

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE CENTRAL JERSEY TRANSPORTATION FORUM
WILL BE **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2008 AT 1:00 PM**
NEW JERSEY HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
760 ALEXANDER ROAD, PRINCETON, NJ**

**ONE PAGE OVERVIEW
CENTRAL JERSEY TRANSPORTATION FORUM
MAY 27, 2008 MEETING**

INTRODUCTIONS

There were over 60 participants, including representatives for 7 municipalities, 3 counties, 2 MPOs, 1 TMA, 9 representatives from NJDOT, 4 from NJ Transit, and various other agencies and organizations (for-profit and non-profit). Barry Seymour, Executive Director at DVRPC, and Mark Stout, Assistant Commissioner of Planning and Development at NJDOT, thanked Hillsborough and Carriage Farm for hosting the meeting.

UPDATES ON ROUTE 1 CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

- > David Kuhn, Executive Director of NJDOT's Capital Investment Strategy, spoke about the Draft FY 2009 – 2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). It shifts to a 10-year capital plan and uses a constrained revenue model. Mr. Kuhn discussed new capital projects in the Forum area, and projects moved to Tier 2 unfunded status.
- > Mr. Seymour spoke about the Planned Projects Status Report. It provides current information on major transportation and land development projects in the Forum area.

GOODS MOVEMENT MATTERS

- > Bob Bzik, Director of Somerset County's Planning Division, gave updates on land use and goods movement projects in the vicinity of US 206, including an update on the TransLoad site and the Hillsborough Town Center project. He and Jack Kanarek, Senior Director of Project Development at NJ Transit, addressed resuming passenger service on the West Trenton line.
- > Danielle Graves, Principal Engineer at NJDOT, gave an update on the Blue Route Task Force. Mercer and Somerset Counties will be case studies for policies including improved truck weighing systems.

EAST-WEST EXISTING CORRIDORS

The Forum endorsed a package of easily implemented projects on CR 518, an important existing east-west corridor. Five municipalities led the effort that was also shaped with input from two counties, two MPOs, and various agencies.

SMART TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS GUIDEBOOK

Don Shanis, Deputy Executive Director at DVRPC, described the Guidebook that helps define contextual possibilities and appropriate improvements for types of roadways. The executive summary was distributed and is available at www.dvrpc.org.

COORDINATING ROUTE 1 PLANNING EFFORTS

- > The Forum serves as an umbrella gathering and supporting the various Route 1 efforts
- > The NJ Office of Economic Growth Route 1 Planning Through Partnerships continues to gather information and there will be a report on it at the next Forum meeting
- > The NJDOT Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy will convene workshops over the summer, and will coordinate with the BRT, Forum, and other projects
- > Mr. Kanarek reported that ridership studies are underway for the Route 1 BRT. A near-term implementation plan is being developed to identify cost-effective, easily implemented elements.

**MEETING SUMMARY
CENTRAL JERSEY TRANSPORTATION FORUM
MAY 27TH, 2008 MEETING**

ATTENDEES (approximately 61)

Municipalities

Andrew	Carten	Director	City of Trenton Division of Planning
Theodore	Chase	Chair	Franklin Township Planning Board
Thomas	Belanger	Engineer	Hillsborough Township
Michele	Hovan	Administrator	Hopewell Borough
Mike	Costello		Monroe Township Trails Committee
Gail	Smith	Engineer	Montgomery Township
Louise	Wilson	Committee Member	Montgomery Township
Eileen	Heinzel	Council Member	Pennington Borough
Peter	Cantu	Mayor	Plainsboro Township
Pat	Hullfish		Plainsboro Township
Les	Varga	Director	Plainsboro Township Planning and Zoning
Mildred	Trotman	Mayor	Princeton Borough
Marvin	Reed	Chairman - Master Plan Committee	Princeton Regional Planning Board
Lee	Solow	Planning Director	Princeton Regional Planning Board
Bob	Kiser	Engineer	Princeton Township
Craig	Marshall	Planning Director	South Brunswick Township
Ron	Schmalz	Public Affairs Coordinator	South Brunswick Township Public Affairs
Alison	Miller		West Windsor Parking Authority
Brian	Aronson		West Windsor Township
Pat	Ward	Coordinator of Community Development	West Windsor Township Community Development Dept.

