

ONE PAGE OVERVIEW
Central Jersey Transportation Forum
March 5th, 2013 Meeting

Welcome and Introductions

There were over 70 participants, including representatives from 13 municipalities, three counties, two MPOs, and various agencies and organizations (for-profit and non-profit). South Brunswick Township Mayor Frank Gambatese welcomed everyone.

Action Items

Three action items were addressed to begin the meeting: the November 27th, 2012 meeting summary was adopted; Marvin Reed was unanimously re-elected Forum chair; and the Forum voted to send a letter the Rt1RGS Action Team drafted to express concerns about the Economic Opportunity Act, a fast-moving bill in the NJ Legislature. There were also brief reports on the recent activities of the Rt1RGS and Transit Action Team.

Improving Communication about Transportation During Major Events

There was a discussion of state and county efforts during major storm events. Local success stories were shared, as well as challenges and opportunities for improvement. Opportunities for improved communication during future events were identified.

Transit Villages/Transit-Oriented Design

Updates were presented for the North Brunswick Transit Village, New Train Station and Turnaround Study; the West Windsor Transit Village and Howard Hughes Corporation redevelopment of the American Cyanamid Property; and the Ewing Parkway Avenue Redevelopment Plan for the former General Motors and Naval Warfare Center.

Brief Introduction to Together North Jersey

Mary K. Murphy, Executive Director of NJTPA, gave a brief overview of the Together North Jersey project, which will develop a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development and will be closely coordinated with NJTPA's Plan 2040 regional transportation plan update. NJTPA has issued a call for applications to participate in its Local Demonstration Project (LDP) Program that will provide technical assistance for strategic planning studies.

Transit

Greg Krykewycz, Manager of the Office of Transit, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Planning at DVRPC, provided an update on several recent DVRPC transit planning projects. Cheryl Kastrenakes, Executive Director of Greater Mercer TMA, summarized the TMA's New Freedom Specialized Transit Study and Job Access Mobility Program. Tom Marchwinski, Director of Systems Planning at NJ Transit, provided updates on the US 1 BRT and West Trenton update study.

Other Updates & Dialogue

Shing-Fu Hsueh, Mayor of West Windsor Township, gave a brief update about the recent NJDOT jughandle proposal in the Penns Neck area. There have been two public meetings in West Windsor and one in Princeton so far.

Meeting Summary
Central Jersey Transportation Forum
March 5th, 2013

ATTENDEES: over 70 participants – Please advise if you attended but are not on the list.

Mayors			
Peter	Cantu	Mayor	Plainsboro Township
Liz	Lempert	Mayor	Princeton
Frank	Gambatese	Mayor	South Brunswick Township
Shing-Fu	Hsueh	Mayor	West Windsor Township

Other Municipal Staff			
Andrew	Feranda	Traffic Consultant (Shropshire Associates)	Cranbury Township
Chuck	Latini	Consulting Planner	Ewing Township
Theodore	Chase	Councilman	Franklin Township Council & Planning Board
James	Parvesse	Township Engineer	Lawrence Township Engineering Division
Ed	Cohen	Transportation Specialist	Monroe Township
Amy	Rutherford	Transportation Coordinator	Monroe Township
John	Riggs	Board Member	Monroe Township Planning Board
Gail	Smith	Engineer	Montgomery Township
Tom	Vigna	Township Planner; Co-Chair, Rt1RGS Action Team	North Brunswick Township Community Development - Division of Planning
Bill	Meytrott	Board Member	Pennington Borough Planning & Zoning Board
Les	Varga	Director, Office of Planning & Zoning	Plainsboro Township
Marvin	Reed	Chairman - Master Plan Committee; Forum Co-Chair	Regional Planning Board of Princeton
Lee	Solow	Planning Director	Regional Planning Board of Princeton
Tim	McGough	Director of Community & Economic Development; Engineer	Robbinsville Township
Bryan	Bidlack	Planner	South Brunswick Township
Pat	Ward	Director of Community Development	West Windsor Township, Community Development Department

