

**The next meeting of the Central Jersey Transportation Forum will be on
Thursday, November 4th at 9:00 AM
Sarnoff Corporation - 201 Washington Road, Princeton, NJ**

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

**Highlights of the
Central Jersey Transportation Forum
Meeting of July 23, 2004**

Attendees (65):

Name	Organization
Chris Altomari	Stony Brook- Millstone Watersheds Association
Richard Amodei	STV Incorporated
Rosemarie Anderson	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Raymond Andrejczik, Sr.	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Brent Barnes	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Martin Bierbaum	The College Of New Jersey
Peter Bilton	Greater Mercer TMA
Dianne Brake	Regional Planning Partnership
Sandra Brillhart	Greater Mercer TMA
Janet Campbell-Lorenc	SYSTRA Consulting
Peter Cantu	Plainsboro Township/Keep Middlesex Moving
Jon Carnegie	Voorheers Transportation Policy Institute
Thomas Clark	New Jersey Transit
Paul Cohn	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Mike Collins	New Jersey Economic Development Authority
Susan Conlon	Berrien City /Princeton Junction
Frank Fechter	Hopewell Township Police Department
Doug Freudenrich	Michael Baker & Associates, Inc.
Katherine Fullerton	Washington Township, Mercer County
Tony Gambilonghi	Middlesex County Department of Planning
Hamid Ghadimy	New Jersey Turnpike Authority
Basil Giletto	A-1 Limousine Corporate Offices
Gail Gimbel	DMJM Harris
Erin Gold	Office Of Assemblywoman Greenstein
Danielle Graves	New Jersey Department of Transportation
William Hearon	Princeton Township Committee
Pam Hersh	Princeton University
Shing Fu Hsueh	West Windsor Township
Brian Hughes	Mercer County
Martin Hull	Baker Engineering
Ileana Ivanciu	Dewberry -Goodkind, Inc.

Jack Kanarek	New Jersey Transit
Arlene Kemp	Hopewell Township Committee
Katherine Kish	Chamber Of Commerce Of Princeton Area/Market Entry Inc.
Miki Krakauer	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Jim Lewis	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Bruce Looloian	The Advance Realty Group
Bradford Lyon	Hopewell Borough
Alan Maiman	New Jersey Transit
Craig Marshall	South Brunswick Township
Alison Miller	West Windsor Township
Jack Molenaar	Plainsboro Planning Department
Pam Mount	Lawrence Township
Robin Murray	New Jersey Dept. of Community Affairs - Office of Smart Growth
Diane Murphy-Atkins	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Zoe Neaderland	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Damien Newton	Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Stan Platt	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Marvin Reed	Princeton Regional Planning Board
Carlos Rodrigues	New Jersey Dept. of Community Affairs - Office of Smart Growth
Howard Rosen	Transportation Consultant
Madelyn Rumowicz	New Jersey Department of Transportation
James Schwarzwaldner	New Jersey Transit
Charles Scott	NJ Dept. of Env. Protection, Historic Preservation Office
Don Shanis	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Sandra Shapiro	West Windsor Citizens For Transportation Alternatives
Lee Solow	Princeton Regional Planning Board
Linda Spalinski	Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission
Ron Tindall	North Jersey Transportation Authority
George Ververides	Middlesex County Department of Planning
Herman Volk	New Jersey Dept. of Community Affairs - Office of Smart Growth
Pat Ward	West Windsor
Kenneth Wedeen	Somerset County Planning Department
Bob Wolfe	Princeton Forrestal Center
Jim Yeager	Michael Baker & Associates, Inc.

Overview

The meeting of the Central Jersey Transportation Forum took place on Friday, July 23, 2004 at Sarnoff Corporation in Princeton, New Jersey. There were presentations and discussions of the vision of the Forum and of the long range plans being prepared by DVRPC, NJTPA and NJDOT. New Jersey Transit staff provided an update on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.