Counties

Matthew	Lawson	Transportation Planner	Mercer County Planning Department
Donna	Lewis	Director	Mercer County Planning Department
George	Ververides	Director	Middlesex County Department of Planning
Robert	Bzik	Director	Somerset County Planning Division
Joe	Fishingier	Principal Engineer	Somerset County Engineering Division
Walter	Lane	Principal Planner	Somerset County Planning Division

Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Jesse	Buerk	Intern	DVRPC Long Range Planning
Zoe	Neaderland	Senior Transportation Planner	DVRPC Long Range Planning
Barry	Seymour	Executive Director	DVRPC
Don	Shanis	Deputy Executive Director	DVRPC
Lois	Goldman	Director of Regional Planning	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
Ted	Matthews	Director of Freight Planning	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority Freight Planning
Peter	Palmer	Board, Freeholder	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Other Regional Bodies

Morteza	Ansari	Senior Transportation Coordinator	Keep Middlesex Moving, Inc.
Glenn	Reibman	Director of Policy and Planning	Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission

State Departments

James	Requa	Manager of Implementation Unit	NJ Department of Community Affairs Office of Smart Growth
Brent	Barnes	Director of Planning and Development	NJ Department of Transportation Planning and Development
Cheryl	Brennan		NJ Department of Transportation NJ Department of Transportation Project Planning and Development
Paul	Cohn	Manager, Smart Growth Initiatives	
Danielle	Graves	Principal Engineer	NJ Department of Transportation Bureau of Statewide Planning
Miki	Krakauer	Administrative Analyst	NJ Department of Transportation Bureau of Freight Services
David	Kuhn	Executive Director	NJ Department of Transportation Capital Investment Strategy
Gary	Leach	Project Engineer	NJ Department of Transportation DPPD-Central
Jim	Lewis	Manager	NJ Department of Transportation Bureau of Statewide Planning
Mark	Stout	Assistant Commissioner	NJ Department of Transportation Planning & Development
Tim	Evans	Research Director	NJ Future
Danielle	Esser	Policy Research Administrator	NJ Housing and Mortgage Financing Agency
Daniel	O'Connell	NJ Legislative Director Regional Manager, Gov. & Community Relations	NJ State Legislative Board/United Transportation Union
Tom	Clark		NJ Transit
Jack	Kanarek	Senior Director of Project Development	NJ Transit
Tom	Marchwinski	Director of Systems Planning	NJ Transit
James	Schwarzwalder	Manager of Area Studies	NJ Transit
Brian	Wahler		NJ Turnpike Authority

Other

John	Burchill		Century 21 W&G Commercial
Ed	Clerico	President	Alliance Environmental
Jeff	Hewitson		Dewbery-Goodkind, Inc.
Jerome	Lutin		Citizen
Walter	Schmidlin		Sarnoff Corporation Corporate Real Estate
Raymond	Tomczak	Senior Transportation Planner	HNTB

Please advise if you attended but are not on the list. It is helpful for everyone to sign in.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mark Stout, Assistant Commissioner of Planning and Development at NJDOT, opened the meeting and thanked Hillsborough Township for hosting it. He recognized Hillsborough Township Business Advocate Gene Strupinsky, President of Alliance Environmental and owner of Carriage Farm Ed Clerico, Hillsborough Mayor Anthony Ferrera, and Hillsborough Township Engineer Tom Belanger. He thanked Mr. Strupinsky and Carriage Farm Property Manager Debbie Burke for their efforts coordinating the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves. Mr. Clerico welcomed the group and spoke about the need for sustainable development, integrated systems, and design principles that build for everyday use, and not just for extreme conditions.

He linked his words to transportation by talking about the need to move away from fragmented systems, and stressing the positives of transit oriented development.

2. FEBRUARY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Stout asked for any revisions to the highlights of the February 11th Forum meeting as distributed in advance of the meeting and in the meeting folders. There were no comments and the highlights were adopted.

3. UPDATES ON ROUTE 1 CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

David Kuhn, Executive Director of the New Jersey Department of Transportation's Capital Investment Strategy spoke at length about the new Draft TIP and its implications for transportation projects in the Forum area. Mr. Kuhn gave background about the challenges of the current economic climate and gave insight into NJDOT's strategies for addressing funding gaps as part of a long-term strategy that builds on past work and present assets. NJDOT is faced with the difficult task of balancing competing needs including safety, infrastructure, transit, multimodal, and other investment categories. Mr. Kuhn summed up the problem, saying "We can't pay for everything."

