacy Coordinator	Stony Brook - Millstone Watershed Association
Jon	Carnegie	Assistant Director	Voorhees Transportation Policy Institute

State Departments			
Barry	Ableman	Area Planner: Somerset, Hunterdon	NJ Department of Community Affairs Office of Smart Growth
Brent	Barnes	Director	NJ Department of Transportation Systems Planning and Research
Paul	Cohn	Manager, Smart Growth Initiatives	NJ Department of Transportation Project Planning and Development
Danielle	Graves	Principal Engineer	NJ Department of Transportation Bureau of Statewide Planning
Gary	Leach	Project Engineer	NJ Department of Transportation DPPD-Central
Jim	Lewis	Manager	NJ Department of Transportation Bureau of Statewide Planning
Andrew	Ludasi		NJ Department of Transportation
John	Micikas		NJ Department of Transportation Office of Transp. and Sustainable Comm.
Thomas	Wospil	Director	NJ Department of Transportation Capital Investment Planning & Dev.
Jay	Corbalis	Policy Analyst	NJ Future
Chris	Sturm	Senior Director of State Policy	NJ Future
Raja	Waran	Intern	NJ Housing and Mortgage Financing Agency
Daniel	O'Connell	NJ Legislative Director	NJ State Legislative Board/United Transportation Union
Tom	Clark	Regional Manager, Gov. & Community Relations	NJ Transit
Jack	Kanarek	Senior Director of Project Development	NJ Transit
Tom	Marchwinski	Director of Systems Planning	NJ Transit
Brian	Wahler	Funding Administrator	NJ Turnpike Authority
Jeffrey	Wilkerson	Project Planner	Plan Smart NJ

Other			
James	Hess		AECOM Transportation (formerly DMJM Harris)
David	Bander		Citizen
John	Mullan		CMX Engineering
Karl	Pehnke		CMX Engineering
Craig	Johnson		Dewberry-Goodkind, Inc.
Barry	Keppard		Michael Baker and Associates, Inc.
Jim	Yeager		Michael Baker and Associates, Inc.
Jerry	Lutin		NJIT
Tony	DeJohn		Parsons Brinkerhoff
Curt	Emmich		Princeton Forrester Center, Picus Associates
Pam	Hersh	Vice President for Government Relations	Princeton Healthcare System
Kristin	Appelget	Director	Princeton University Community and Regional Affairs
Walter	Schmidlin		Sarnoff Corporation Corporate Real Estate
Andrew	Feranda		Shropshire Associates
Ron	Reinhardt		TransitCenter, Inc.

Jiji	Kottommannil		URS Corporation
Erik	Wong		Staff to US Representative Frank Pallone
Lonnie	Weiss		Weiss Consulting

1. Welcome and Introductions

Barry Seymour, Executive Director of DVPRC, and Don Shanis, Deputy Executive Director of DVRPC, welcomed participants and thanked Mayor Frank Gambatese and South Brunswick Township for hosting the meeting. Mayor Gambatese welcomed the group to South Brunswick. Everyone introduced themselves.

2. Approval of November Meeting Summary

There were no comments and the summary was adopted.

3. Funding Transportation Projects

- a.) Update on the near-term financial situation and on the economic recovery package by Tom Wospil, Director of Capital Investment Planning and Development, NJDOT

Tom Wospil provided details on the good and the bad of the current financial situation at NJDOT. The good news is that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 will provide an opportunity to work on the backlog of projects at NJDOT. To take advantage of the stimulus funds, NJDOT is doing its best to speed projects through the pipeline faster than ever before. However, the bad news is that this additional funding is still inadequate. There is a \$1 billion per year shortfall at NJDOT, meaning that the list of unfunded needs continues to grow.