1. Introduction of Attendees

Brent Barnes, Director of Planning and Development for NJDOT, and Don Shanis, Assistant Executive Director for Transportation Planning at DVRPC, welcomed attendees. John Coscia, Executive Director of DVRPC, was unable to attend and sent his regrets. Forum participants introduced themselves.

2. Summary of April Meeting Highlights

Mr. Barnes asked for amendments to the highlights of the April 23, 2004 Forum meeting. The motion was carried to approve the highlights as written.

3. Vision for the Future

Rosemarie Anderson, Manager of the Office of Corridor Planning at DVRPC, gave a PowerPoint presentation, "Central Jersey Transportation Visions". She explained the original mission of the Forum, outlined the original action plan and what had been accomplished, and then proposed the main goal for the future and potential directions for implementing it. Her presentation covered general possible directions and a list of potential meeting topics for the coming year. This material was also covered in an accompanying written item, "Achievements and Next Steps".

Marvin Reed, Master Plan Committee Chairman of the Princeton Regional Planning Board, said east-west highway access was a fundamental reason the Forum was established five years ago. He said that, with the Hillsborough Bypass being built at western side of the study area and SR 92 possibly happening on the other side, there is no connectivity being discussed between the two projects. He stressed that the other possible topics on the Forum's agenda, including the BRT, are good and should go forward but east-west connectivity by automobile is very important. He went on to say that at the last Army Corp meeting on SR 92, five mayors were for the project and five were against it. With that kind of division we have not made much progress, but Central Jersey cannot continue to develop without addressing the issue of connectivity. If the conclusion is to not build road capacity, then growth in land development and economic development should not be encouraged.

Dianne Brake, President of the Regional Planning Partnership (RPP), said that the purpose of the Forum is to try to find a way through controversy grounded in factual analysis. She called for measurements and targets to help know how aggressive strategies should be.

Mr. Reed said that on other smaller-scale issues, the mayors have broken into small groups, committed to being respectful of each other, and come up with solutions that allowed us to move on even when they were not perfect. The Forum has the potential to do this on a larger scale.

Peter Cantu, Mayor of Plainsboro and Executive Director of Keep Middlesex Moving, said more than twenty-five years of studies keep showing SR 92 helps. The Forum will lose credibility if it does not take action and if it does not do things it had agreed to support. He does not think the Forum can afford to move on without addressing past issues.

There was a discussion about the effectiveness of the Penns Neck EIS Round Table process and whether it is applicable with SR 92. Shing Fu Hsueh, Mayor of West Windsor, and Mr. Reed both said it encouraged good discussion but may not have been the most effective use of time and discouraged repeating such an approach currently. Mayor Hsueh emphasized that we have to focus on consensus and then move forward.

Stan Platt, Manager of the DVRPC Office of Congestion Management, asked which of several ways to proceed was desired by the Forum, such as focusing on education, a regional master plan, capital programming or other approaches.

Zoe Neaderland, Senior Transportation Planner at DVRPC, suggested further discussion of the slide on the proposed new mission of the Forum.

Sandra Shapiro, West Windsor Citizens for Transportation Alternatives, said the Forum does a good job with elected and appointed officials but misses the community.

There was a discussion about putting the goal areas in priority order. The conclusion in a first round of voting was that east-west access should be the first priority. It seemed that transit would be the second priority based on number of votes, but later in the discussion there was a second vote. This vote was only on what should be second and third priorities. The result of that vote was a tie between transit and land use issues. Mr. Shanis recommended they be worked on together as they are interrelated.

Pam Hersh, Director of Community and State Affairs for Princeton University, said the Forum needs to look at overlap with other groups such as RPP and NJ Futures. It should do something they are not doing or can't do. The Forum should focus on getting projects done and can have a good niche. RPP does Smart Growth and land use issues.

