



CENTRAL JERSEY TRANSPORTATION FORUM

DRAFT Meeting Highlights

Monday, February 22, 2021 | 1:00 pm

Virtual Meeting

Welcome & Introductions

The meeting was held virtually via Zoom. There were 60 participants including representatives from 10 municipalities, three counties, two MPOs, and various agencies and organizations. Forum Chair Bill Neary opened the meeting.

New Brunswick Innovation Hub - Smart Mobility Testing Ground

Peter Jin of the Rutgers Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation (CAIT) shared details on the New Brunswick Innovation Hub Smart Mobility Testing Ground (The Living Lab) for connected and automated vehicle technology. The \$9.5M partnership between Middlesex County, Rutgers, Verizon and many others began with the NJEDA Innovation Challenge in August of 2019 and entered Phase II of Deployment in July 2020. Testing technologies include Self-Driving-Grade Roadside Sensing and Computing Infrastructure; an Industrial-Grade Smart Mobility Data Hub; and V2X Smartphone-based Community Mobility Applications. The Hub is built as a Mobility Technology Breeding Ground for NJ State, Middlesex County, and the City of New Brunswick.

Forum Business

Chair, Bill Neary, reminded Forum members that voting letters are due, and required on an annual basis. The [membership map](#) on the CJTF website will be updated with new representatives and membership status before the next Forum meeting. Because there was not a quorum, a formal vote on the Forum Chairperson was not held.

Municipal Updates

Walt Lane, Somerset County, invited municipalities to highlight projects or innovations of regional interest, noting the Forum's history as an information exchange. Mr. Lane noted trends with warehouse development, Sustainable Jersey initiatives, and pandemic response as key issues that would benefit from ongoing dialogue.

- Matt Lawson, Mercer County, voiced concerns with warehouse development—specifically noting the 5.5M acre warehouse distribution center to be placed on the Howard Hughes development site at Quaker Bridge Rd and Rt. 1. This is a court-settled alternative to the mixed-use development turned town by the municipality, and is the largest greenfield development site in Central NJ. Mercer approved 3 million sqft of warehouse in 2020. COVID-19 has radically changed goods movement and we need to pay attention to land use impacts on the transportation network and discuss potential impacts before they become a crisis to solve at

great expense. It would be good for Counties to have a better sense of upcoming projects before they are late in the game, even if in private conversations. Also, many proposals seem speculative—what is the capacity and need to sustain the delivery of goods?

- Walt Lane added that Counties can be a great resource and pointed municipalities toward the [NJCPA report](#) on “Creating a Healthier, Prosperous and More Equitable Future for all New Jersey’s Residents.”
- Charles Latini, Ewing Township, noted the enormous pressures of last-mile distribution and need for statewide planning. Municipalities are getting requests to convert old warehouses and anything else developers can access. Ecommerce and front-door deliveries are looking to be a long-term trend and municipalities are pressured provide the land use. As an update, the Town Center redevelopment project for 150 sqft mixed-use space is being completed; there are inquiries for converting some shopping centers to town centers; there is a proposal for the naval base to include some warehousing near the airport with flex commercial space in the front; many residential renovations; also, more open space being proposed by developers as a result of COVID-19 and buyer preferences.
- Bill Neary noted that municipalities like North Brunswick depend on property taxes and the change from retail to warehousing will have a large impact.
- Katherine Kish, Einstein’s Alley, mentioned an upcoming meeting between herself, KMM, GMTMA and the Business Action Center to discuss connecting workforce to employment sites. Bill Neary suggested it be part of municipal code for developers to provide for that transportation, along with meeting other criteria.
- Doug Greenfeld, Middlesex County, mentioned their strategic investment framework for identifying priority areas for growth and investment with municipalities.
- David Cohen, Princeton, announced their new Vision Zero Task Force and expectations for a VZ Action Plan for engineering policy for street lighting, traffic signals and data gathering.

TMA Updates

Cheryl Kastrenakes of shared updates on Greater Mercer TMA's Dynamic Carpool Program to Warehouse Employment which focuses on getting underserved workers in Trenton and Hightstown/East Windsor to warehouse jobs in East Windsor and Cranbury. The pilot has created a Waze Carpool App with cost subsidies for riders and benefits for drivers. Marketing is ongoing and the program is set to launch from May/June–December 2021.

Leanne McGowan shared updates on RideWise's EV Coalition to increase electric vehicle adoption in Somerset County. The Somerset County EV Readiness Plan provides assistance to municipalities in planning for EVs, promotes the implementation of public charging stations, and educate the public and business community. Priorities include Municipal EV planning assistance, implementation of public charging stations, and community and business education and outreach. Municipalities are encouraged to join the coalition.

