

Note Change of Date!

**The next meeting of the Central Jersey Transportation Forum will be on
Thursday, February 10th at 9:00 AM**

Sarnoff Corporation - 201 Washington Road, West Windsor, NJ

*In the event of inclement weather, please call (215) 238-2839
to check if the meeting has been delayed or rescheduled.*

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

**Highlights of the
Central Jersey Transportation Forum
Meeting of November 4, 2004**

Attendees (74):

Name	Organization
Chris Altomari	Stony Brook - Millstone Watershed Association
Richard Amodei	STV Incorporated
Rosemarie Anderson	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
John Araneo	French and Parrello Associates, P.A.
Brent Barnes	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Wendy Benchley	Princeton Borough
Martin Bierbaum	The College of New Jersey
Peter Bilton	Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association
Henry Boucher	Camp, Dresser and McKee
Dianne Brake	Regional Planning Partnership
Sandra Brillhart	Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association
Janet Campbell-Lorenc	SYSTRA Consulting
Peter Cantu	Plainsboro Township & Keep Middlesex Moving
Jon Carnegie	Voorhees Transportation Policy Institute
Thomas Clark	New Jersey Transit
Paul Cohn	New Jersey Department of Transportation
John Coscia	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
John Coscia, Jr.	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Marge Della Vecchia	NJ Dept. of Community Affairs - Office of the Commissioner
Marty DeNero	Mercer County
Frank Fechter	Hopewell Township Police Department
Michele Fisher	Office of Assemblywoman Linda Greenstein
Colleen Fitzgerald	Heyer, Gruel and Associates
Frank Gambatese	South Brunswick Township
Tony Gambilonghi	Middlesex County
Hamid Ghadimy	New Jersey Turnpike Authority
Basil Giletto	A-1 Limousine Corporate Offices
Danielle Graves	New Jersey Department of Transportation
William Hearor	Princeton Township
Pam Hersh	Princeton University
Shing Fu Hsueh	West Windsor Township
Dennis Keck	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Arlene Kemp	Hopewell Township

Katherine Kish	Princeton Future/Princeton Reg'l Chamber of Commerce
Miki Krakauer	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Jack Kugler	New Jersey Department of Transportation
David Kuhn	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Matthew Lawson	Mercer County
Joung Lee	Federal Highway Administration
Jim Lewis	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Philip Ludeke	Princeton Forrestal Center
Bradford Lyon	Hopewell Borough
Steve Manera	New Jersey Department of Transportation
John Manzoni	STV Incorporated
Phyllis Marchand	Princeton Township
Christopher Marion	West Windsor Township
Craig Marshall	South Brunswick Township
Alan Miller	New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
Alison Miller	West Windsor Township
Pam Mount	Lawrence Township
Diane Murphy-Atkins	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Robin Murray	New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
Zoe Neaderland	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Daniel O'Connell	NJ State Legislative Board/United Transportation Union
David Parris	Penns Neck Community
Stan Platt	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Pete Rayner	Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association
Marvin Reed	Princeton Regional Planning Board
Madelyn Rumowicz	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Roger Sager	Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission
Tom Saylor	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Walter Schmidlin, Jr.	Sarnoff Corporation
James Schwarzwald	New Jersey Transit
Don Shanis	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Bob Sheehan	Plainsboro Township
Lee Solow	Princeton Regional Planning Board
Michael Tayyabkhan	Community Without Walls-Princeton
Ron Tindall	North Jersey Transportation Authority
George Ververides	Middlesex County Department of Planning
Herman Volk	New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
Aaron Watson	Mercer County
Kenneth Wedeen	Somerset County
Louise Wilson	Montgomery Township
Gail Yazersky	BEM Systems, Inc.

Overview

This meeting of the Central Jersey Transportation Forum included a discussion of current and future Forum tasks. There were presentations on the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) project pipeline process by Thomas Saylor, Division of Project Planning and Development, and the updated pipeline three process by Steven Manera, Division of Project Management. Tom Clark from New Jersey Transit and Rich Amodei from STV Incorporated provided an update on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Study.

1. Introduction of Attendees

John Coscia, Executive Director of Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), welcomed attendees and apologized for not having been able to attend the previous meeting. He summarized that the Forum is intended to help appointed and elected officials develop solutions around the Route 1 corridor with regard to transportation and land use.