Ms. Hersh went on to ask what the Forum means by land use and how its approach differs from what other groups do. She recommended that the Forum stay specific and non-philosophical. Mr. Reed responded that the land use goal focuses on not building up open land at new intersections and acting to get the land use changes the BRT depends upon. It means answering where to do Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and how to encourage municipalities to do it in ways that help the region.

Jack Kanarek, Senior Director of Project Development for New Jersey Transit, said that measurement criteria would help. They would allow the Forum to say, "If we do those projects, we'll get this end state." It is important to relate the individual projects to the original goal. They would also clarify the current status of east-west access.

Mr. Cantu proposed opening up east-west access, since it can include other items. The Forum should look at other routes and local roads regarding choke points, potential improvements, pedestrian, bike, and transit issues.

Ms. Brake said it is not useful to focus on bogged-down projects with thirty or fifty year histories. When the modeling of solutions was done, there were few projects to test. The need is to find a way to develop and chose new projects. Eventually NJDOT will have money again.

Mr. Shanis said it is important to look at the distribution of benefits with projects such as SR 92. There needs to be a package of items, which can be very diverse, put together so that all the municipalities gain by getting the main item done.

There was discussion of starting an east-west mobility subcommittee. In the next few months, it would meet on projects, the goal of the Forum, and short and long term action steps.

There was also discussion of what the Forum is able to do. The following actions were cited: write letters, lobby that the BRT be funded, educate and debate matters. Janet Campbell-Lorenc, SYS TRA Consulting, added the following: figure out how we as representatives can sell recommendations to our towns, figure out how to get funds, and how to move projects through NJDOT. She recommended action items under each goal, not just plans or studies, and deciding who in this group is going to do what. She said the Forum should make choices and get them done.

Ken Wedeen, Senior Planner at Somerset County, said there need to be some small immediate wins moved forward, not just long term projects that get bogged down. He said they have had luck dealing with quality of life issues such as missing sidewalks, coordination of Trip Reduction Ordinances (TROs), and shuttles. Allison Miller, Council President for West Windsor Township, noted that the "Transportation Problems and Projects" task is a start on moving toward some quick wins.

Ms. Shapiro said that instead of focusing on the whole region, the Forum could focus on smaller areas. She said that small actions can add up to a bigger effect.

George Ververides, Director of Planning for Middlesex County, said that SR 92 has been studied enough. The need now is to make the decision to do it or not. Decision-makers should act or tell the municipalities to stop growing. He also said he did not think another committee is a good idea.

Lee Solow, Planning Director for the Princeton Regional Planning Board, said he agrees that east-west access is a problem, but people do not necessarily want SR 92 in their back yards. It would help to define regional solutions, but then to work with municipalities at a smaller scale to meet their needs.

Christine Altomari, Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association, said she believes the SR 92 process was a lost opportunity to bring municipalities along. It was four years of closed-door meetings by the Turnpike Authority. If the Forum starts an east-west committee, it should coordinate with the Penns Neck group and an e-mail would need to go to each municipality to invite them.

Ms. Altomari went on to ask what authority the Forum does have. She said she doesn't understand the process for choosing and funding roads but maybe the Forum can provide input on TIP priorities.

Mr. Shanis proposed an east-west summit to try to hammer out a package of projects distributing the benefits and impacts of SR 92. Mr. Cantu asked how you get past five mayors for the project and five mayors against it. Mr. Shanis said you figure out what the five against it want. Mr. Cantu said they've already been there and this would just lead to five more years of study. Mr. Shanis said if that's what it takes, it should be done or the project cannot be supported by the Central Jersey Transportation Forum.

Ms. Miller said that dealing with land use would be even more controversial than east-west access. She said we would be moving forward with all the goals if we can move forward on something specific. She also expressed support for the idea of packaging items together to come to a win-win solution.