Commissioner Dilts set a goal of having 100% of NJDOT’s stimulus funding obligated within the first 120 days, which would exceed guidelines laid out by the legislation that require 50% obligation within the first 120 days. As of the beginning of April, NJDOT had 50% of its funding obligated, and anticipated having 100% obligated by the end of the first 120 days. This puts New Jersey in position to receive additional funding if redistribution of unspent ARRA funds occurs. NJDOT has prepared another half billion dollars of “shovel-ready” projects if more funding is released.

Mr. Wospil also said that the FY 2010 capital program will be released soon. The reality is that there will still be a Tier 2 unfunded list of approximately \$6 billion in projects.

The discussion included the following highlights:

- Marvin Reed, Chairman of the Master Plan Committee for the Princeton Regional Planning Board brought up the Vaughn Drive Connector and Penns Neck projects, wondering how we can talk about housing and economic development without them.
- Shing-Fu Hsueh, Mayor of West Windsor Township, announced that West Windsor recently approved its TOD redevelopment plan, and said he hoped NJ Transit and NJDOT honor that commitment by moving forward with funding for the Vaughn Drive Connector project.

- Barry Seymour noted that a letter was sent on behalf of the Forum to Commissioner Dilts, which recommended funding the Vaughn Drive Connector and Penns Neck projects, as well as the BRT.
- Mr. Wospil said there would be a meeting on April 6 at NJDOT to talk about what to do with the Vaughn Drive project. He said it has been downsized, but that the project “still has a pulse,” and that there are efforts underway to revive it. The project is not recommended for termination, which means it is possible that it could go to design this year if funding becomes available, since the EIS has been completed. However, the \$200 million cost is still an issue.
- Pam Hersh, Vice President for Government Affairs at Princeton Healthcare System, said PHS is very concerned that the Penns Neck project gets done.
- Mr. Wospil suggested project breakouts that can tackle a problem piecemeal are a good way to handle budgetary shortfalls and still get projects done.
- Mr. Reed commended NJDOT for showing support for TOD in West Windsor, but questioned blocking the Vaughn Drive project, because it affects everyone in the Route 1 area.

b.) Liberty Corridor and the Route 1 Corridor

Peter Palmer, Freeholder, Somerset County and NJTPA Board Member, described the Liberty Corridor vision sponsored by Senator Menendez. The goal of the Liberty Corridor is to create new business and enhance existing businesses along Route 1. The focus runs from the port of Passaic down the Turnpike to Mercer County, with an emphasis on eliminating choke points. The Senator was able to secure \$88 million for the first phase, which will involve two freight rail projects and three funded projects in Middlesex County, including one in North Brunswick and one at Route 1 and Ryder Lane. For the second phase, the Senator will seek funding in the upcoming transportation reauthorization bill. The second phase will focus on green practices. Successful implementation will depend on agency coordination.

Edward Cohen, Transportation Specialist, Monroe Township, asked about off-turnpike truck stops. In Monroe Township there are major problems with trucks “wandering around” because they do not have anywhere to stop. He asked if NJTPA had done any studies on the issue. Mr. Palmer said that NJTPA presented some possibilities to NJDOT, but that difficulties arose because truck stops are rarely popular with local communities. This prompted a comprehensive look at freight-related properties. Mr. Palmer announced that the next NJTPA Freight Committee meeting would take place on April 20th and invited anyone to attend. Mayor Gambatese agreed that the truck stop issue is a problem, but said the financial burden is currently on the townships, and that the state needs to offer help.

4. Light on the Housing Horizon

Chris Sturm, Senior Director of State Policy at NJ Future, gave a presentation on the Smart Housing Incentives Act. Work on the Act began when the Brookings Institute did a study for NJ Future that found New Jersey is not economically competitive with other states. The primary reasons included rising housing costs, lack of housing choices, sprawling land use patterns, a shortage of workforce housing, and the third longest commutes in the nation. At the same time, surveys by NJ Future showed that

communities have concerns about increasing density, ranging from a desire to preserve the character of communities to not wanting development that will attract too many school children. A task force was created with the goal of increasing workforce housing in smart growth settings. Ms. Sturm defined Smart Housing as being close to jobs and transportation choices, affordable, and easy on the environment.