Counties			
Dean	Raymond	Coordinator	Mercer County Office of Emergency Management
Matt	Lawson	Transportation Planner	Mercer County Planning Division
Donna	Lewis	Director	Mercer County Planning Division
Tony	Gambilonghi	Supervising Planner for Transportation	Middlesex County Department of Planning
George	Ververides	Director	Middlesex County Department of Planning
John	Ferguson	Coordinator	Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management
Bob	Bzik	Director of Planning	Somerset County Planning Division
Walt	Lane	Principal Planner	Somerset County Planning Division

Freeholder Peter Palmer represented Somerset County and the NJTPA Board.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations			
Rich	Bickel	Director of Planning	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Jesse	Buerk	Transportation Planner	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Greg	Krykewycz	Manager, Office of Transit, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Planning	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Lisa	MacCarrigan	Intern	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Zoe	Neaderland	Manager, Transp. Safety & Congestion Mgmt.	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Barry	Seymour	Executive Director	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Zenobia	Fields	Director, Department of Planning	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
Lois	Goldman	Director of Regional Planning	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
Mary K.	Murphy	Executive Director	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
Peter	Palmer	Freeholder, Board Member	Somerset County, NJTPA Board

Other Regional Bodies			
Cheryl	Kastrenakes	Executive Director	Greater Mercer TMA
Bill	Neary	Executive Director	Keep Middlesex Moving TMA
Basil	Giletto	Chair of Transportation Committee	Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce
Joan	McGee	Watershed Policy Specialist	Stony Brook - Millstone Watershed Association

State Departments			
Robert	Tessier	Project Specialist	NJ Department of Community Affairs, Local Planning Services
Barry	Ableman	Principal Planner	NJ Department of State, Office for Planning Advocacy
Danielle	Graves	Project Engineer	NJ Department of Transportation, Bureau of Statewide Strategies
Ira	Levinton	Project Engineer, Planning	NJ Department of Transportation, Bureau of Systems Development & Analysis
Andrew	Swords	Director	NJ Department of Transportation, Division of Statewide Planning
Gail	Yazersky	Transportation Planner	NJ Department of Transportation, Division of Statewide Planning
Wasif	Mirza	Executive Manager, Mobility & Systems Engineering	NJ Department of Transportation, Division of Transportation Systems Management
Robert	Burd	Manager	NJ Department of Transportation, Office of Emergency Management
Alison	Schneider		NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness
Susan	Winter	Principal Planner, Emergency Management	NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, Planning & Project Management Bureau
Jim	Hadden	511 and Special Projects	NJ Statewide Traffic Operations
Tom	Clark	Regional Manager, Gov. & Community Relations	NJ Transit
Tom	Marchwinski	Director of Systems Planning	NJ Transit
Mike	Viscardi	Senior Facilities Manager	NJ Transit

Other			
Leah	Picone	Government Transportation Safety Specialist	3M, Traffic Safety Systems Division
Jim	Hess	Consultant	AECOM Transportation
Katherine	Kish	Chairman	Einstein's Alley
Pam	Mount	Citizen, former Mayor	Lawrence Township Resident
Jerome	Lutin	Citizen	South Brunswick Township Resident
Daniel	O'Connell	NJ Legislative Director	NJ State Legislative Board/United Transportation Union
David	Parris	Citizen	Penns Neck Community

Pam	Hersh	Vice President for Government Relations	Princeton Healthcare System
Kristin	Appelget	Director	Princeton University, Community & Regional Affairs
Eric	Payne	Realtor Sales Associate	Smart Traffic Solutions and Weichert Realty
Chip	Crider	Citizen	Spurts.org
Tushar	Patel	Senior Project Manager	URS Corporation
Jerry	Foster	President	West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance
Alison	Miller	Board Secretary	West Windsor Parking Authority / West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance

1. Welcome and Introductions

There were over 70 participants, including representatives from 13 municipalities, three counties, two MPOs, and various agencies and organizations (for-profit and non-profit). Marvin Reed, Forum Chair and Chairman of the Master Plan Committee for the Regional Planning Board of Princeton, opened the meeting. Mr. Reed thanked South Brunswick for hosting. South Brunswick Township Mayor Frank Gambatese welcomed everyone.

