



CENTRAL JERSEY TRANSPORTATION FORUM

DRAFT Meeting Highlights

Monday, October 26, 2020 | 1:00 pm

Virtual Meeting

Welcome & Introductions

The meeting was held online in a webinar format via Zoom. There were 61 participants including representatives from 10 municipalities, three counties, two MPOs, and various agencies and organizations. Forum Chair Bill Neary opened the meeting and began by remembering former Chairperson Marvin Reed, who passed away in early October. Mr. Neary called on participants to introduce themselves and welcomed everyone on the call.

Participants then heard from Solomon Caviness, Department Head of Middlesex County's new Department of Transportation. The department is part of the County's reorganization and includes the Office of Planning, Engineer's Office, MCAT transit system and Office of Public Works. Some initiatives currently in the works include \$60M in capital spending available in 2021; a partnership with Rutgers and NJDOT for a Smart Mobility testing ground in New Brunswick, focused on electric vehicles; Destination 2040 long-range plan; a committee on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and master plans for Vision Zero, Bike/Ped, and Transportation. The county is actively developing vision and mission and is looking forward to maximizing stakeholder engagement on its new initiatives.

COVID-19 Travel Impacts

Tom Edinger, DVRPC, presented DVRPC's analysis, using INRIX and Transcom data, of the travel impacts of the pandemic and economic shutdown on the Central Jersey region. Mr. Edinger reported that the percent of people staying at home seems to have leveled off above pre-COVID levels. Traffic volumes are down from pre-COVID on many roadways, but not all; available data does not provide a complete picture. Higher speeds have been recorded on roadways compared to pre-COVID travel generally. Truck volumes experienced less significant reductions compared to passenger vehicles. Transit Ridership is also down. Commuters who previously used rail are the mostly likely to be working from home now, while bus commuters in South Jersey are the least likely to do so. As more people stay home, walking and trail usage is up.

Changing Trends in Industrial/Distribution Space

Anne Strauss-Weider, NJTPA, gave a presentation on the trends in industrial and distribution spaced in Central Jersey. There is ~445 million square feet of industrial space in the Central Jersey region (increase of 19M sf in 1 year) and is going for ~\$7/sqft triple net (compare with \$3 during the Great Recession). NJ has the largest port on the east coast and August was the busiest month for containers, as businesses reopen and prepare for the holiday season. E-commerce has pushed this, with a rise of 6% of retail in 2009 to 27% in April 2020. Industrial spaces are changing to meet this acceleration of

trends through fulfillment centers, sortation facilities, delivery stations and other complexes. Ongoing trends include e-commerce style customer demands and subsequent increases in returns; increases in product types; 24/7 operations; increased automation and increased reliance on real time information. Some emerging longer-term trends from the COVID-19 pandemic and its demand forces include accelerating of ecommerce growth, certain technologies, and the financial condition of transportation providers/sectors; diversification & pivoting of production locations; reviewing suppliers and supplier connectivity; and ensuring workforce health and safety. Labor availability is a top priority for industrial developers, as are transportation options for workers.

New CJTF Website

Jackie Davis, DVRPC, gave a live tour of the Forum's new virtual home: <https://centraljerseytf.org/>. An independent website was requested as part of the 2018 Strategic Plan and after extensive coordination with web and graphics services, is live on the web. The home page hosts content most recently added as well as updated from the Forum's new Twitter account https://twitter.com/CJTF_NJ. Monthly email blasts to Forum members will include this content. Members are encouraged to visit the site, follow @CJTF_NJ, and recommend resources, events, and funding opportunities via the contact page at <https://centraljerseytf.org/contact>.