In an effort to address these realities, NJDOT has shifted to a ten-year capital plan with the new TIP. It uses a constrained revenue model and certain economic assumptions in the calculations underlying the Draft TIP. The first financial assumption is that Federal transportation dollars will remain flat over the ten-year period. The second economic assumption is that the state Transportation Trust Fund will be renewed in 2011, but with only a three percent inflationary increase in funding. These constraints led NJDOT to assume a budget of approximately \$19 billion over the ten-year capital improvement plan. Within these constraints, certain categories, namely bridge repairs, were given priority over others. Funding bridges heavily meant that other large funding categories, including roadway assets and congestion mitigation, had to be cut significantly. Many smaller funding categories maintained relatively static funding levels. As a result of these financial constraints, certain projects were shifted to "Tier 2" status, which means that these projects are not currently funded in the Draft TIP. Major Tier 2 projects in the Forum area include the Penns Neck project, the Vaughn Drive Connector, and the Old Somerville Road to Brown Avenue project. Mr. Kuhn stressed that Tier 2 status does not mean that projects will never be realized. If other projects are removed from the TIP, or if funding levels increase, Tier 2 projects may be reconsidered.

Discussion followed. Mr. Kuhn clarified that the TIP will continue to be revisited on a yearly basis, and explained the mechanism for payback of funds for dropped projects already underway. Questions were raised about the level of public and MPO input regarding the major changes undertaken by NJDOT, with some people feeling that the level of participation was perhaps less than ideal. The main issues raised were the economic assumptions that formed the basis of the financial constraint model and the selection process for priority areas, particularly as related to congestion. Barry Seymour, Executive Director of DVRPC, said that although DVRPC was consulted and allowed to comment on projects receiving Tier 2 status, with three out of five projects subsequently going back into the Draft TIP, the process occurred at a pace that did not allow as much discussion as there could have been. Another question concerned why the Penns Neck and Vaughn Drive projects were dropped, while the Quaker Bridge Road project was not. Princeton voiced concerns about development projects as related to traffic issues in the Penns Neck area. Mr. Kuhn concluded the question and answer session

by suggesting that Forum members reach out to members of the state legislature about projects of interest.

Mr. Seymour introduced the latest Planned Projects Status Report compiled by DVRPC staff and included in the meeting folders. The report details TIP projects in the Forum area, with full project descriptions and maps provided for capital projects. It also provides an overview of the Draft FY 2009 TIP, including new capital projects and those projects moved to Tier 2 status. Information about the status of major land use projects in and around the Forum area is included, as well as a listing of major capital projects reported by the counties as being underway or of importance. Mr. Seymour stressed the value of getting the whole view of projects in the Route 1 area, including land use projects that will have profound influences on transportation and goods movement. He emphasized the need to coordinate land use and transportation projects, citing the 2.5 million square feet of retail and commercial development, over 4 million square feet of office space, nearly 4,000 housing units, 1 million square feet of medical facilities, and over 80,000 parking spaces planned, proposed, or currently being developed in the Forum area.

4. GOODS MOVEMENT MATTERS

Bob Bzik, Director of Somerset County's Planning Division, provided updates about land use and goods movement projects in the vicinity of US 206, including an update on the TransLoad site. Mr. Bzik gave an update about the Somerville Borough Station project, which will be built in two phases, and would include the rehabilitation of a former landfill and construction of nearly 1,000 housing units, 28,000 square feet of retail, 120,000 square feet of commercial, and 6,000 square feet of civic use. The county is reviewing proposals and making recommendations. The NJ Transit Somerville Station is mostly designed, and construction could begin in 2008. Mr. Bzik said that the Hillsborough Town Center project is dependent on the completion of the US 206 bypass. Zoning for a pedestrian-friendly town center has been put in place, but no plans have been filed to date. Discussions related to resuming passenger service on the West Trenton line are also critical for the town center project. Zoning proposals for a research zone near the US 206 bypass terminus are on hold pending litigation. The Montgomery Promenade development still has some unresolved issues to solve before final zoning is passed. The Township developed a plan involving loop roads to relieve congestion at the development and approved designs using the concept. Transit village proposals in Hillsborough, Bell Meade, and North Brunswick were also mentioned.

Mr. Bzik provided an update about the TransLoad site. In 2006, a grant from NJTPA was used to develop plans building on a county-wide freight study done in 2000 and freight analysis performed by NJTPA. The Veterans Administration (VA) Supply Depot, Defense Logistics Agency property, and former US Postal Service property in Somerset County comprise 265 acres, and include 2 million square feet of existing warehouse space. The VA Depot site is operated by a California firm with a 35-year lease in effect. Rail freight is served by Norfolk Southern. Somerset County developed a set of guiding principles, which included ways to encourage modal shifting to increase rail and decrease reliance on trucking. Trucks over 102" wide and empty truck movements were of particular concern. New buildings and structures targeted for conversion were identified, and attempts were made to balance freight and community needs. Innovative measures included specialized lighting to reduce spillage and an 800-number for community concerns. Although these guiding principles were developed by Somerset County, the current site owners do not seem interested in reinvesting in the property, or implementing the innovative concepts put forward by the county at this time.

