

**ONE PAGE OVERVIEW**  
**Central Jersey Transportation Forum**  
**May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Meeting**

Welcome and Introductions

There were over 60 participants, including representatives from fourteen municipalities, three counties, two MPOs, and various agencies and organizations (for-profit and non-profit). Bill Neary, incoming Forum Chair and Executive Director of Keep Middlesex Moving TMA, welcomed everyone. The Forum honored outgoing Chair Marvin Reed for his excellent service.

Action Items

One action item was addressed to begin the meeting: The February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014 meeting summary was adopted. There were brief reports on the recent activities of the Rt. 1 Regional Growth Strategy (Rt1RGS) and Transit Action Teams.

Economic Development & Transportation

Joe Constance, Business Advocate for the NJ Business Action Center, provided an overview of a number of economic development incentive programs offered by the state, including opportunities to help fund transportation improvements. Bob Tessier, Project Specialist for NJ Department of Community Affairs (NJDCA) Local Planning Services, summarized a list of grants and programs available through NJDCA. A handout with links was distributed in the meeting folders. Lois Goldman, Director of Regional Planning at NJTPA, discussed the ongoing updates of the NJTPA and DVRPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) documents and encouraged everyone to participate in the process.

Reuse of Underutilized Commercial & Office Spaces to Mixed Use Coordinated with Transportation Planning

Annie Hindenlang, Senior Planner for the City of Perth Amboy, described the *Perth Amboy Bay City Transit District Strategy*, an innovative local planning effort to redevelop around transit, which was prepared as a local demonstration project of NJTPA's Together North Jersey program. Emily Costello, Senior Planner at DVRPC, reviewed the key findings of the recent DVRPC publication, *Revitalizing Suburban Downtown Retail Districts: Strategies and Best Practices*. She also mentioned a forthcoming Municipal Implementation Tool brochure on non-contiguous parcel clustering.

Brief Comments on Penns Neck Project

Shing-Fu Hsueh, Mayor of West Windsor Township, said he is still waiting for NJDOT to call a meeting to discuss the proposed final concept. It was generally acknowledged that the prospects of moving forward and finding funding for the project do not seem promising at this time.

Transit

Tom Marchwinski, Director of Systems Planning at NJ Transit, gave updates on the US 1 BRT, CR 571 BRT study, and Route 655 Partners. NJ Transit, working with the 655 Partners, has developed some modifications to the route, which will be implemented in conjunction with a major publicity campaign. Mr. Marchwinski and Terence Sobers, Manager for Research and Forecasting at NJ Transit, presented an analysis of 2006-2010 Census Transportation Planning Products (CTPP) data to provide insight into travel flows and patterns in Central Jersey. Cheryl Kastrenakes, Executive Director of Keep Middlesex Moving TMA, provided an update on the public-private partnership effort to provide transit service to the planned Amazon.com distribution facility in Robbinsville Township.

Brief Updates

Zoe Neaderland, Manager of Transportation Safety and Congestion Management at DVRPC, briefly reviewed the findings of a recent NJDOT report on the effectiveness of red-light running cameras statewide. The report found reductions in crashes and crash severity at these locations. A summary handout was included in the meeting folders. Jesse Buerk, Senior Transportation Planner at DVRPC, demonstrated a new interactive website to display the Timing and Phasing of Planned Transportation Projects map that has been included in recent editions of the *Planned Projects Status Report*.

**Meeting Summary  
Central Jersey Transportation Forum  
May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**ATTENDEES:** over 60 participants – Please advise if you attended but are not on the list.

<b>Mayors</b>			
Steven	Kirson	Mayor	Borough of Hightstown
Peter	Cantu	Mayor	Plainsboro Township
Liz	Lempert	Mayor	Princeton
Shing-Fu	Hsueh	Mayor	West Windsor Township