2. Action Items

Three action items were addressed to begin the meeting:

- There were no comments on the November 27th, 2012 meeting summary and it was adopted unanimously.
- Barry Seymour, Executive Director of DVRPC, opened the floor to nominations of any voting members wishing to run for Forum chair or co-chair. Hearing none, a roll-call vote was held and Marvin Reed was re-elected unanimously.
- Tom Vigna, North Brunswick Township Planner and Co-Chair of the Rt1RGS Action Team, gave an update on the progress of the Rt1RGS Action Team. He noted that the South Brunswick Council would receive the Road Show presentation later that evening. North Brunswick Township and Franklin Township have passed Smart Growth resolutions after hearing the presentation. Members of the Action Team also recently met with officials in Hillsborough Township. The Action Team is looking to schedule presentations with other municipalities, with the goal of presenting the Road Show to every regular Forum participant by the end of the year or next spring. At the most recent Rt1RGS Action Team meeting, the group discussed concerns about the Economic Opportunity Act, a fast-moving bill in the NJ Legislature. A brief summary of this bill was provided in the meeting packets. The Action Team drafted a letter to express concerns about the bill. A roll-call vote was held and the Forum agreed to send the letter to the appropriate legislators.

Cheryl Kastrenakes, Executive Director of Greater Mercer TMA, gave a brief report on the activities of the Transit Action Team (TAT). The TAT helped organize a CR 571 BRT Corridor Study working group meeting held on February 17th in East Windsor Township. The study effort, led by NJ Transit, will focus on developing transit service for East and West Windsor Townships, Hightstown Borough, and Monroe Township. NJ Transit has secured funding of about \$51,000 for a consultant to accomplish the first phase of the project, which will include identification of service options and travel patterns, BRT treatments, new bus stops, and transfers to other services. The intent is to complete the

first phase by Fall 2013, then move on to implementation. Tom Marchwinski, Director of Systems Planning at NJ Transit, added that NJ Transit is seeking funding for Phase 2.

The TAT also met on February 27th to discuss other potential actions. One action that was discussed was making sure NJDOT coordinates with NJ Transit if the jughandle proposals for the Penns Neck area of US 1 move forward. There was a lengthy discussion about installing shelters at the existing bus stops on US 1, including identification of some first steps toward implementation.

Mr. Reed thanked NJ Transit for working through the TAT to set up the stakeholder group for the CR 571 BRT Corridor Study. Ed Cohen, Transportation Specialist for Monroe Township, thanked NJ Transit for including Monroe Township in the study. Ms. Kastrenakes said the Transit Action Team would provide the Forum with updates as the CR 571 study progresses.

3. Improving Communication about Transportation During Major Events

Mr. Reed began the discussion by noting that the Forum first touched on this topic a little over a year ago, after Hurricane Irene. He introduced Jim Hadden, Manager of 511 and Special Projects for NJ Statewide Traffic Operations.

Mr. Hadden provided an overview of state-level efforts during major events, beginning with lessons learned from Hurricane Irene. One lesson was that many people visited the NJ 511 website's main page for information, but few drilled down further. As a result, during Super-storm Sandy, NJ 511 added links to other sources and updates from other agencies directly to its main page, including NJ Transit.

Mr. Hadden also described regional conference calls led by Transcom, which ended up playing an important role in regional coordination. The calls helped agencies along the East Coast provide consistent messaging, for example on Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) and when contacting the public through targeted phone calls and emails. These coordinated messages are referred to as "flood gates."

Addressing challenges to better coordination, Mr. Hadden said that obtaining accurate and timely information about local and county road closures remains difficult. His staff looked for updates and posted them to the 511 website. Mr. Hadden said a problem is that there is no one place to look for county information. He offered that 511 could be expanded to have, for example, a 511/Mercer page. He offered to meet with the county OEM directors to coordinate better. To publish information on the 511 website, it must be in the proper format for the Open Reach database system used as the backbone of the state 511 system. He said that if the counties also use the Open Reach format, it would be much easier to integrate information with the state 511 system and share it with the public.

