



## **Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)**

David Antonio, Chair  
Andras Holzmann, Vice Chair

### **Meeting Minutes**

**June 12, 2023**

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#### **I. Roll call**

Beverly Morris, Central Staff, called the roll and 20 voting members of the Committee were present.

#### **II. Approval of Minutes**

Liza Betz, Union County, requested that the April 17, 2023 meeting minutes be edited to better reflect her comments during the April meeting that emphasize the need for clarification on the duration of subregional projects. She proposed adding a sentence stating that the duration of the projects in the subregional support programs directly affects the scope of work, as the Requests for Proposals (RFP) differ for 12-month and 24-month projects. Ms. Morris said this sentence would be added.

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 10 meeting was made by Sussex County, seconded by Somerset County and carried with 17 affirmative votes. Monmouth, Morris and Ocean counties abstained.

#### **III. Presentation: North Jersey Regional Transportation Model-Enhanced (NJRTM-E) Validation**

Bob Diogo, Central Staff, briefed the Committee on the completion of the NJRTM-E. He said the model is based on a pre-COVID base year of 2019 but incorporates 2020 census data. The multi-year validation project aims to ensure that the model accurately reflects real-world travel behavior and provides the basis for future adjustments and improvements, including a post-COVID model. Mr. Diogo said the validation involves analyzing various metrics and indicators to assess the model's performance, including trip distribution, travel time, speed, occupancy and traffic volumes. He acknowledged that the model may not be perfect but should be within an acceptable range as defined by guidelines. The validation project also considers transit trips and their impact on the region, particularly the New Jersey to New York travel pattern.

Brian Fineman, Central Staff, and Mr. Diogo thanked the consultants who worked on the large project under Mr. Diogo's guidance. They are Stantec Consulting Services Inc., AECOM, Gallop Corporation, Ty Lin International, Inc. and Sobers Consulting.

Mr. Fineman noted that Mr. Diogo is retiring. Mr. Fineman and NJTPA Executive Director David Behrend thanked him for his outstanding service over the past several years.

#### IV. Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) Report

Cheryl Kastrenakes, Greater Mercer TMA, gave a presentation on Road Safety Audits. Noting the alarming rates of traffic fatalities involving pedestrians and cyclists, she said these audits aim to improve mobility, safety and sustainability by identifying areas for improvement and enhancing safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Ms. Kastrenakes said that road safety audits also help in obtaining funding for improvements, because discretionary and federal funding is available for projects supported by these audits. Ms. Kastrenakes said the TMAs collaborate with stakeholders, contribute expertise and engage with the community during the audit process. The outcome includes comprehensive reports with actionable recommendations, such as intersection redesigns and other improvements to make pedestrians and cyclists feel safer.

#### V. Information Items

##### 1. Demographic and Employment Forecasting

Eugene McGuinness, Central Staff, said the NJTPA is developing forecasts for household population and employment until 2055, which will be used for the next long-range plan. The county forecasts are expected to be available for review in the summer, and the NJTPA is reaching out to subregions for information on preserved land and future developments. They are requesting data by the end of June. Mr. McGuinness said staff will provide more details via email.

##### 2. Trail Development Survey Results

Ms. Goldman introduced Deborah Kagan, the Executive Director of the New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition. The NJTPA partnered with the Coalition to assess the use of resources for supporting trails and bicycle network development, current activities and challenges. This included distributing a survey to the subregions to better understand how they plan for trails and any challenges they face. Ms. Goldman requested that additional input be submitted by June 16. At the time of the meeting, eight counties and one municipality had responded to the survey. Ms. Kagan presented the findings of the survey, which consisted of 12 questions. The survey yielded the following key points:

- Six respondents have multi-use trail plans as part of larger plans.
- Most respondents use public input and data engagement methods.

- Three counties had separate multi-use plans, three had partial plans and three had no plans.
- Two had county-level plans, four had county and municipal plans and three had no multi-use trail plans.
- Challenges included lack of a trail database, staffing, funding, right of way acquisition, conflicting jurisdictions and environmental regulations.
- Funding sources included open space trust funds and state and federal grants.
- Three counties had not applied for funding grants in the last five years and four had applied successfully.