<b>Other Municipal Staff</b>			
Richard	Pratt	Planning Board Member	Borough of Hightstown
Lee	Stults	Planning Board Vice-Chairman	Borough of Hightstown
Leigh Anne	Hindenlang	Senior Planner	City of Perth Amboy
Andrew	Toth	Grants Analyst	City of Perth Amboy
Andrew	Feranda	Traffic Consultant (Shropshire Associates)	Cranbury Township
Allan	Kehrt	Planning Board Chairman	Cranbury Township
Theodore	Chase	Councilman	Franklin Township Council & Planning Board
James	Parvesse	Township Engineer	Lawrence Township
Amy	Rutherford	Transportation Coordinator	Monroe Township
Gail	Smith	Engineer	Montgomery Township
Tom	Vigna	Township Planner; Chair, Rt1RGS Action Team	North Brunswick Township Community Development - Division of Planning
Les	Varga	Director	Plainsboro Township Office of Planning & Zoning
Arthur	Lehrhaupt	Chair	Plainsboro Township Planning Board
Ralph	Widner	Board Member	Princeton Traffic and Transportation Committee
Marvin	Reed	Chairman - Master Plan Committee	Regional Planning Board of Princeton
Lee	Solow	Planning Director	Regional Planning Board of Princeton
Ann	Bell	Administrative Officer	Robbinsville Township
Bryan	Bidlack	Director of Planning	South Brunswick Township
Linda	Geevers	Council Member	West Windsor Township

<b>Counties</b>			
Liz	Muoio	Director	Mercer County Office of Economic Development and Sustainability
Matt	Lawson	Transportation Planner	Mercer County Planning Division
George	Ververides	Director	Middlesex County Department of Planning
Joe	Fishingier	Principal Engineer	Somerset County Engineering Division
Bob	Bzik	Director of Planning	Somerset County Planning Division

Freeholder Peter Palmer represented Somerset County and the NJTPA Board.

<b>Metropolitan Planning Organizations</b>			
Jesse	Buerk	Transportation Planner	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Emily	Costello	Senior Planner	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Zoe	Nederland	Manager, Transp. Safety & Congestion Mgmt.	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
David	Behrend	Director, Dept. of Communications and Government Affairs	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Lois	Goldman	Director of Regional Planning	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
Peter	Palmer	Freeholder, Board Member	Somerset County, NJTPA Board

Other Regional Bodies			
Chad	Dixson	Mobility Manager	Greater Mercer TMA
Cheryl	Kastrenakes	Executive Director	Greater Mercer TMA
Bill	Neary	Executive Director; Forum Chair	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
Janna	Chernetz	New Jersey Advocate	Tri-State Transportation Campaign

State Departments			
Robert	Tessier	Project Specialist	NJ Department of Community Affairs, Local Planning Services
Joe	Constance	Business Advocate	NJ Department of State, Business Action Center
Barry	Ableman	Principal Planner	NJ Department of State, Office for Planning Advocacy
Danielle	Graves	Project Engineer	NJ Department of Transportation, Bureau of Statewide Strategies
Tom	Houck	Transportation Planner	NJ Department of Transportation, Bureau of Statewide Strategies
Raymond	Tomczak	Metropolitan Planning Organization Liaison	NJ Department of Transportation, Bureau of Statewide Strategies
Sudhir	Joshi	Project Engineer	NJ Department of Transportation, Division of Statewide Planning
Andrew	Swords	Director	NJ Department of Transportation, Division of Statewide Planning
Paul	Ceppi	Senior Community Development Officer	NJ Economic Development Authority
Susan	Winter	Principal Planner, Emergency Management	NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, Planning & Project Management Bureau
Tom	Marchwinski	Director of Systems Planning	NJ Transit
Terrence	Sobers	Manager for Research and Forecasting	NJ Transit
Mike	Viscardi	Senior Facilities Manager	NJ Transit

Other			
Kerri	Tyerman	Project Manager	Dewberry-Goodkind, Inc.
Katherine	Kish	Chairman	Einstein's Alley
Sheldon	Sturges	Managing Director	Princeton Future
Pam	Hersh	Vice President for Government Relations	Princeton Healthcare System
Eric	Payne	Realtor Sales Associate	Smart Traffic Solutions & Weichert Realty
Jerome	Lutin	Citizen	South Brunswick Township Resident
Bridget	Clerkin	Reporter	Trenton Times
Alison	Miller	Board Secretary	West Windsor Parking Authority / West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance

*If you attended but did not sign in, please let us know to add you to the summary.*

## 1. **Welcome and Introductions**

There were over 60 participants, including representatives from fourteen municipalities, three counties, two MPOs, and various agencies and organizations (for-profit and non-profit). Bill Neary, incoming Forum Chair and Executive Director of Keep Middlesex Moving TMA, welcomed everyone. The Forum honored outgoing Chair Marvin Reed for his excellent service. Everyone introduced himself or herself.