Dennis Keck, Assistant Commissioner of Planning and Development at NJDOT said the Forum has been ahead of its time at bringing people together and focusing on the transportation and land use connection. Building consensus where possible sets a tone not just for the Forum but also elsewhere in New Jersey and in Pennsylvania. He noted that the commissioners of the departments of transportation of both states were getting ready to meet for a full day on these matters.

Forum participants introduced themselves.

2. July Meeting Highlights

Mr. Coscia asked if there were any amendments to the highlights of the July 23, 2004 Forum meeting in addition to the one already added in underlined text on page 7 of the copy in meeting folders. Marvin Reed, Chairman of the Master Plan Committee of the Princeton Regional Planning Board, said he liked the summary of his comments on page 3, but thought the summary on page 4 needed revision. The conclusion was to change the clause starting with “discouraged” in the second paragraph to say “intense analysis should be encouraged”. The motion carried to approve the highlights as amended.

3. Forum Action Plan

Mr. Coscia provided a brief summary of some key conclusions from the previous meeting. These were as follow:

Matters of Consensus

- The Forum has value to the region. Its role is still being clarified
- Improving east-west access is a priority issue and relates to all modes
- The Forum will help get projects implemented
- The Forum will stay involved with Highway II projects as they are implemented by others
- The Forum is about a multi-modal approach that better integrates transportation and land use

Matters that were Rejected

- Endorsement by the Forum of building a specific configuration of SR 92

- Summit, special committee, general studies

Matters in Need of Clarification

- Goods movement – future of the subcommittee, future as a key issue
- Role of the Forum and its relationship to other organizations

Mr. Coscia introduced the Draft Forum Action Plan, included in meeting folders, by explaining that it reflected the discussion at the previous Forum meeting and consensus resulting from two meetings of the Forum Steering Committee in the time that has followed. It contains ten tasks with two noted as priorities. Much of the discussion focused on one of these two priorities, which is: “For a few existing important east-west corridors, package practical, low-impact improvements... and get them funded.” He explained three ways this task could be addressed and asked for feedback on how the Forum wanted to proceed.

These three possibilities are:

- Work with mayors, county planners, and NJDOT on projects ready, fundable, and desired
- Do intensive corridor analysis on one to two corridors
- Look at east-west corridors regarding important needs for symbiotic improvements that improve the function of them in a holistic manner.

Frank Gambatese, Mayor of South Brunswick Township, spoke in favor of focusing on the Finnegans Lane extension from US 1 to US 130. He added that with the thousands of homes going up along NJ 27, if the new railroad station does get built many commuters would be trying to make trips that would be served by an extension of Finnegans Lane.

Mr. Reed said that four or five major links might be the answer for east-west access along with or instead of SR 92 if it does not go forward. These would consist of widenings of existing roads, perhaps to three or four lanes. He said that if this is the answer, we should go forward and distribute the impacts fairly.

Peter Cantu, Mayor of Plainsboro Township, emphasized the need to be practical with regard to whether proposals can happen. He said that what we have learned is that road improvements are nearly impossible to achieve.

Wendy Benchley, Princeton Borough Council member, spoke for a holistic approach that would include up-to-date numbers from the SR 92 studies and other studies of Central Jersey regional transportation so the Forum can deal in facts. Others said that these matters have been studied exhaustively. Louise Wilson, Mayor of Montgomery Township, said she had heard that the traffic impacts north and northwest of SR 92 may not have been adequately studied. She went on to ask if DVRPC has taken a position on a new crossing of the Millstone River as flooding regularly closes many of the bridges. Mr. Coscia said there is no position on that.

Dianne Brake, President of Regional Planning Partnership, said that updating data and adding where there may be holes are valuable efforts, but the key is to find ways to make agreements. She said that the beauty of the Forum is the range of public officials around the table. Planners need good will, data, and authority to implement projects, as everything will impact someone's back yard. The need is to get officials to think more regionally. Mr. Coscia agreed, adding that there comes a point where top levels of leadership, such as a governor or senator, need to take over and make a project happen, recognizing that there will never be one hundred percent consensus.

Mayor Cantu added that he believes it is time to move forward, not excluding new ideas, but focusing on people and communications. He said he believes it would be a mistake to study the problems for another three years.

Robin Murray of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs-Office of Smart Growth spoke for an approach of common pain and common benefits. She suggested an approach of focusing on safety. There is and will be considerable traffic on Central Jersey roads, and it can use roads scaled for it, or smaller roads with more crashes. She also recommended going forward focusing on projects that can provide benefits in one to two years without waiting for SR 92 as it would not be built soon even if the decision were to go forward. Allison Miller, President of West Windsor Township Council, similarly recommended developing a package with something for everyone that leaders can back.

