



Kathryn A. DeFillippo, Chair
Mary D. Ameen, Executive Director

KATHRYN A. DeFILLIPPO, CHAIR

Board Meeting Minutes

July 13, 2020

A. Open Public Meetings Act Compliance

Chair Kathy DeFillippo, Morris County called the online meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. Beverly Morris, Central Staff, reported that, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L.1975, adequate notice of this meeting had been forwarded to the *Star Ledger*, the *Asbury Park Press*, the *Courier News*, the *Daily Record*, the *Home News Tribune*, the *Jersey Journal*, the *New Jersey Herald*, and *The Record*.

B. Roll Call

Ms. Morris called the roll, and 20 voting members were participating. (Attachment 1).

C. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2020 meeting was made by Ocean County, seconded by Somerset County and carried with 18 affirmative votes. Middlesex County and the City of Newark abstained.

D. Chairman's Remarks

Chair DeFillippo said due to the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, no reopening date for the NJTPA offices had been set. She noted that the NJTPA has been able to conduct all work remotely. Thus, given the current circumstances, all Board, Committee and RTAC meetings will continue to be held remotely until further notice. She thanked everyone who was able to participate in the June virtual Board retreat on the Long Range Transportation Plan that is now named "Plan 2050: Transportation, People, Opportunity."

The Chair said some important themes emerged from the discussion at the retreat. Equity is a key focus. She said recent incidents across the country have again put a spotlight on the racial and economic injustices that still exist. Equity she noted has long been central to the work of the NJTPA, where staff strives to ensure that outreach is inclusive and accessible. Along with NJDOT and NJ TRANSIT, she said, the NJTPA has sought to see that the benefits and burdens of the transportation system are shared equally. Chair DeFillippo said, while it is no simple task

to assess impacts and balance investments, Plan 2050 provides an opportunity to think about how the NJTPA can promote equity and make the region an even better place for all its residents.

On the topic of virtual public outreach, Chair DeFillippo said she had the pleasure of participating in the Dover & Rockaway Railroad Freight Concept Development Study meeting in May. She said several members of the public and local businesses attended the virtual meeting to hear about the preliminary preferred alternative, which will eliminate several ungated crossings, making the line safer and more efficient. To help the public stay involved and engaged with the project, all meeting materials were posted online in English and Spanish, and an interpreter was available. The Chair said virtual meetings are being planned for other concept development studies, including the Oceanic Bridge in Monmouth County and John F. Kennedy Boulevard in Hudson County.

Chair DeFillippo reported that several of the NJTPA's locally led projects have had their preliminary preferred alternatives approved by the Interagency Review Committee and are headed to the engineering phase of work. These projects include the East Anderson Street Bridge in Bergen County; the Chadwick Beach Bridge in Ocean County; the Picket Place Bridge in Somerset County; and the Martin Luther King Avenue Bridge in Morris County. She noted that three more bridge projects over the Passaic will be moving to the engineering phase soon – the Clay Street and Bridge Street bridges, both managed by Hudson County, and the Kingsland Avenue Bridge being led by Bergen County. She thanked the staff of the counties, NJDOT, and the NJTPA for keeping these projects moving forward.

Chair DeFillippo also announced the retirement of Gerry Rohsler, Morris County Director of Transportation, and highlighted an impressive record of his accomplishments in transportation planning. John Hayes will replace Mr. Rohsler as the County's Alternate NJTPA Board Trustee.

E. Executive Director's Report

NJTPA Executive Director Mary D. Ameen said the NJTPA continues to meet its requirements and obligations despite the many challenges of these unusual times. She said there is no established schedule for the agency's return to normal operations; it is closely following the lead of the Governor's Authorities Unit and its host agency, NJIT.

Ms. Ameen said the NJTPA held a second virtual discussion with its UpNext young adult advisory group in June, and it featured a presentation on communities opening streets for more walking, biking, and outdoor dining and retail, followed by a discussion on ways to improve walking and cycling -- all valuable input for Plan 2050.

Ms. Ameen reported that staff took part in the Metropolitan Area Planning (MAP) Forum spring meeting, where they shared information and collaborated on regional issues with nine other Metropolitan Planning Organizations from New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. In June, NJTPA hosted a Together North Jersey virtual workshop on micromobility. A link to a recording of the insightful 90-minute discussion is on the NJTPA website.

Ms. Ameen noted that July 1 marked the end of the NJTPAs Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, and final reports will be issued from several FY 2020 efforts, including updated freight commodity profiles and two subregional studies: Paterson-Newark Transit Market Study and the Jersey City Parking Plan. She said staff is already moving ahead with projects for the new fiscal year – reviewing proposals for the next round of subregional studies and for initiatives funded with Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, including support for local shuttles.