## **2. Action Items**

One action item was addressed to begin the meeting. There were no comments on the February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014 meeting summary and it was adopted unanimously.

Tom Vigna, North Brunswick Township Planner and Chair of the Rt1RGS Action Team, announced that Princeton and Plainsboro had each recently hosted the Smart Growth Road Show presentation. East Windsor and Montgomery townships have scheduled presentations. Cheryl Kastrenakes, Executive Director of Greater Mercer TMA, gave a brief report on the activities of the Transit Action Team (TAT). Efforts to provide transit service to the Exit 7A area for the new Amazon.com facility are nearing fruition and Ms. Kastrenakes hoped to have an official announcement soon. An effort to promote the Route 655 Bus, including free fare days and some modifications to the route, are planned for June. The TAT continues to work toward implementing bus stops at specific locations along US 1 in West Windsor and has gathered resources for planning and designing bus shelters in historic districts.

Peter Palmer, Somerset County Freeholder and NJTPA Board Member, congratulated Bob Bzik on his retirement and thanked him for his years of excellent service as Director of Planning for Somerset County.

## **3. Economic Development & Transportation**

Joe Constance, Business Advocate for the NJ Business Action Center, discussed a number of state programs to help make the connection between economic development and transportation planning:

- He described the four components of the NJ Partnership for Action, including: non-profit marketing through the "Choose NJ" campaign, loans for businesses through the Economic Development Authority, working directly with businesses, and partnering with the Higher Education Commission.
- Mr. Constance described how the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 2013 can help link economic development and transportation planning.
- The Economic Redevelopment and Growth (ERG) Program provides incentives for developers and businesses to address revenue gaps in development projects. Mr. Constance noted that ERG grants can involve infrastructure investments. Bonuses are available for projects in one of the four Garden State Growth Zones (Camden, Trenton, Paterson, and Passaic) or distressed municipalities (see [www.njeda.com/web/pdf/ERG\\_GrowNJ\\_DistressedMunicipalities.pdf](http://www.njeda.com/web/pdf/ERG_GrowNJ_DistressedMunicipalities.pdf).)
- Mr. Constance noted that recently he has observed a trend of developers and towns moving in the direction of mixed-use development.
- Mr. Neary asked about the ERG in suburban areas, saying they need help too. Mr. Constance agreed, but said that the current legislation was focused on distressed urban areas. Mr. Bzik described how Somerset County mapped the EOA and showed municipalities which areas qualified. This led to discussions with the municipalities about how to tweak land use strategies to align better with opportunities.
- Mr. Vigna described the North Brunswick transit village project and asked if it might be eligible for ERG grants. Mr. Constance asked if there were drivers such as hotels and retail, and Mr. Vigna said that there were. Mr. Vigna said the township was waiting until they had a better sense of the project's costs to reach out to EDA. Mr. Constance said to call Paul Ceppi once the details came together.

Bob Tessier, Project Specialist for NJ Department of Community Affairs (NJCA) Local Planning Services, summarized a list of grants and programs available through NJCA:

- Local Planning Services works with communities on targeted projects and can help with transit village and other projects.
- The Redevelopment Handbook is a roadmap to navigate the process of redevelopment, and is offered for sale through the American Planning Association. Mr. Tessier brought some copies on CD-ROM disks to distribute to interested parties.
- DCA also works with the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority (NJRA) to provide training and technical assistance. The NJRA Training Institute offers intensive intermediate-level training courses focused on development and redevelopment fundamentals, topics, and issues.

- Mr. Tessier briefly described several other programs, including resources for Main Street revitalization, historic preservation, community development and business growth, and housing accessibility and affordability.
- A handout was distributed in the meeting folders with summary information and links to all of the program websites.

Lois Goldman, Director of Regional Planning at NJTPA, discussed the ongoing updates of the NJTPA and DVRPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) documents. She explained what was involved in the process and described the numerous partners involved. NJTPA is looking to coordinate with its counties to make sure the regional and county CEDS are in agreement. NJTPA is promoting strategies such as workforce training and small business development in an effort to build on existing transportation infrastructure. Ms. Goldman encouraged everyone to participate in the CEDS update process. Mr. Bzik commented that he would like to see a greater emphasis on working with higher education institutions, as well as promoting more opportunities for vocational-technical education.