Chair, Bill Neary announced upcoming KMM webinars and podcasts. Zoom outreach has been garnering more attendance than seen before. KMM hosted an EV podcast focused on usage and connectivity. NJ TRANSIT CEO Kevin Corbett provided KMM with an update on their operations. Busses are seeing similar ridership to pre-COVID-19, where trains are seeing ~35% of normal. Last week KMM held a discussion surrounding electric school busses following the Governor's proposed \$13M grant. Other discussions on micromobility, environmental justice, and the future of work are being planned.

Other Updates

Brett Fusco, DVRPC shared an update on development of the Connections 2050 Long-Range Plan for Greater Philadelphia, touching on steps in the planning process including identifying trends and forces shaping the region, conducting a scenario planning exercise, establishing a vision for 2050, identifying strategies to achieve the vision, and developing a financial plan with specific project investments. The Draft Plan being developed will be brought to DVRPC's Board for adoption in September 2021.

Lois Goldman, NJTPA, shared an update on development of their Plan 2050. NJTPA is being cognizant of recent trends related to COVID-19 and is assuming a 5-year recovery for population and employment. Technology, climate change resilience, and safety will be major themes in the plan, supported by three background papers available on their website and the CJTF website. NJTPA has adapted its outreach strategies and Ms. Goldman shared its contest for kids to draw the future.

Peter Bilton shared an update on NJTPA's TDM and Mobility Plan. NJTPA is conducting a study through June 2021 on TDM best practices, travel trends analysis, and recommended 51 potential strategies with 6 high-impact strategies for further development.

Chris D'Elia, NJ TRANSIT, provided several project updates from the office of Government and Community Relations.

- Rail is experiencing 20-25% ridership from pre-COVID-19 levels; bus has seen the biggest return at 60-65%; light rail closer to 55%.
- Portal North Bridge project will replace the movable span with a fixed span to improve reliability and increase train speed. The 2.5 miles of related infrastructure has a \$1.8B budget from an FTA grant. Once construction begins, the timeline is estimated at 5 years.
- NJT first deployed its "mask force" of volunteers on November 25th to hand out free masks to encourage universal compliance of mask-wearing on transit.
- NJT continues its Safe NJ customer awareness campaign and its cleaning and disinfection of all stations and station houses.
- FLEX pass is the new pilot ticketing option to allow flexible travel. It offers 20 one-way tickets between customer selected origins and destinations, sold at 20% discount, only through the app. All tickets need to be used within 30 days.
- Delco Lead and County Yard, a project to identify better places to store equipment during storms, identified the NEC for its wide right of way that isn't susceptible to tree fall and other weather. This project is in final engineering with construction anticipated mid-2022.
- PTC goals met and operationalized as of December 2020.
- 17 new engineers graduated on January 6th, with a total 385 engineers active with NJT.

Chairman Bill Neary adjourned the meeting.

Attendees

Mayors		
Hopewell Township	Kristin	McLaughlin

Municipal Staff & Council Members		
Borough of Highland Park	Teri	Jover
Ewing Township	Charles	Latini
Franklin Township	Theodore	Chase Jr
Hillsborough Township	David	Kois
Lawrence Township	James	Parvesse
Montgomery Township	Gail	Smith
North Brunswick Township	Tom	Vigna
Princeton	Deanna	Stockton
Princeton Council	David	Cohen
South Brunswick Township	Bryan	Bidlack
South Brunswick Township Planning Board	Jerry	Lutin
Township of Plainsboro	Les	Varga

Counties		
County of Mercer	Matthew	Lawson
Middlesex County	Doug	Greenfeld
Somerset County	Adam	Bradford
Somerset County	Walter	Lane
Somerset County	Kenneth	Wedeen

Metropolitan Planning Organizations		
DVRPC	Michael	Boyer
DVRPC	Jackie	Davis
DVRPC	Brett	Fusco
DVRPC	Barry	Seymour
NJTPA	Mary	Ameen
NJTPA	Peter	Bilton
NJTPA	Lois	Goldman
NJTPA	Jeffrey	Perlman
NJTPA	Ted	Ritter

Other Regional Bodies		
Greater Mercer TMA	Cheryl	Kastrenakes
Greater Mercer TMA	Steven	daCosta
Keep Middlesex Moving	Bill	Neary
RideWise	Donna	Allison
RideWise	Leanne	McGowan

State Departments		
NJ TRANSIT	Chris	D'Elia
NJ TRANSIT	Michael	Viscardi
NJ Department of Community Affairs	Robert	Tessier
NJDOT	Neha	Galgali
NJDOT	Tom	Houck
NJDOT	Bassey	Onyile
NJDOT	Touraj	Tayebi

Other		
AECOM	Jim	Hess
AECOM	Tushar	Patel
Dewberry	Jack	Kanarek
Einstein's Alley	Katherine	Kish
FHWA	Brian	Goodson
Mercer County Community College	Widmarc	Dalce
Princeton Forrestal Center	Curt	Emmich
Rutgers University	Peter	Jin
SMART TD	Ronald	Sabol
The Hathaway Group	Patricia	Prutzman