Mr. Hadden said another opportunity would be to improve communication with utility companies.

Mr. Reed asked if there were any further comments from the state perspective from Robert Burd, Manager of NJDOT's Office of Emergency Management. Mr. Burd said his role is more about resource management than communication.

Mr. Reed asked for comments from the county OEMs:

- Dean Raymond, Coordinator of the Mercer County OEM, said that the biggest challenge for Mercer County was getting road closure information to the public. He stressed that during a storm event, it's important for people to stay home and avoid the roads. However, after the storm, he recognized that the public is ready to move again. The challenge is getting information about road closures to the public at this time, especially when the situation is still ongoing and evolving. He suggested that a dedicated AM radio station could be effective as another way to get information to the public, especially when power outages are widespread.
- Walt Lane, Principal Planner at the Somerset County Planning Division, said that Somerset County's OEM reports county road closures on its website and also sends email updates to subscribers. He cited insufficient staffing as one of the biggest challenges the county faces in regards to sharing all of its municipal road closure updates with the public during an emergency event. Mayor Gambatese praised the excellent work of the Somerset County OEM during Sandy.
- John Ferguson, Coordinator of the Middlesex County OEM, described the challenges Middlesex County faced as a result of prolonged power outages. For example, the OEM's phones and radio went down, and some people lost power for as long as 11 days. There was also a combination of flooding and downed trees. The Middlesex OEM used reverse 911 to get information to the public, but with many residents lacking power, Mr. Ferguson acknowledged that this method was not fully effective. The OEM also used AM radio as a means of communication, but found that not everyone in the public knew the right station to check. He encouraged everyone to have a crank-up radio in their emergency kit. The Middlesex County business community used its Facebook page as another way to share information. Mr. Ferguson said the county OEM would likely use Facebook as another means of communication during future storm events.

Mr. Reed opened the floor for comments. Discussion included the following highlights:

- Pam Hersh, Vice President for Government Relations for Princeton Healthcare System, said the hospital became a de-facto shelter during Sandy. She suggested that municipalities should each consider designating a building with back-up power that could be used in emergencies for people to recharge phones and computers, have access to restrooms, and so forth. She said the key would be to make sure that the public knew where to go. She suggested that the OEMs consider doing reverse 911 emergency information phone calls now, while there is no emergency, to share information about what to do the next time there is one.
- Bill Neary, Executive Director of Keep Middlesex Moving, said that TMAs take the data feed from 511 and put it on their websites. TMAs are a liaison with businesses, who are important partners in emergency response. The TMA directors expressed enthusiasm to coordinate and help more.
- Mayor Gambatese said South Brunswick prepared hourly updates of which streets did not have power or were closed. Generators and gas were provided to residents who needed them. More than 7,000 people came to charge devices at their municipal complex.

- Mr. Reed asked if participants had learned lessons during Hurricane Irene that helped during Super-storm Sandy. Shing-Fu Hsueh, Mayor of West Windsor Township, said West Windsor learned the value of social media such as Facebook and Twitter for sharing information with the public. He noted that 30,000 people using their Facebook page indicated use by more than just residents. The township also learned the importance of using municipal staff to keep storm drains and drainage basins clear. West Windsor used its Senior Center as a place for people to charge devices and have access to restrooms during Sandy. Based on experiences from the last two storms, the township is planning to renovate its municipal complex and is considering using the school system for showers and shelter during future emergency events. Mayor Liz Lempert of Princeton said that Irene led to the establishment of relationships across agencies that helped during Sandy. For example, they worked with sports teams that have lights and generators to mark major intersections. Mr. Cohen said that East Brunswick had put in an extra tank for residents to get gas for generators as it received daily tanker truck refills.
- Mr. Reed asked if any specific locations in the transportation network were especially problematic during Sandy. Mayor Gambatese said that in South Brunswick, power outages caused the traffic signals on US 1 to go out. The township had to close the intersections to crossing traffic due to safety concerns.
- There was overall frustration about the lack of power for gas stations and mention of a proposed bill that would require gas stations to have back-up generators.
- Donna Lewis, Director of Planning at the Mercer County Planning Division, said more people need to take storms seriously and prepare for them.
- Pat Ward, Director of Community Development for the West Windsor Township Community Development Department, said one lesson of both Irene and Sandy is to be careful not to over-rely on any single technology.