#### **4. Reuse of Underutilized Commercial & Office Spaces to Mixed Use Coordinated with Transportation Planning**

Annie Hindenlang, Senior Planner for the City of Perth Amboy, described the *Perth Amboy Bay City Transit District Strategy*, an innovative local planning effort to redevelop around transit, which was prepared as a local demonstration project (LDP) through NJTPA's Together North Jersey program. Ms. Hindenlang said that since Perth Amboy is largely built out already, redevelopment was identified as a key strategy. The city's goal is to revitalize the downtown area, using the train station as a focal point, but to date, attracting new commercial, retail, and housing has been challenging. The city faces economic challenges including a large population of low-income residents and a high unemployment rate. But at the same time, the city has many assets, including a vibrant immigrant community, the Northeast Corridor rail line, a good street grid network, and relatively flat terrain, which makes it bike-friendly.

Ms. Hindenlang described how Perth Amboy is working with NJ Transit to redesign the train station, which is not currently ADA accessible. The plan is to complete final design around November 2014. The City used the NJTPA LDP grant to complete the *Transit District Strategy* plan and is working toward achieving Transit Village designation. One of the strategies identified in the plan is to add housing to existing underused buildings, in the hopes that it will lead to more demand for office development. In order to allow these changes, Ms. Hindenlang said that some zoning changes will be required. The City is working toward accomplishing re-zoning by the end of the year. Ms. Hindenlang touched on the pros and cons of using form-based code and explained that the City decided to use form-based codes for the station area, but not for the rest of the redevelopment area. This allowed flexibility in some areas while allowing more control over the aesthetics and feel of the station area. Another aspect of the plan was to reconsider parking and modify parking requirements for future development.

The City is working with KMM to try to encourage more bicycling downtown and is coordinating with the East Coast Greenway regarding trail connections. In addition, the City is working with NJDOT local assistance to develop a bicycle/pedestrian plan. As for the station area redevelopment, a conceptual plan has been drafted and the City is meeting with potential developers. The plan is to add green, public spaces and do more to highlight the train station itself.

Ms. Hindenlang concluded her presentation by discussing potential funding sources and listing next steps. Ted Chase, Franklin Township Councilman and Planning Board Member, asked if there were plans to improve boat access. Ms. Hindenlang said the City is investigating a second marina and the possibility of ferry service, with the overall goal of opening up more access to the waterfront. Andy Swords, Director of the Division of Statewide Planning at NJDOT, thanked the City for reaching out to NJDOT and complemented all their great work so far.

Emily Costello, Senior Planner at DVRPC, provided an overview of the recent DVRPC publication, *Revitalizing Suburban Downtown Retail Districts: Strategies and Best Practices* (Publication #13070). The

report involved an extensive survey of existing retail and included strategies to revitalize downtowns. Mr. Neary asked what could be done about very long retail corridors, such as the four-mile NJ 18 corridor. Ms. Costello replied that smaller nodes could likely be found within the corridor to make revitalization more manageable. Mr. Neary also asked if the report discussed ways that downtown shopping districts can compete with online shopping. Ms. Costello said these districts can work to cultivate an environment and provide a shopping experience that online sites can't offer. She also described a forthcoming Municipal Implementation Tool brochure on the topic of non-contiguous parcel clustering.

## **5. Brief Comments on Penns Neck Project**

Shing-Fu Hsueh, Mayor of West Windsor Township, said he is still waiting for NJDOT to call a meeting to discuss the final concept for a revised Penns Neck project proposal. Mayor Hsueh said he hoped to meet with Commissioner Simpson soon. [Commissioner Simpson has since resigned.] There was a brief discussion about the importance of consensus on this issue. Peter Cantu, Mayor of Plainsboro Township, said that consensus has been reached and stressed the importance of communicating that fact to NJDOT very clearly. He expressed his concern that the opportunity to get a revised project has already been missed. Liz Lempert, Mayor of Princeton, suggested breaking the Penns Neck project into smaller pieces that could advance independently. In general, it was acknowledged that the prospects of finding funding to advance the revised project do not seem promising at this time.