Danielle Graves, Principal Engineer at NJDOT, filled in for Talvin Davis, Manager of Freight Planning and Intermodal Coordination at NJDOT, and read a statement updating the progress of the Blue Route Task Force. Subcommittees have been formed and criteria discussed. Plans are underway to use Mercer and Somerset Counties as case studies. New policies include improvements to mapping and truck weighing systems.

5. EAST-WEST EXISTING CORRIDORS

Zoe Neaderland, Senior Transportation Planner at DVRPC, introduced a package of small-scale, easily implemented projects to facilitate east-west movement along CR 518. A copy of the package was included as a handout in the meeting folders. Ms. Neaderland praised the participating municipalities, counties, and agencies for coming together to conduct productive discussions. Of particular concern for CR 518 is balancing transportation and goods movement needs while protecting the historic character of the towns along the route. Bob Bzik told the group that Somerset County has taken action to include the CR 518 group's package in the County's capital program. Mr. Bzik also noted the importance of municipalities contacting counties to drive home the importance of certain projects. Tom Marchwinski, Director of Systems Planning at NJTransit, expressed NJ Transit's support of further study of the connections beyond CR 518 to include some of the larger new developments in the area. Amidst concerns about north-south movement, and larger projects outside the scope of the CR 518 package, Mr. Seymour stressed that addressing small problems where possible is part of the collective action that will be required to solve mobility problems in the Forum area. While large, expensive capital projects are another important part of the solution, they are not the whole solution.

The discussion concluded with formal endorsement of the Forum's support of the CR 518 package. Next steps include evaluating key east-west (and possibly other) corridors to develop a short list of candidates for the next package of small, easily implemented projects. Support for expanding the list to include a broader look at north-south movements was expressed by some.

6. SMART TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS GUIDEBOOK

Don Shanis, Deputy Executive Director at DVRPC, introduced the Smart Transportation Solutions Guidebook, a helpful document for municipalities in New Jersey and Pennsylvania recently published by DVRPC. The executive summary of the guidebook was included in the folders distributed at the Forum meeting. The Smart Transportation Solutions Guidebook was created through a cooperative effort between PennDOT and NJDOT, in conjunction with DVRPC. The guide addresses the frustration of past, one-size-fits-all approaches to transportation facilities by defining different contextual possibilities and different types of roadways. Recognizing that wide, fast, uniform roads are not appropriate for every location, the guidebook suggests ways to evaluate designs to select the most appropriate solution for the context. Mr. Shanis pointed out that this approach also suggests ways to save money at a time when transportation budgets are highly constrained. Important next steps will be to disseminate the guidebook to municipal officials, and to engage and train engineers. DVRPC, PennDOT, and NJDOT will work together to establish performance measures for the techniques presented in the guidebook, going beyond standard measurement such as volume to capacity ratios. Integrating freight and better use of mapping are key steps for the future. The full report (publication number 08030A) is available by request from DVRPC. The report can be downloaded in PDF format at: <http://www.dvrpc.org/asp/pubs/reports/08030A.pdf>

Mr. Stout commented that the guidebook is more than just a report, and in fact represents a radical, empowering document. He noted that NJDOT is very interested in feedback, and that he hopes the guidebook will spread, “like wildfire.” Montgomery Township Committee Member Louise Wilson also expressed the need to introduce the guidebook as widely as possible. Ms. Wilson suggested the League of Municipalities conference in the fall as a potential venue to spread the word. She also raised issues faced by many towns, including how to accomplish retrofitting, how to get funding, how to persuade developers to adopt the types of approaches described in the guidebook, and what to do when developers are not willing to go as far as a town might like. West Windsor Township Coordinator of Community Development Pat Ward labeled the document a, “wonderful guide,” saying she liked that the guide looks at context instead of just adding more lanes. Miki Krakauer, Administrative Analyst at NJDOT’s Bureau of Freight Services, pointed out that freight still has to move, and that roads must be able to handle freight vehicles. This prompted Mr. Seymour to point out that while traffic calming is an important technique where appropriate, it is also undesirable to calm “to a standstill.” Lois Goldman, Director of Regional Planning at NJTPA, mentioned that NJTPA is working on an update of their regional visioning plan, and wants to work closely with counties, using ideas like those presented in the guidebook to define appropriate contextual solutions.