4. Transit Villages/Transit-Oriented Design

Mr. Reed introduced the agenda item by saying that the Forum was created in part to share information about major land development projects in Central Jersey. Things have been quiet for several years with the economic downturn, but it appears that development activity is starting to pick up again.

- Mr. Vigna provided an update about the North Brunswick Transit Village project. He reviewed the project's history, including its performance-based zoning approach. In summary, the developer was required to pay for a traffic impact study and proposed improvements. The township allowed two big box stores as part of the first phase of the Transit Village development, in return for 300 housing units and \$8 million in roadway improvements. The first phase will be served by bus service. In order for subsequent phases to be constructed, a new train station and additional road improvements will be required.
- Mr. Marchwinski said NJ Transit is hiring a consultant to design a new station and turnback loop in North Brunswick. The loop is related to improvements Amtrak is making to increase the speed of its trains between Trenton and New Brunswick. As a result of that project, which is funded and moving forward, NJ Transit needs the new grade-separated turnback loop to be open by 2018. Mr. Marchwinski said the new loop should allow more off-peak service, improve peak service, and save money on operating costs between North Brunswick and New York City. The station will be

designed as part of the turnback loop project, although construction funds for the station have yet to be identified.

- Mayor Hsueh provided an update about the West Windsor Transit Village. He gave a brief recap of the project and noted that the main outstanding issue is the status of the Vaughn Drive Connector project, which would provide needed circulation improvements. He said NJDOT has committed to paying for half of the project. The other half will come from property owners, including NJ Transit. Construction of the Transit Village could begin by the end of 2014 or start of 2015. Mr. Reed asked if the Vaughn Drive project was essential to the Transit Village. Mayor Hsueh said yes, because it impacts the developer's designs and costs.
- Mayor Hsueh also gave an update on the proposed redevelopment of the American Cyanamid property by the Howard Hughes Corporation. The 658-acre site is located across from the Quaker Bridge Mall on US 1. The township is currently working to adjust the zoning for the site to encourage mixed-use development. Mr. Reed pointed out that the site is crucially important for the US 1 BRT and that the current master plan requires BRT-supportive elements at the site. Mayor Hsueh confirmed this and said that shoulders, bus lanes, bus parking areas, and other BRT-supportive elements will be required.
- Chuck Latini, Consulting Planner for Ewing Township, provided an update about the Ewing Parkway Avenue Redevelopment Plan for the former General Motors and Naval Warfare Center. He described Ewing's planning efforts over the years for the 130-acre site, which has been vacant since the late 1990's. The plan blends form-based and traditional zoning to control the style and layout of the development. The project hopes to take advantage of existing assets including the SEPTA train station and Mercer airport. The redevelopment plan would add around 2,000 housing units, 250,000 square feet of office space, 600,000 square feet of retail space, and possibly a hotel. The goal is for the project to fit in with and benefit the existing adjacent neighborhoods. Mr. Latini said the township has received interest from developers and is ready to start moving forward to figure out what is possible. He said the township will work with the state regarding road and transit improvements.

Mr. Reed summarized the discussion by noting that all of these developments will need infrastructure improvements to work. He briefly mentioned the Princeton Arts and Transit expansion study, which also involves complicated traffic circulation issues.

5. Brief Introduction to Together North Jersey

Mary K. Murphy, Executive Director of NJTPA, gave a brief overview of the Together North Jersey project, which will develop a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD) and will be closely coordinated with NJTPA's Plan 2040 regional transportation plan update. Ms. Murphy said the public engagement process is ongoing and includes a set of visioning meetings featuring interactive polling. She said the goal is to build the plan from the ground up over the next 18 months. She shared flyers, encouraged people to participate in the visioning meetings, and said NJTPA would provide more information at the next Forum meeting. NJTPA has issued a call for applications to participate in its Local Demonstration Project (LDP) Program that will provide technical assistance for strategic planning studies as part of the RPSD. Zenobia Fields, Director of the Department of Planning at NJTPA, said the deadline for applications was April 8th. Ms. Murphy encouraged people to apply or follow-up after the meeting with questions.

