**Central Jersey Transportation Forum Meeting**

Tuesday, October 17 202312:00 PM — 3:00 PM

850 Bear Tavern Rd, Ewing Township, NJ 08628

**Minutes of the Meeting**

* Chair Bill Neary opened the meeting and began the introductions. Members and attendees took turns introducing themselves.

**MPO Updates**

* AriellaMaron, the Executive Director of DVRPC, gave MPO updates about the approved TIP, outreach efforts for DVRPC’s Long Range Plan update, climate action planning efforts, and the organization’s pipeline for Vision Zero and High Injury Network planning projects. She also promoted new publication materials on the DVRPC’s website such as the EV Toolkit for Municipalities and the Trenton Bike Plan video and related documents.
* David Behrend, the Executive Director of NJTPA, gave MPO updates about NJTPA’s Local Safety Action Plans and highlighted several studies under the Subregional Studies Program: Somerset County Master Plan Circulation Element, Middlesex County Road Safety Audits, and the recently concluded Southern Middlesex County Freight Movement Study. He also extended the invitation to municipalities in the NJTPA region to participate in NJTPA’s Technical Assistance programs and reminded members of upcoming grant funding application deadlines.
* Aaron Watson, Deputy County Administrator, Director of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, and Executive Director of the Park Commission for Mercer County, provided updates on bridge repairs, repaving, and Complete Streets efforts in Mercer County. He highlighted the prioritization of the development of D&R Canal connections to county-owned trails and the expansion of the Trenton-Mercer airport.

**Presentation: New Jersey State Plan Efforts**

* Donna Rendeiro from the Office of Planning Advocacy provided an overview of New Jersey State Plan efforts, discussed phases of the Plan development, and provided context for the cross-acceptance and public input process.
* NJAPA will be assisting with outreach efforts, and the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University is assisting with the Infrastructure Needs Assessment component of the Plan.
* There are several process improvements to the State planning process—It will now allow for virtual meetings and electronic submissions, and will use a procurement of software for the recording, tracking, and consolidating public comments.
* ***Question: Formal feedback process only goes down to the county level. How will the State Planning office get more municipalities involved?*** 
  + Municipalities may coordinate their comments with their counties.
* ***Question: Does “human services” include healthcare facilities?*** 
  + Yes. The state plan must consider that critical resources like hospitals are not located in harm’s way in terms of climate change and environmental risks.

**Discussion: Future CJTF Structure**

The CJTF has been meeting approximately three times per year for over 20 years. This has been supported administratively by DVRPC and the NJTPA, with both MPOs providing considerable staff resources, and with DVRPC largely arranging logistics, including lunch before the meeting. Beginning in July 2024, the MPOs are not able to continue in these roles. The MPOs will continue to participate in the Forum and to provide some technical assistance at a much lower level to a restructured Forum.

A member survey was conducted to gage member’s interest in continuing the forum and their capacity to take on leadership roles.

* DVRPC and NJTPA staff lead a conversation about the member survey results and facilitated the discussion about the future structure of the Forum.
* Summary of Responses:
  + - 80% of people said they wanted to continue the forum.
    - Majority of responses indicate desire to meet twice a year
* GMTMA, Somerset County, Mercer County, and Middlesex County expressed interest in taking on leadership of the forum. Counties offered to take turns planning one event a year.
* Members discussed the need to find a means of financial support and the possibility of creating specific work products to provide value. If CJTF is not doing a big planning project, the main expense is food.
* Members identified issues that interest and involve them: coordination of mass transit systems across counties, inter-municipality coordination of grant funding and technical assistance applications, etc.
* Members discussed the need to provide support and engage more municipalities in conversations.

**Member Updates**

* GMTMA: 130 Connection was expanded in June to serve Mercer County residents working in Middlesex.
* KMM: Long time Chair Bill Neary is retiring.
* Somerset: Public hearing process for the Circulation Element of the Master Plan is coming up.
* Mercer: Five new local concept development projects upcoming
* Middlesex: Project pipeline includes Greenways plan and Bike Safety plan. Completed the Metuchen Station Access Project with NJ TRANSIT.