George Ververides, Middlesex Planning Department Director, stressed the needs for a decision on SR 92, for addressing the rapid growth in the Central Jersey region (noting that at least a connection from Exit 8A to US 130 would help), and for looking at transit. A feature of the region is the tremendous commuted area of the Northeast corridor and need to serve it with transit villages and park and ride facilities.

Mr. Coscia summarized that there seem to be two tracks. One track would take a holistic approach to improving east-west transportation in the region. The other would focus on one corridor at a time. Mr. Keck added that it is important to recognize that problems change over time, and that the east-west access problem exists both north and south of the SR 92 area. He said there are strong pros and cons to SR 92 but a decision is needed. After that, it will be important to band together on next steps focusing on transportation and land use coordination. Mayor Gambatese emphasized that once highway designs are developed, they should not sit for thirty years while people continue to build homes.

In the discussion of the other items on the action plan, Mr. Ververides said that it should include extending the Route 1 BRT to the proposed BRT in New Brunswick. This would address the difficulty of widening US 1 in South

Brunswick and the potential for a transit village at the Johnson and Johnson property in North Brunswick.

Mr. Coscia asked whether the Forum wished to endorse the action plan. Endorsement was moved, seconded, and approved.

4. Short-Term Projects

a) Transportation Problems and Projects

Zoe Neaderland, Senior Transportation Planner at DVRPC, summarized the process and recommendations of “Selected Projects - 2004” (included in folders). Pam Hersh, Director of Community and State Affairs for Princeton University, asked about improvements to the DINKY Line. It was explained that this task focuses on currently unfunded projects and that the DINKY is being considered as part of the BRT study. In response to a question about the support for a South Brunswick railroad station, Mayor Gambatese and representatives for adjoining municipalities and the county enthusiastically reaffirmed their commitment. There was general agreement to send the letter of support for the six projects attached at the end of the report.

b) NJDOT Project Pipeline and Local Aid Program

Two speakers covered the NJDOT PowerPoint presentation included in folders. The first speaker was Thomas Saylor, Jr., who is the Manager of the South Region for the Division of Project Planning and Development. The second speaker was Steven Manera, the Program Manager for the Division of Project Management. This agenda item also had a handout on Local Aid Programs and Resources from David Kuhn, Director of Local Aid and Economic Development.

Both speakers stressed coordination within the project development process. There was additional discussion after the presentation clarifying how the NJDOT processes fit with the MPO processes. NJDOT deals primarily with state roads. While state roads only represent about 8 percent of the total mileage, they carry over 40 percent of traffic. NJDOT also funds over \$150 million in local aid. Most non-state road projects are evaluated for funding priority by the MPOs (DVRPC and NJTPA in Central Jersey). Mr. Coscia introduced John Coscia, Jr., Senior Transportation Engineer at DVRPC, who is the point person for project development. John Coscia, Jr. stressed that the MPO and NJDOT work together closely and it does not really matter to which organization a potential project is submitted.

Ms. Brake asked about coordination with the State Plan. The response was that there is coordination and there are monthly meetings with the Office of Smart Growth staff.

Phyllis Marchand, Mayor of Princeton Township, asked for a description of how a known project fit into the process. She praised how quickly the removal of the traffic light at Route 1 and Provinceline Road happened and suggested it as an example. She also asked about how NJDOT assesses the broader impacts of its projects. NJDOT staff said it was an example of the upper end of a pipeline four project and they are now reviewing its effect on related projects in the vicinity of the nearby Quakerbridge Mall. The Value Management Committee had pulled out the removal of the light from a larger project due to concern about high accident rates on an interstate. They will further assess the effect of the project during the holiday shopping season.

The discussion also covered the following items. There is strong concern about funds tied up in projects that are not moving forward. It was clarified that pipeline four projects generally have a cap of \$200,000 per task. There is a \$10 million budget for such projects statewide.

Mr. Coscia praised the NJDOT streamlined project development process. Mr. Manera said they are tracking its effect on how long projects take, and have found it reduced total time by twelve to eighteen months. Mr. Keck said the State's priorities are "Fix it First", maintenance, and safety, and that half of statewide transportation funds go to transit. He stressed that endorsement by involved municipalities is key to how fast projects move forward within the context of many needs and few dollars.

5. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Tom Clark, Regional Manager of NJ Transit Government and Community Relations Department, started with an update on outreach. In addition to information in the PowerPoint slides included in folders, he added that they had made a presentation to the Mercer County Chapter of the Alliance for Action and would be making a presentation to the Middlesex County Transportation Coordinating Committee on November 23rd. He said they have also set a date with South Brunswick to review potential alignments and service patterns and with Sarnoff Corporation and Princeton University. These are mainly working meetings rather than public meetings. There will be a BRT Subcommittee meeting before the next Forum meeting.

Sandra Brillhart, Executive Director of Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association (TMA), asked if there has been outreach in Burlington County. The answer was that there had not been because the majority of passengers are expected to come from within ten to fifteen miles of the BRT line.

Rich Amodei, STV Incorporated, made the rest of the presentation. He said that they have drafted alignments for the BRT on aerials but are showing that material to municipalities before presenting it to the Forum. He also outlined five options

for the DINKY right-of-way. Mr. Amodei said the travel demand model for the study is being calibrated and he expects ridership estimates by the end of the year.

The following items were clarified in response to questions. If everything comes together, the BRT might be running in three to ten years. A chart will be included in the future showing connections to local buses. The PowerPoint presentation will be put on the BRT web site (www.route1brt.com) and is available from STV. A decision on recommendations is expected in the spring. There would be a one-seat ride from the main park and ride stations. The route is currently estimated at approximately sixty percent dedicated right-of-way and forty percent shared right-of-way. The fare would be on the order of \$2. Park and ride lots will accommodate bicycles and the DINKY right-of-way is expected to eventually include a bike path.

Ms. Murray emphasized the need to include lunchtime service in addition to peak times. Don Shanis, Assistant Executive Director for Transportation Planning at DVRPC, and others spoke about using pricing policies to encourage ridership.

6. Brief Reports

a) Cross-acceptance

Ms. Murray said the deadline for the final adopted report has been extended from July to September, 2005. The Office of Smart Growth had been short of staff but has now hired two more planners.

Mr. Coscia said DVRPC feels strongly about using DVRPC population and employment forecasts. Ms. Murray said they have agreed to use multiple ones for now and are also working with the Pinelands Taskforce.

Mr. Coscia asked about how the DEP big map has been included. Ms. Murray said several layers were incorporated and others were referenced. The stream buffers are not shown as the buffer widths vary and are difficult to show at map scales.. Work continues on the matter of sewer service. The Plan will indicate where there is sewer service in inappropriate areas and where there is not service in areas designated for levels of development that would call for it. She said cross acceptance negotiations will determine how to handle areas that have sewer service currently but show as inappropriate for development..

b) NJDOT Route 1 Smart Growth Study

Danielle Graves, Principal Engineer for the NJDOT Bureau of Statewide Planning, provided a summary of the first meeting held on this study, which was in late October. Eleven of the fifteen communities in its study area were

represented and the three counties. The study area generally overlaps the Forum area. The study will focus on an economic framework, demonstrate some land use efforts to support the BRT, and there will be reports back to the Forum. The next meeting will be in January. There will be a total of about five meetings over the fifteen to eighteen months of the study.

Ms. Miller asked about public participation in the study and said she would like the summary of the last study meeting e-mailed out to Forum members. Ms. Murray said there would be public process.

7. Dialogue

Mr. Reed reported on the Princeton Medical Center situation. If this large facility stays at its current location they want to expand. If it moves, from a regional perspective, it would be important that the new location have transit access and that the implications of redevelopment of the current site be considered.

Michael Tayyabkhan, Community Without Walls-Princeton, explained that they are doing a one-year pilot project to evaluate an on-demand service for senior citizens in the Princeton area.

Mayor Wilson reported that Montgomery is embarking on community based planning for the Belle Mead node, where US 206 and the West Trenton rail line cross. There is no transit there currently, but they see it as a receiving zone for TDR. This is a project coordinated through Somerset County. Ken Wedeen, Senior Planner for Somerset County, followed up. He said the County had proposed a West Trenton Line Station Area Design Study to NJTPA for Montgomery and Hillsborough. The study will fund integrated station design and transit oriented land use planning in coordination with NJ Transit. Mr. Clark added that there would be NJ Transit West Trenton Line meetings on December 1st and 7th.

Next Steps

Mr. Coscia congratulated Walter Schmidlin on retiring from his previous position as Director of Facilities Management for Sarnoff and thanked him for his support over the years. Mr. Schmidlin will remain the Sarnoff representative to the Forum in his new position in their Corporate Real Estate Department.

The next meeting of the Forum will be on Thursday, February 10th . .