6. Transit

Greg Krykewycz, Manager of the Office of Transit, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Planning at DVRPC, provided an update on several recent DVRPC transit planning projects:

- Mr. Krykewycz began with a quick refresher on the *Mercer County Future Bus Plan* report, a “one stop shop” for survey data, census journey-to-work travel patterns, growth forecasts, and current and planned bus routes/services in Mercer County, including the US 1 BRT.
- He discussed the Transit Development Review Checklist from a recent DVRPC project and noted that the TAT plans to adapt this checklist for use in Central Jersey.
- Mr. Krykewycz gave an overview of the *CR 571 Park-and-Ride Study*, which identified and evaluated 15 candidate locations for new park-and-ride capacity along CR 571 and NJ 33. The NJ Transit CR 571 BRT Corridor Study will use the DVRPC park-and-ride study to help decide on improvements to advance in the corridor.
- He described ongoing work to determine locations in Mercer County where Transit Signal Priority treatments are likely to be the most cost effective and have the greatest operational benefits. The TAT helped decide the factors and scoring framework for the countywide analysis. The project will be followed with a second phase next fiscal year, which will take a closer look at designs and engineering specifications for one or more top-ranked locations. He said the analysis method should be transferrable to Middlesex and Somerset counties.

Ms. Kastrenakes summarized two studies administered by Greater Mercer TMA:

- The New Freedom Specialized Transit Study was intended to build on the County Human Services Coordination Plan by identifying gaps and working to fill them. The TMA surveyed seniors, low-income residents, and people with disabilities, receiving over 500 responses. The survey helped pinpoint first- and last-mile service gaps as well as issues related to the public’s understanding of the transit network. GMTMA will work with Mercer County to address the gaps and issues identified by the study.
- The second study focused on job access, specifically in the vicinity of the distribution centers around Exit 7A of the NJ Turnpike. Many of the employment centers in this area have no transit service. Amazon.com is opening a new facility in the area, which is helping to bring resources and drive planning efforts. Ms. Kastrenakes said a business coalition is being formed, but some market analysis needs to be done to figure out the best solutions. Greater Mercer TMA will take the lead on a series of meetings with Amazon.com and other stakeholders, organized by the NJ Office for Planning Advocacy. Amy Rutherford, Transportation Coordinator for Monroe Township, asked if Mercer County TRADE was involved and mentioned that many county services do not extend past county borders. Ms. Kastrenakes said that TRADE was involved and is helping to coordinate and share resources.

Mr. Marchwinski provided updates on the US 1 BRT and West Trenton study. NJ Transit is looking for ways to fund smaller pieces of the BRT, including coordination with the proposed jughandle improvements in the Penns Neck area. The Route 655 partners group will meet to discuss the new Novo Nordisk office park opening soon in Plainsboro. Pedestrian access to the site, as well as bus stops and access to them have been provided by the developer. Regarding the West Trenton Line, NJ Transit is hoping to update the study and is looking to the MPOs and counties for funding. In particular,

employment and population data needs to be updated and reanalyzed. Mr. Marchwinski said NJ Transit hopes to do this work in Fiscal Year 2014.

7. Other Updates & Dialogue

Mayor Hsueh gave a brief update about the NJDOT jughandle proposal in the Penns Neck area. There have been two public meetings in West Windsor and one in Princeton so far. NJDOT is gathering input and will evaluate the impacts of their proposals on Penns Neck and other established communities. The results will be shared and the hope is that a consensus will emerge within the next few weeks. Mayor Hsueh stressed the importance of having buy-in from all the involved stakeholders. He said that while no one will get 100 percent of what they want, there is a need to start somewhere and figure out how to move forward.

Mr. Reed thanked everyone for attending. There were no further comments and the meeting was adjourned.

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.