COVID-19 Survey & Discussion

- a) Jackie Davis, DVRPC, shared results from a member survey covering impacts of COVID-19 in to CJTF member organizations, as well as resources available.
- b) Bill Neary, Forum Chair, facilitated a discussion of Forum members around the use of open streets and long-term impacts and concerns related to COVID-19. Bob Tessier raised the question of what will happen to government and private sector offices if that space is no longer needed for workers, and how a shift will affect the economy (e.g. restaurants that serve lunch) and transportation (for commuters). Barry Seymour asked how many communities had changed rules to allow for outdoor dining. Mr. Neary shared that downtowns in Middlesex County are exploding with outdoor dining and noted that outdoor heaters are being sold out for colder months. Mike Viscardi noted that ski resorts have been doing outdoor dining for years and much of the winter may still see significant activity.

Updates

- Bill Neary mentioned a Future of Work podcast hosted on 10.27 via KMM. A recording of the conversation is available [HERE](#).
- Barry Seymour invited participants to join a [free event](#) as part of its annual Board Retreat on December 9th to hear from Richard Rothstein, author of *The Color of Law*, about the history of racial segregation in the United States and Greater Philadelphia.

Chairman Bill Neary adjourned the meeting.

Attendees

Mayors		
East Windsor Township	Janice	Mironov
Hopewell Township	Kristin	McLaughlin
Municipal Staff & Council Members		
Franklin Township	Theodore	Chase Jr.
Hillsborough Township	David	Maski
Lawrence Township	James	Parvesse
Montgomery Township	Gail	Smith
Montgomery Township	Donato	Nieman
Monroe Township	Miriam	Cohen
North Brunswick	Tom	Vigna
Princeton	Justin	Lesko
Princeton	David	Cohen
Princeton	Deanna	Stockton
Township of Plainsboro	Les	Varga
Township of Plainsboro	Arthur	Lehrhaupt
South Brunswick Township	Joe	Camarota
South Brunswick Township	Bryan	Bidlack
City of Trenton	Jeffrey	Wilkerson
Counties		
County of Mercer	Matthew	Lawson
Middlesex County	Anthony	Gambilonghi
Middlesex County	Ryan	Rapp
Middlesex County	Doug	Greenfeld
Middlesex County	Bruce	McCracken
Middlesex County	Alex	Zakrewsky
Middlesex County	Solomon	Caviness
Middlesex County	Vijayant	Rajvanshi
Middlesex County	Charles	Kenny
Somerset County	Walter	Lane
Somerset County	Kenneth	Wedeen
Somerset County	Andras	Holzmann
Metropolitan Planning Organizations		
DVRPC	Jackie	Davis
DVRPC	Tom	Edinger
DVRPC	Barry	Seymour
NJTPA	Jennifer	Fogliano
NJTPA	Patricia	Newton
NJTPA	Ted	Ritter

NJTPA	Mary	Ameen
NJTPA	Lois	Goldman
NJTPA	Elizabeth	Johnson
NJTPA	Anne	Strauss-Wieder

Other Regional Bodies		
Greater Mercer TMA	Cheryl	Kastrenakes
KMM	Bill	Neary
Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission	Joe	Donnelly
Einstein's Alley	Katherine	Kish
Princeton Transit Trust Fund	Ralph	Widner
Rutgers Voorhees Transportation Center	Trish	Sanchez

State Departments		
NJ TRANSIT	Chris	D'Elia
NJ TRANSIT	Benjamin	LaVine
NJ TRANSIT	Michael	Viscardi
NJ Department of Community Affairs	Robert	Tessier
NJDOT	Elise	Bremer-Nei
NJDOT	Megan	Fackler
NJDOT	Tom	Houck
NJDOT	Jelena	Lasko
NJDOT	Bassey	Onyile
NJDOT	Richard	Rabinowitz

Other		
AECOM	Jim	Hess
AECOM	Tushar	Patel
Dewberry	Jack	Kanarek
Kimley-Horn	Matt	Shinton
Mercer County Community College	John	Simone
Shropshire Associates	Andrew	Feranda
Temple University	Katie	Kahn
The Hathaway Group	Pat	Ward