## **6. Transit**

Tom Marchwinski, Director of Systems Planning at NJ Transit, gave an update about efforts to revamp the Route 655 bus. Slight modifications to the route will be implemented in conjunction with a major publicity campaign. The route will be modified to serve some large residential developments in Plainsboro, and the loop will now go back and forth on Witherspoon Street in Princeton instead of looping back on a different street. The exterior of the buses will also have their wraps modified to say "Shop, Work, Dine, Play" to make it clearer that the route serves more locations than just the hospital. Ms. Kastrenakes described the extensive marketing effort that will accompany the route modifications. Three free fare days are planned (June 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>), as well as direct mailings, extensive press coverage, and social media outreach. Mayor Cantu thanked all the 655 Partners for their hard work to preserve and enhance this important asset. Zoe Neaderland, Manager of Transportation Safety and Congestion Management at DVRPC, said DVRPC could help promote and publicize the changes to the route. Mr. Neary added that Forum participants could also help get the word out using social media. The CR 571 BRT study is progressing and should be completed by the end of summer, Mr. Marchwinski said.

Terence Sobers, Manager for Research and Forecasting at NJ Transit, presented an analysis of 2006-2010 Census Transportation Planning Products (CTPP) data to provide insight into travel flows and patterns in Central Jersey. Mr. Sobers cautioned that NJ Transit is still working with the data to verify statistic validity. In general, the data show a greater increase in flows to destinations outside the Central Jersey region than within, and an increase in the proportion of single occupancy vehicles. Mr. Marchwinski noted that these numbers will be used for the CR 571 BRT and West Trenton Line studies. Mr. Neary asked for clarification as to whether or not the data set included private transit carriers. Mr. Marchwinski confirmed that it does, but that it's up to the respondent to note this information. Jesse Buerk, Senior Transportation Planner at DVRPC, said he would post the tables from Mr. Sobers' presentation on DVRPC's Forum web pages and share the link with the Forum. [The tables can be found at [www.dvrpc.org/LongRangePlan/CentralJerseyForum/maps.htm](http://www.dvrpc.org/LongRangePlan/CentralJerseyForum/maps.htm).]

Ms. Kastrenakes provided an update about the public-private partnership effort to provide transit service to the planned Amazon.com distribution facility in Robbinsville Township. The Amazon facility is set to open in mid-July. An announcement about the new transit service will be made within a few weeks.

## 7. Brief Updates

A recent NJDOT report on the effectiveness of red-light running cameras statewide found reductions in crashes and crash severity at these locations, Ms. Neaderland reported. A summary handout was included in the meeting folders. [The NJDOT report and appendices are available at [www.state.nj.us/transportation/publicat/lmreports/](http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/publicat/lmreports/).]

Mr. Buerk demonstrated a new interactive web page to display the Timing and Phasing of Planned Transportation Projects map that has been included in recent editions of the *Planned Projects Status Report*. He said the web page should help make it easier to track these projects and keep the status up-to-date. The link for the beta web page will be sent to the Forum to seek input. [The beta interactive map can be found at [www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/Leaflet/CJTF\\_Leaflet/](http://www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/Leaflet/CJTF_Leaflet/).]

Janna Chernetz, New Jersey Advocate for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, gave an update on the status of Assembly Bill A1600, which requires drivers to move over or slow down when approaching a bicyclist or pedestrian. This bill would protect pedestrians and bicyclists by delineating a safe passing distance of at least four feet. It would be the most comprehensive such bill in the United States if it passes.

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

*The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and related nondiscrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. DVRPC's website, [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org), may be translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages and formats, if requested. DVRPC public meetings are always held in ADA-accessible facilities and in transit-accessible locations when possible. Auxiliary services can be provided to individuals who submit a request at least seven days prior to a meeting. Requests made within seven days will be accommodated to the greatest extent possible. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice by DVRPC under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint. Any such complaint may be in writing and filed with DVRPC's Title VI Compliance Manager and/or the appropriate state or federal agency within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. For more information on DVRPC's Title VI program, or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, please call (215) 238-2871 or email [public\\_affairs@dvrpc.org](mailto:public_affairs@dvrpc.org).*