The approach NJ Future sought for implementation was to look for “carrots” rather than “sticks.” NJ Future studied a program in Massachusetts involving planning grants and payouts for smart housing rezoning, which was relatively successful. This led to the development of the Smart Housing Incentives Act (A3632/S2505). The Act would be an incentive-based program for municipalities, distributing planning and visioning grants with a \$1,000 incentive payment per net new zoned unit and another \$4,000 incentive payment for every net new zoned unit that is built and for which a certificate of occupancy is issued. Requirements to qualify as “Smart Housing,” would include higher density housing, mixed incomes, appropriate locations, energy-efficiency measures, and walkable communities. Municipalities would also have the option to include design standards and requirements for mixed-use development. The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) would administer the program. Implementation is revenue neutral, with planning grants coming from existing state programs and incentives funded through developer’s fees and the NJ Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The Act has been introduced in the NJ Senate and Assembly. NJ Future is hoping the Act will be adopted in June.

Highlights of the discussion included the following:

- Ted Chase, Chairman of the Franklin Township Planning Board, asked about the schools issue. Ms. Sturm said that studies indicate multi-family and mixed-use development can be revenue neutral or positive in terms of school children.
- Alison Miller of the West Windsor Parking Authority said that it will difficult to bring about land use reform in New Jersey without property tax reform, and that while discussions often focus on housing near jobs, there is also a need for housing near supermarkets. Ms. Sturm agreed, noting that the food issue is not being addressed yet, but that hopefully mixed-use development would address the issue at least in part.
- Peter Palmer asked if the Act would conflict with COAH. Ms. Sturm said that it is a voluntary program, and is worded to be flexible enough to change if COAH regulations change.

5. Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy (R1RGS) Update

Danielle Graves, Principal Engineer of NJDOT’s Bureau of Statewide Planning, and Jim Hess of AECOM Transportation provided an update on the progress of the R1RGS. The first round of subarea meetings is complete, and the meetings were well attended. The input from these meetings is being synthesized to formulate a desired future transportation network for the regional transportation model to evaluate along with the conceptual land use scenario developed in the previous phase. The results of this refined model will be presented at the next round of subarea workshops. The second round of workshops will also work on refining the regional land use vision, informed in part by the results of the February 25th Economic Development Roundtable.

After the second round of workshops, updated transportation and land use modeling efforts will be completed. Centers will be translated into zoning areas using the GOZ model. Concentrating mixed uses along Route 1 will be a focus of the zoning analysis.

The second round of workshops is scheduled to take place around the weeks of May 11th and May 18th. The results will once again be synthesized into the models and will inform the growth strategy scenarios. Around June, final outreach meetings will be held. The goal at that time is to have the completed Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy in order to begin the process of building consensus among the mayors in the study area. Ultimately, the goal is to achieve a “magnetic north” consensus for future transportation and land use decisions in the Route 1 corridor. Ms. Graves announced a new website where all the R1RGS materials can now be found:

<http://policy.rutgers.edu/vtc/rgs/>

Highlights of the discussion included:

- Bill Neary, Mayor of East Brunswick and Executive Director of KMM, asked for clarification of the phrase “magnetic north.” Lonnie Weiss of Weiss Consulting explained that “magnetic north” is a metaphor to describe an organizing concept that will help all the various decision-makers in the Route 1 corridor make transportation and land use choices that all point to the same shared vision of the future.
- Marvin Reed asked how consensus on the R1RGS could be reached in only one meeting. He pointed out that July and August are difficult months for scheduling, and that the time-table might not be realistic. Ms. Graves clarified that the consensus-building meetings could end up being a series of meetings, and could even include individual outreach meetings if deemed necessary.
- Mr. Seymour asked what the final product of the R1RGS would be, and whether specific action items for counties, agencies, and other stakeholders would be included. Ms. Graves said that the intention is to deliver a set of actionable items at the end of the process.

6. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Products and Updates

a.) Route 1 BRT Forecasts and Short-term Plan

Jack Kanarek, Senior Director of Project Development at NJ Transit, gave his final presentation to the CJTF as an employee of NJ Transit, as he is retiring. He thanked everyone for all the help over the years.

Mr. Kanarek updated the group on the status of the Route 1 BRT project. NJ Transit is developing a near-term plan for gradually rolling out BRT service. The Alternatives Analysis completed in 2006 prepared a plan based on forecasts for 2025, which provides a framework for the long-term system plan. At this point, the concept is not to provide separate guide-ways for the BRT, but to begin to provide some priority treatments using an incremental approach.

Mr. Kanarek provided information on some specific routes:

- Three existing routes, 600, 603 and 605, are proposed to have increased frequency.
- Route 603 will also be extended.

- The near-term BRT routes would serve destinations in Lawrence, West Windsor, Princeton, Plainsboro and South Brunswick.
- New routes under consideration would operate from Bucks County, Pennsylvania to Route 1; US 130 in Hamilton to Princeton; along Route 1 from New Brunswick to the Quakerbridge Mall; Princeton to Plainsboro serving the new UMCP site; East Windsor to West Windsor and Princeton Junction, ending at the Quakerbridge Mall.
- Station stops and park-and-rides will be implemented as part of the near-term plan.
- Based on application of the ridership forecasting model, current estimates are that around 10,000 new trips per day and 4,600 auto diversions will result from the fully-implemented near-term BRT plan. The near-term plan could be phased in over several years.

More detail will be provided in future updates. Mr. Kanarek said he thought the whole near-term plan would probably have a capital cost of about \$225 to \$250 million. This would probably be about a third of the total BRT system cost. The current strategy is to phase-in the near-term plan rather than wait for hundreds of millions of federal dollars that may never come. Mr. Kanarek announced that the BRT subcommittee will meet within the next few weeks. NJ Transit will work with municipalities, TMAs, DVRPC, NJTPA, and NJDOT on specific routes and priority treatments.

b.) Update on New Brunswick BRT

Tom Marchwinski, Director of Systems Planning at NJ Transit, provided an update regarding the New Brunswick BRT study efforts. Phase I, which explored concepts, is now complete. Phase II began with a survey of all local bus routes in New Brunswick, including local NJ Transit routes and routes run by private transit services. NJ Transit is working with a consultant and Middlesex County planning staff to analyze routes, ridership forecasts, and costs. By the end of the year, details of those study efforts should become available. There will also be a separate study to look at intermodal connections including bicycle/pedestrian and bus/rail connections and facilitating easier transfers between systems.

The discussion included the following highlights:

- Mr. Shanis commented that the bus line by bus line approach may not capture all of the stakeholders in the corridor as well as an integrated approach. Mr. Marchwinski responded that after the focus groups, there are plans to hold large meetings of New Brunswick stakeholders.
- Matt Lawson, Mercer County Transportation Planner, asked about station stops and express bus service. Mr. Marchwinski said the first phase will upgrade selected stops with enhanced bus shelters including better amenities and more information for riders. Later, a second phase will incorporate more routes including express routes, as well as exploring locations for park-and-rides.
- Gail Yazersky, Principal Planner for the City of New Brunswick, asked about coordination between NJ Transit and municipalities regarding BRT priority treatments and ongoing road improvement efforts. Mr. Kanarek replied that he would help set up a meeting to coordinate with New Brunswick.
- Jerry Lutin of NJIT asked if enhanced bus shelters built as part of the BRT efforts would include real-time bus arrival and departure information. Mr. Kanarek said that NJ Transit will not yet deploy this technology, but it is likely that it will be utilized in the future as the BRT systems are phased-in.