Ms. Ameen said one of the priorities for this year is to strengthen equity in the work of the NJTPA, particularly in better addressing the needs of minority and low-income communities. . She said, along with other institutions and agencies, the NJTPA recognizes that it must do its part to undo the legacy and continuing impacts of racism, which extend in many ways to the transportation sector. She said last year, the agency adopted a Title VI plan that guides its compliance with federal civil rights requirements. As a follow-up, an internal Title VI-Environmental Justice working group was formed to help implement the plan and undertake an equity assessment of all NJTPA plans and programs.

Ms. Ameen said the NJTPA is committed to providing guidance to subregions to better address the concerns of minority and low-income communities in their planning work and will be reporting to the Board on its progress while welcoming their input on other approaches and activities.

Ms. Ameen said the NJTPA will be funding another round of projects under its Local Safety and High Risk Rural Roads Programs for 2021. Proposed projects are now being evaluated. Selected projects will be on the Project Prioritization Committee agenda in August, with Board action planned for September. She said these are among the agency’s most successful programs, funding important improvements that have been proven to reduce crashes and enhance safety. These include upgraded traffic signals, high friction pavement, road diets, modern roundabouts, pedestrian countdown signals, high visibility crosswalks, bike lanes, signage improvements and more. The last allocation for these programs was two years ago, which reflects not only the limited funding available but also the fact that many projects in recent years have become larger and more complex.

She said staff is determined to see that selected projects get authorized and move forward satisfactorily prior to carefully adding more projects to the program. Therefore, solicitations will not be released annually but rather as program capacity allows, likely a minimum of two years. Ms. Ameen said the program has grown because of its success, and the NJTPA will need to adapt its business practices to ensure a more robust and extensive program of safety improvements.

Ms. Ameen said the latest issue of InTransition magazine, which was launched on its updated website, includes articles on electric vehicles and climate change. A link is on the NJTPA homepage, and feedback is welcomed. She also announced that the NJTPA will host a virtual meeting of the MAP Forum’s Multi-State Freight Working Group on September 10. The meeting will feature a discussion on truck parking.

F. Committee Reports/Action Items

Project Prioritization – Freeholder John W. Bartlett, Chair

Freeholder Bartlett said the Committee had considered three action items since the last Board meeting. First, during a special online meeting on May 12, the Committee considered a modification to the current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), to add federal funds to the Route 78 Rockfall Mitigation, Bethlehem Township project, as requested by the New Jersey Department of Transportation. He said the project is ready for authorization and requires additional federal funding in the amounts of \$6.9 million for FY 2020 and \$1 million for 2022. The increase is due to updated costs for mobilization, excavation, environmental vibration monitoring, and construction engineering. Resources are available from the Rockfall Mitigation line item in the TIP.

The Freeholder noted that members of the Board have raised concerns about the rising costs of rockfall projects in the region. Members of Central Staff are currently working with NJDOT to learn more details about the rockfall mitigation program and will share additional information on this issue with the Board soon.

Freeholder Bartlett said that the Committee considered two action items at the June online joint meeting. The first was a modification to the current TIP to add federal funds to the Route 80, Riverview Drive to Polifly Road project, as requested by NJDOT. He said, based on recently updated schedule and cost estimates, the design phase of work can be advanced sooner than originally programmed. This action shifts \$36 million in design funds to FY 2022 from 2023, and adds \$7.7 million in federal National Highway Performance Program, or NHPP, funds to the project. These resources are available from unobligated prior year funds. Also, a spelling correction of Polifly Road in the title was needed.

The Freeholder said the Committee next considered a TIP modification to add federal funds to the Route 46, Main Street/Woodstone Road to Route 287, ITS project in Morris County, also requested by NJDOT. He said, based on recently updated schedule and cost estimates, half a million dollars in NHPP funding is needed for right-of-way in FY 2021. In addition, the construction phase of work must be reprogrammed into FY 2022, with an increase of nearly \$1 million for a total of \$9.7 million in NHPP funds. He said the funds are available from prior year unobligated funds. The Committee approved all three of these modifications and no further action is needed.

Planning and Economic Development – Freeholder John P. Kelly, Chair

Freeholder Kelly said that, at the June joint meeting staff provided a recap of the June Board retreat, which focused on priorities for Plan 2050 and how the region can capitalize on its strengths and related opportunities.

On another issue, the Freeholder noted for the record the disappointment of Ocean County that the Route 9 widening project from Lakewood to Tom's River has been removed from the Study and Development Program and replaced with what is believed to be minor improvements.