7. COORDINATING ROUTE 1 PLANNING EFFORTS

Mr. Seymour introduced the handout included in the meeting folders explaining the four distinct planning efforts underway in the Route 1 area, and how they all fit together. These efforts include the Forum, the Regional Growth Strategy, NJ Transit’s BRT studies, and the Office of Economic Growth’s Planning Through Partnerships Program. Mr. Seymour described the Forum as the larger umbrella under which the various other efforts take place.

Ms. Graves gave an update on the Regional Growth Strategy, which involves 15 municipalities in the Route 1 area. She gave a brief history of the effort, stated a need to update work on planned and proposed developments, and said that workshops will be set up this summer with the goal of concluding by early next year. The Regional Growth Strategy will be coordinated as closely as possible with the BRT effort.

Jack Kanarek, Senior Director of Project Development at NJTransit, gave an update about the BRT. An alternatives analysis was performed two years ago, which came up with potential routes to serve the Forum area and beyond. However, given the current economic climate, the money for implementation has yet to become available. Mr. Kanarek said that a near-term implementation plan is being developed to identify cost-effective, easily implemented pieces of the project. Ridership forecasts are being conducted, taking into account recent development activity, and within a couple of months, smaller routes could be developed. Mr. Kanarek also gave an update on the prospects of renewing passenger service to the West Trenton line. A draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has been completed, and comments received. However, the FTA has taken the position that it will not review the EA unless the project is funded in a capital program. Currently, the project is not funded in a capital program. Ted Chase, Chair of Franklin Township’s Planning Board, asked if the public comments were incorporated into the EA, and Mr. Kanarek replied that the matter was complicated by the fact that the EA will inevitably become obsolete over time. Marvin Reed, Chairman of the Master Plan Committee of the Princeton Regional Planning Board, asked about the nature of the passenger service being considered for the West Trenton line. Mr. Kanarek replied that the service analyzed was a limited morning, evening, and afternoon commuter service. He pointed out that the project is constrained by the freight needs of the CSX railroad company, and suggested that it would be important to keep the project to a fundable scale, and then once it was up and running, to

consider expanding capacity. The tension between freight and passenger rail will be a challenge to resolve, he said. The project is of great interest to Hillsborough, Montgomery, and Hopewell Townships, as well as Somerset County. Hillsborough and others are already planning transit oriented developments. Mr. Bzik said that Somerset County was very interested in the project, and discussed updating ridership studies to reflect current gas prices. Mr. Seymour said that the level of interest in the West Trenton line seemed to justify introducing the topic as an agenda item at a future meeting.

Mr. Stout gave a very brief update on the Regional Compact. Problems with staff turnover at the NJ Office of Economic Growth have slowed the process, and as a result there is nothing of substance to report at this time.

8. DIALOGUE

The floor was opened to discussion. Mr. Bzik brought up the subject of New Jersey's new COAH rules, mentioning that Somerset County was trying to implement the rules, but was concerned about the accuracy of some of the state's adopted data, for example the amount of vacant land in the county and the state's economic forecasts. He asked if the Forum could help the counties form a consistent position. Mr. Seymour said that the Forum could help make sure that data gets integrated and used consistently. The Forum can also help communicate differences between state data and local understanding. Mr. Shanis said that municipalities and counties should start thinking about new funding solutions for transportation projects instead of waiting for federal money that may never arrive. Mr. Clerico wondered why transit projects are not a higher funding priority, considering the level of interest in these projects. He also stressed the need for life-cycle cost assessments when planning development and transportation projects. Mr. Stout made an impassioned speech about housing, pointing out that New Jersey is employment rich and housing poor, and that the disparity between employment and housing is rapidly widening. Municipalities fear costs associated with schools and other services that housing can bring, but these issues must nonetheless be addressed. Mr. Bzik suggested that the Forum reach out to NJ Future, support modification to the urban transit tax credit bill to encourage private sector investments, and comment on the new COAH rules, including density bonuses for transit concentration. Tim Evans, Research Director at NJ Future, suggested property-tax sharing as a potential solution to solving the problem of the burden of providing municipal services.

Mr. Seymour adjourned the meeting, once again thanking Mr. Clerico, Mr. Strupinsky, and Hillsborough Township for hosting it. The next meeting will take place in Mercer County on the schedule of rotating among counties..

DVRPC fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. DVRPC's website may be translated into Spanish, Russian, and Traditional Chinese online by visiting www.dvrpc.org. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages or formats, if requested. For more information, please call (215) 238-2871.