Ms. Kagan said participants discussed the burdensome grant application processes, lack of staff resources and the need for assistance in identifying and applying for grants.

### 3. Upcoming Local Safety Action Plans/FHWA-Resource Center Training

Ms. Goldman gave an update on the NJTPA's efforts to work with subregions to develop Local Safety Action Plans, which would enable them to apply for federal implementation funding. She said the initiative would involve extensive community engagement. She mentioned that a request for proposals (RFP) for the program had been issued and proposals are due on July 12. The RFP can be requested on the NJTPA website.

Ms. Goldman said that an in-person workshop, in collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration and local partners, is being planned in late summer or early fall. The training will cover various safety topics, including outreach, data analysis and selecting appropriate measures. Ms. Goldman encouraged Committee members to provide input on specific training topics.

### 4. Update on the Draft FY 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Study & Development Program

Ann Ludwig, Central Staff, said the TIP consists of 301 projects and programs, totaling \$3.4 billion for the first year and \$14.3 billion over four fiscal years. The allocation includes \$1.9 billion for road, bridge and related projects, \$1.5 billion for transit projects and \$27 million for the Port Street Corridor Improvement project. The funding breakdown includes \$1.8 billion in federal funds and \$1.6 billion in state and non-federal funds.

Ms. Ludwig said the focus remains on safety and maintaining the transit and roadway systems. There will be a 30-day public comment period on the TIP, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and conformity process. She said the Board's approval will be sought at its September meeting.

Ms. Ludwig said the Study & Development program includes 29 projects, with 42 from the current program transitioning into the TIP. The projects will go through further committee review and be included in the FY 2024 TIP.

Mr. Behrend thanked Ms. Ludwig, who is retiring, for her work at the NJTPA. He said she has always been very dedicated to sharing information with subregions, working very closely with all on the Capital Program, the TIP, Study & Development program and more. Mr. Antonio thanked her as well.

## 5. Together North Jersey (TNJ) Initiative Update

Blythe Eaman, Central Staff, reported on the following TNJ Initiative activities: TNJ staff held a webinar on parklet best practices in collaboration with Downtown New Jersey on April 20. The speakers shared lessons learned since the release of the original parklet handbook and provided insights and ideas for implementation. A recording of the webinar is available on the [TNJ website](#), and an updated handbook will be released soon and accessible on the website as well.

Ms. Eaman reported that two Vibrant Places Program projects were conducted this year, and they will conclude later in the month. TNJ staff collaborated with the City of Lambertville to develop a story map and an augmented-reality walking tour. The team also worked with the Musconetcong Watershed Association to create a strategic plan for the Village of Asbury in Warren County. Plan recommendations include place-making, economic development, traffic calming and pedestrian improvements to capitalize on the area's historic, cultural and natural assets.

## 6. Report on the June 6<sup>th</sup> Autonomous Vehicle Symposium

Andy Kaplan, Central Staff, reported that over 60 people attended the symposium in-person at the NJTPA. He said the first panel focused on the state of the practice. Via also presented their vision and ongoing pilots of autonomous micro-transit services in two communities. The second panel sparked a discussion on the potential impacts of autonomous vehicle technology on local communities and counties. Topics included infrastructure improvements, land use zoning and the overall transportation system. Mr. Kaplan said a key takeaway was the importance of designing and building for the current needs of humans rather than solely for future autonomous vehicles. There was emphasis on leveraging technological advancements to address issues such as equity and safety, which are outlined in the long-range plan. A video of the event will be posted on the NJTPA website.

## VI. Written Information Items

1. Subregional Pass Through Program Workshop – Justine Recio-Patel and William Long, Central Staff

In response to this written item, Ms. Betz highlighted a disclaimer in the guidelines received for the current cycle of the program. She said the guidelines raised concerns about conflicting information about ownership of reports prepared

by vendors. Ms. Goldman said she appreciates Mr. Betz's comment, and it will have to be addressed offline. She invited input from the other subregions. Mr. Behrend said the NJTPA has updated the disclaimer and perhaps some documents were not yet synchronized with the update. He said the matter will be addressed.

Ken Wedeen, Somerset County, expressed concerns about the shrinking timeline for subregional studies and requested more review time for documents. Ms. Goldman said the issue will be addressed at the next RTAC meeting.