Returning to the Long Range Transportation Plan, Freeholder Kelly said it is important to note that the Planning and Economic Development Committee will play a key role in directing the development of Plan 2050, and while 2050 may seem impossibly far off in the future, it should be recognized that projects conceived today often take years to develop and implement—and the resulting infrastructure can last for decades. He said much of the work repairing and upgrading the transportation network addresses facilities that are fifty, a hundred, or even more years old. On the regional rail system, the Hudson River Rail tunnels date back to 1910.

The Freeholder said the priorities and objectives set today will help shape the future of travel and regional development. He said, to this end, members of the Planning and Economic Development Committee will be tasked with reviewing interim products, such as the financial element, demographic forecasts, and more, and the Committee will also guide staff on the content and recommendations of the plan. He said he looks forward to working with the staff, the Committee and all members of the Board on these important tasks.

Freight Initiatives – Freeholder Charles Kenny, Chair

Freeholder Kenny said the June Freight Initiatives Committee meeting featured the Annual Port and Maritime Update. Speakers discussed how goods have continued to move through the port during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping supply the state with food and other essentials. The Committee also heard about a current marine highway initiative involving Port Raritan in his home county of Middlesex.

The Freeholder said the first speaker was Bethann Rooney of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ), who said the pandemic has presented many challenges, including keeping workers safe and ensuring that goods were not stranded at the port due to warehouse closures. Ms. Rooney said container volumes at the port declined three to four percent through the end of April, which was much less than the 30 percent drop some expected, reflecting the port's strength in serving a vast multistate region that is home to some 45 million people. She did note, however, that other PANYNJ facilities had more drastic losses: airport travelers and PATH ridership fell by 90 percent, and there was a 60 to 70 percent decline in bridge and tunnel traffic. Ms. Rooney also said that, as the economy rebounds, the PANYNJ will continue to implement its Port Master Plan, which includes improving express rail, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from operations, and undertaking major projects such as upgrading the port's northern entrance and exit.

Freeholder Kenny said the next speaker was John Nardi, President of the New York Shipping Association, who spoke about the pandemic's effects on the workforce. Mr. Nardi said labor issues have proven especially challenging, noting that the Shipping Association joined with the International Longshoremen's Association to create joint guidance for workers and operators. He also said there has been extensive investment to provide workers with personal protective equipment and implement other safeguards. However, approximately 800 of the port's 3,500 workers have been unable to work due to reduced cargo volumes and disruptions related to the pandemic. The Shipping Association is working closely with the State of New Jersey, the Port

Authority, and various industry groups on economic recovery efforts, and he noted that volumes have begun to rebound.

Freeholder Kenny said the final presenter was Genevieve Clifton from NJDOT, who spoke about the prospects for expanding marine highway operations in the state. The current crisis has underlined the need for improving logistics redundancy, and marine highways can help with this. The U.S. Maritime Administration, or MARAD, has called for a marine highway along the Atlantic Coast, and Ms. Clifton said the Raritan Center Business Park in Woodbridge and Edison offers a prime opportunity for this. She said NJDOT will seek MARAD support for a public/private partnership to develop the area for expanded maritime services.

The Freeholder said the next meeting of the Freight Initiatives Committee, will focus on articulating, analyzing, and displaying supply chains critical to goods movement in the region. Her thanked NJTPA Freight Division staff who put the meeting together.

G) Key Discussion Item

Planning for 2050: Turning Regional Strengths into Opportunities

A presentation and discussions led by Lois Goldman of NJTPA Central Staff focused on five key issues identified at the retreat that offer opportunities for progress in the region. They involved improvements in downtowns, diversity and equity, freight, transportation networks and technology. Several Board members raised the need to expand and improve public transit options to connect people to employment and other parts of the state. However, it was noted that expanding transit would require addressing funding needs in a realistic and long-term way. Among the transit suggestions were:

- Explore restoring service on former rail lines, such as the West Shore and interurban streetcars
- Improve transit to and from areas in the western part of the region to give people access to jobs
- Expand train service west of Dover to serve Sussex and Warren counties and northeastern Pennsylvania
- Improve intra-state and intercity travel as well as commuting to New York City
- Make transit and other improvements along corridors, such as Newark to Paterson, to help address needs of the region's minority and low-income communities
- Improve beneficial technology that provides transit information and schedules

Other points raised during the discussion:

- Towns should begin investigating how to reuse some of the extensive parking in downtowns for parks and other purposes, particularly as new technologies reduce dependence on personal vehicles
- Many of the experiments with reusing street space and encouraging walking during the pandemic should be made permanent
- Continued support for subregional planning is needed