- Pat Ward, West Windsor Township Coordinator of Community Development, asked about possible BRT stops in West Windsor, specifically Old Trenton Road on the way to East Windsor. Although stops have not been determined yet, Mr. Kanarek replied that it would certainly be a possibility.
- A question was raised about the connection between BRT efforts and the R1RGS. Mr. Marchwinski said that the BRT efforts are focused on the short-term, between now and 2015, while the R1RGS is a long-term visioning effort.
- There was a question about whether or not the two BRT efforts would have some overlap at the Quakerbridge Mall. Mr. Marchwinski said that it would be considered. NJ Transit is examining the ridership, cost, and potential route information as related to the Quakerbridge Mall for both ongoing BRT efforts.
- Ted Matthews, Director of Freight Planning at NJTPA, suggested that the new UMCP site in Plainsboro is another good termination/transfer point.
- Mr. Reed said that short-term routes should be discussed with towns and local committees that have already given a lot of thought to these issues. Mr. Kanarek agreed, saying such discussions are planned as part of the near-term program. This will include coordination with the new Princeton Jitney system.

7. Forum Accomplishments

Zoe Neaderland, Manager of Transportation Safety and Congestion Management at DVRPC, noted that the Planned Projects Status Report was included in the meeting folders. The Report is prepared for every other meeting of the Forum, and includes updates on transportation projects funded in the TIP as well as information on land use projects. Projects funded by the recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act were also included in the current edition of the Report. Ms. Neaderland announced that Gary Leach of NJDOT has offered to give a presentation about the \$295 million Route 1 Bottleneck Relief project at the next Forum meeting. She also discussed recent truck counts done by NJDOT for the CR 518 Working Group and asked the Forum to begin thinking about the next East/West corridor to study.

8. Initial Discussion of What Happens After the R1RGS Study is Complete

Barry Seymour discussed the future of the Forum. He reflected on the dynamic state of the Route 1 corridor, noting that even in the current economic climate, development projects are still moving forward. This speaks to the powerful economic driving force that the Route 1 area represents. He noted the difficult issues the area must grapple with, including physical challenges such as wetlands and river crossings, as well as political and economic challenges. He also noted that the members of the Forum are a dedicated group who keep coming back despite the challenges. Mr. Seymour brought up three issues for discussion:

- Do we need to update the goals stated on the grid in the back of the folders?
- What projects should the Forum work on?
- What should the structure of the Forum look like?

Mr. Seymour asked if perhaps it was time to bring more of a bottom-up approach to the Forum, for example, by inviting municipal representatives to sit at the head table.

9. Dialogue

Dialogue surrounding the questions raised by Mr. Seymour included the following highlights:

- Brent Barnes, Director of Systems Planning and Research at NJDOT suggested a rotating chairperson to coincide with the municipality hosting the meeting.
- Ed Cohen, Transportation Specialist for Monroe County suggested that County planning directors or representatives of TMAs could sit at the head table.
- George Ververides, Director of the Middlesex County Planning Department suggested that rather than changing the structure of the Forum, why not instead strengthen the bonds between the counties and MPOs. Mr. Ververides also suggested a shift of focus from study to implementation, praising the short-term, incremental approach NJ Transit is taking with the BRT as a potential means of getting things done.
- Peter Palmer said that despite the frustrations, if anyone can help fix the problems in the region, it is the people who attend Forum meetings.
- Ted Matthews said it is not important who sits at the head table, but that opening up the agenda to more local input might help.
- Anton Lahnston, Princeton Borough Traffic and Transportation Committee stressed the need to have continuity in who attends the Forum meetings, as well as the need to set milestones and then meet them.
- Marvin Reed said that MPOs and NJDOT should work more closely.

Mr. Seymour adjourned the meeting, thanking Mayor Frank Gambatese and South Brunswick Township for hosting the meeting. DVRPC will provide follow-up and notice of the next meeting once information is ready.

DVRPC fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. DVRPC's website may be translated into Spanish, Russian, and Traditional Chinese online by visiting www.dvrpc.org. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages or formats, if requested. For more information, please call (215) 238-2871.