2. PRIME 2.0 Update – Jeffrey Vernick, Central Staff
3. Regional Capital Investment Strategy (RCIS) Refinement and Strategy Effectiveness Project – Keith Miller, Central Staff

There were no further comments on the written items.

## VII. Review of Standing Committee Action Items

Central Staff members briefed the Committee on the action items slated for consideration at the June 20 joint meeting of the Project Prioritization Committee and the Planning and Economic Development Committee.

### Project Prioritization Committee

1. Approval of the Initial Financial Plan for the Portway, Fish House Road/Pennsylvania Avenue, CR 659 Project – Elizabeth Johnson, Central Staff
2. Minor Amendment to the FY 2022 – 2025 Transportation Improvement Program to Add Federal Funds to the Portway, Fish House Road/Pennsylvania Avenue, CR 659 Project in Hudson County as Requested by the New Jersey Department of Transportation – John Witsch
3. Minor Amendments to the FY 2022 – 2025 Transportation Improvement Program to Add Federal Funds to the Pavement Preservation, NJTPA Regional Program as Requested by the New Jersey Department of Transportation – John Witsch

Mr. Wedeen expressed concern over the unanticipated schedule change resulting in a delay of the Route 206, Valley Road to Brown Avenue project in Somerset County, shifting \$87 million from FY 2023 to FY 2025. He said he looks forward to working with Mr. Witsch and others to see what can be done to get the 2023 funding restored.

4. Minor Amendment to the FY 2022 – 2025 Transportation Improvement Program to Add the Pavement Preservation, Statewide Program as Requested by the New Jersey Department of Transportation – John Witsch

5. Modifications to the FY 2022 – 2025 Transportation Improvement Program to Add Federal Funds to Two Projects as Requested by the New Jersey Department of Transportation – John Witsch
  - Route 23, Route 80 and Route 46 Interchange, *Essex and Passaic Counties*,
  - Route 35 NB, Bridge over Route 36 NB & GSP Ramp G, *Monmouth County*
6. Modifications to the FY 2022 – 2025 Transportation Improvement Program to Add Federal Funds to Three Programs as Requested by the New Jersey Department of Transportation – John Witsch
  - Restriping Program and Line Reflectivity Management System
  - Bridge Maintenance Fender Replacement
  - Bridge Preventive Maintenance

VIII. RTAC Teleconference – July 17, 2023 (Tentative)

IX. Next Virtual Meeting: August 14, 2023

X. Adjournment

Regional Transportation Advisory Committee  
Attendance  
June 12, 2023

Voting Members	
David Antonio (Chair)	Essex County
Andras Holzmann (Vice Chair)	Passaic County
Chris Helms	Bergen County
Tom Malavasi	Hudson County
Katherine Fullerton	Hunterdon County
Elias Guseman	Jersey City
Mike Dannemiller	Middlesex County
Shilpa Bhojappa	Monmouth County
John Hayes	Morris County
Trevor Howard	City of Newark
Mark Jehnke	Ocean County
Ken Wedeen	Somerset County
Tom Drabic	Sussex County
Liza Betz	Union County
Dave Dech	Warren County
Tavainya Smith	NJDOT
Megan Massey	NJ TRANSIT
Jay Shuffield	Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
Dorian Smith	Governor's Authorities Unit
Charles Burton	Citizens' Representative
Other Attendees	
Dan Callas	Avenues in Motion
Peter Kortright	Bergen County
Jack Kanarek	Dewberry
Lou Liglio	Dynamic Traffic
Jason Simmons	FHWA NJ
Tara Shepherd	goHunterdon
Bob Werkmeister	GPI
Cheryl Kastrenakes	Greater Mercer TMA
Michael Popovech	Monmouth County
Jason Pene	Monmouth County
Sidney Christianson	Monmouth County
Dede Murray	Morris County
Debra Kagan	NJ Bike & Walk Coalition
Rosemary Nivar	NJ Turnpike Authority
Various members of Central Staff	NJTPA
Jim Hunt	Vision Zero New Jersey Alliance
Ryan Conklin	Warren County
Justine Angela	

Kevin Stephens	
P Stonge	
Frank Bell	
Gitkins	
D Chaplick	
Lu Ding	