- New funding mechanisms such as value-capture and public-private partnerships can underwrite needed transportation improvements
- Continued outreach to the state's diverse communities is needed to understand needs in the region
- Changing zoning to improve housing options can promote equity in transportation as well
- Public-private partnerships have been valuable in improving rail freight infrastructure, such as addressing height and weight restrictions on rail lines
- Marine highways offer promise for improving freight and freight-related jobs
- Freight rail must be supported to reduce roadway congestion
- Connecting towns through improved trails, biking facilities and bus transit will give residents needed travel options
- Transportation improvement projects can incorporate technologies such as cabling needed for high speed internet
- Universities and others developing advance technologies should be encouraged to develop practical applications for communities

Following the discussion, Ted Ritter, Central Staff, briefed the Board on a “robust online outreach effort” supporting development of Plan 2050. It will include a virtual symposium series, beginning this fall with an event focusing on Adapting to Change. Mr. Ritter said an advisory committee reflecting the region's diverse communities and outreach events for the public around the region are planned with the involvement of the NJTPA's 15 subregions. He noted that meetings of the NJTPA's UpNext group for young adults have been providing insights for the Plan. As the plan develops, information will be posted at njtpa.org/Plan2050.

H) Public Participation

Tim Sevenser, New Jersey Association of Rail Passengers, said he and several environmental groups are working with experts to determine the feasibility and resilience advantages of providing solar renewable energy to power the NJ TRANSIT grid as an alternative to the natural gas facility to be built Kearney. He said the group has identified potential sites for installing solar energy for trains, such as parking lots near transit-oriented developments. He said solar renewables plus energy storage are more affordable now, and pilot projects in India and Austria are setting examples.

Neile Weissman, Complete George, advocated for expanding recreational activities in New Jersey. He proposed permitting cycling in the South Mountain Reservation, which could generate revenue through user fees and an increased customer base for local restaurants, for example. He also proposed developing more bicycle routes across North Jersey through low intensity residential streets and industrial areas that get little traffic on the weekend. He said, as the routes gain acceptance, they can be enhanced with GPS apps, signage and on-street improvements. Mr. Weissman also reiterated his advocacy for widening the bicycle/pedestrian paths on the George Washington Bridge.

I) Time and Place of Next Meeting

Chair DeFillippo announced that the next virtual meeting of the NJTPA will be held on Monday, September 14, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.

J) Adjournment

At 12:05 p.m., motion to adjourn was made by Middlesex County seconded by Union County and carried unanimously.

Attachment 1

NORTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AUTHORITY, INC.
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Attendance Record: July 13, 2020

| Subregion/Agency | Voting Members/Alternates | Staff & Others |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Bergen County | Peter Botsolas | Joseph Baladi |
| Essex County | David Antonio | |
| Hudson County | Byron Nicholas | |
| Hunterdon County | Hon. Matthew Holt Hon. Zack Rich | Adam Bradford Carrie Fellows |
| Jersey City | Barkha Patel | Elias Guseman |
| Middlesex County | Hon. Charles Kenny Doug Greenfeld | Solomon Caviness Anthony Gambilonghi |
| Monmouth County | Teri O'Connor | Joseph Ettore |
| Morris County | Hon. Kathy DeFillippo Gerald Rohsler | John Hayes |
| Newark | Phillip Scott | Trevor Howard |
| Ocean County | Hon. John Kelly John Ernst | |
| Passaic County | Hon. John Bartlett | Mike Lysicatos |
| Somerset County | Walt Lane | Andras Holzmann |
| Sussex County | Tom Drabic | |
| Union County | Hon. Angel Estrada | Liza Betz |
| Warren County | Hon. Jason Sarnoski Dave Dech | |
| Governor's Office | Rudy Rodas | Vinn White |
| NJDOT | Mike Russo | Andrew Swords |
| NJ TRANSIT | Lou Millan | |
| Port Authority of NY & NJ | Steve Brown | Jay Shuffield |
| Citizen's Representative | Jared Rodriguez | |

| Other Attendees | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Anna Aleynick | AECOM |
| Robert Sobol | Brinkerhoff Environmental Services |
| Neile Weissman | Complete George |
| Michael DeLoreto | Gibbons |
| Tara Shepherd | goHunterdon |
| Bob Werkmeister | GPI |
| Nickitas Alexiades | HDR Inc. |

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|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Raymond Fusco | McLaren Engineering |
| Christina Arlt | McCormick Taylor |
| Bakari Lee | McManimon, Scotland & Baumann, LLC |
| Larry Higgs | NJ Advance Media |
| Various members of Central Staff | NJTPA |
| Dan Callas | TransOptions |
| Albert Maiocchi | |
| David Case | |
| Ellen2108 | |
| Janet R. Keiser | |
| John Lane | |
| Mitch Erickson | |