4. Reports

a) Update on Cross-acceptance

Robin Murray, Assistant Executive Director of the Office of Smart Growth, reported that a full round of meetings with counties had been completed and summaries would be available at the OSG web page. Between July 15th and the end of October, counties will be meeting with municipalities. The process is coming along well. Regarding the Fast Track bill, she said they are trying to understand how many programs and what staffing levels are involved, and how they will be ready in the one hundred remaining days.

b) Update on SR 92

Mr. Barnes said the Turnpike Authority had sent word that they believe the Army Corps process is not at a point where a report is appropriate. At a later point they would be willing to give a brief update. In the meantime, people may contact Director of Engineering, Bob Grimm, with questions at (732) 442-8600, Extension 2205.

c) Planned Projects Status Report

Zoe Neaderland, Senior Transportation Planner at DVRPC, said that the summer update of the Planned Projects Status Report was in the meeting folders. It comes out twice a year and is an update on TIP projects in the Central Jersey area. Behind it was an update on the transportation problems and projects task that had been discussed at the previous meeting. It is a way for the Forum to propose projects for the TIP pipeline or other means of implementation.

5. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Jack Kanarek, Project Development Division Manager for New Jersey Transit, presented a PowerPoint update on the BRT study. In January, 2005 the alternatives analysis will be complete and distributed for discussion.

Mr. Cantu said there needs to be more outreach to employers, employees, and municipalities.

Ms. Brake asked how it will be determined what alternative is workable. She said municipalities will not rezone until they have transit and transit will not go into places until densities are high enough, so how would that be resolved. Mr. Kanarek said that different land use scenarios would be tested. He said New Jersey Transit would see reaching a point of shaking hands on a compact with municipalities.

There was a discussion of the role for the Forum with regard to implementing the BRT. It was suggested that the Forum could help identify stumbling blocks and how to work through them, then advocate for the resulting project(s). The Forum should develop a resolution for each member to take back to their municipality or group rather than just do one for the Forum.

Jim Schwarzwald, Manager of Area Studies for NJ Transit, noted that this project may require his organization and NJDOT to work together more closely than they ever have before.

Ron Tindall, Principal Planner for NJTPA, said they have added the link to the BRT Study to their web site and recommended other participants do that too.

6. Long Range Planning in the Central Jersey Region

a) Regional Planning Scenarios

Mike Boyer, Manager of the Office of Long Range Planning for DVRPC, presented information from the report “Regional Analysis of What If Transportation Scenarios”. There was a summary of the scenarios in the folders.

b) Status of Updates of Long Range Plans

Mr. Boyer went through a PowerPoint about the current work on the 2030 DVRPC Long Range Plan. Mr. Tindall went through a PowerPoint about the current work on the NJTPA Long Range Plan.

c) Status of NJJDOT Transportation Plan

Ray Andrejczik, Project Manager at NJDOT, went through a PowerPoint about the New Jersey Long Range Transportation Plan for 2030. He noted that there will be a tool for financial what-if modeling in the plan. Their consultant is starting next month and they expect to be done in March, 2006.

Mr. Ververides asked how these three plans come together, avoid duplication and which one should counties follow. Mr. Shanis said that the message will hopefully be consistent. The staffs involved in these efforts meet together.

There was a discussion about population forecasts. Each MPO produces forecasts and it was noted that DVRPC has recently distributed a new set . There is another set produced by the Department of Labor. At Cross-acceptance meetings, counties and municipalities were asked to give input on how to bring the divergent numbers together. Ms. Murray stressed that it is important to participate in this exercise. She also noted that funding was offered to the major cities to offset the work involved. The resulting forecasts will be used by the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) to set requirements. The forecasts start with control totals for the state and counties. The break among municipalities is a difficult last step. Municipalities usually say their numbers are too low, but adding up all the recommended increases results in impossible numbers. It was noted that the control totals reflect the Pine Barrens and Highlands restricted growth areas.

7. Dialogue

There were no comments

Next Steps

It was agreed that the next meeting date would be determined in the near future and DVRPC would notify Forum participants.