



## **FREIGHT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Jason Sarnoski, Chair

Commissioner Sara Sooy, Vice Chair

### **Meeting Minutes December 12, 2022**

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#### **I. Roll Call of Members**

Commissioner Charles Kenny, Middlesex County, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Jakub Rowinski, Central Staff, called the roll, and 13 voting members of the Freight Initiatives Committee were present.

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

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2022 meeting was made by Union County, seconded by Somerset County and carried unanimously.

#### **III. Update on NJTPA Freight Division Activities**

Anne Strauss-Wieder, Central Staff, said as of the end of October, the Port of New York and New Jersey is the busiest container port in North America and is on target to move as much as 2 million more TEUs in 2022 than in 2019. She said only two vessels were waiting to enter the harbor, thanks to efficient port operations, realized through the coordinated efforts of the Council on Port Performance and other players in the field.

Ms. Strauss-Wieder said there are over 860 million square feet of industrial property in the region. She noted that the Metropolitan Area Planning Forum's Multi State Freight Working Group held a workshop on Effective Practices for Enhancing Last Mile Workforce Connectivity to Freight Facilities in November.

Ms. Strauss-Wieder said the NJTPA Freight Rail Grade Crossing Assessment Update is in progress, and field work at more than 65 at-grade crossings in the region has been completed. She said data collection included deploying a camera and recording device at certain grade crossings. Scoring and prioritizing the grade crossings are underway. Ms. Strauss-Wieder said the NJTPA is working closely with the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), as well as other partner organizations.

Ms. Strauss-Wieder said two studies under the Fiscal Year 2021 Freight Concept Development Program are nearing completion in Bound Brook, Somerset County, and Roxbury, Morris County. Preferred alternatives for both studies are being finalized and stakeholder coordination is ongoing.

#### IV. Presentations:

William Waxman, Vice Chair, Cushman and Wakefield, said there is still strong demand for warehouse space, and he estimates that about 140 million square feet are being built in the New York-New Jersey-Lehigh Valley multi-state area. He said, over the past three years, demand has been driven by e-commerce companies looking to build their last mile, quick delivery services, and this has caused industrial properties pricing to increase by up to 25 percent and forced some regional hubs to move further south and into Pennsylvania and Delaware where rents are much cheaper. Mr. Waxman said, however, the tenant mix has begun to shift more toward retail companies, third party logistics firms, health care products, and food and beverage companies. He said that the vacancy rate has begun to grow a little, which has slowed the increase in asking lease rates. Mr. Waxman noted that the demand for cold storage has grown and needs to be met.

Steven Beyda, Senior Vice President of Acquisitions, Woodmont Industrial Partners, spoke about trends in converting outdated office properties into industrial uses in north and central New Jersey, mostly in former office parks in Bergen, Middlesex, Morris and Somerset counties. With statewide office space vacancies at about 20 percent, he said there will be other conversions, as developers re-evaluate the best use of properties. He noted that office buildings tend to be concentrated in locations with strong labor and can often meet the transportation requirements for industrial uses.

Jesse Harty, Senior Vice President and Market Officer, for New Jersey and New York, Prologis, spoke about how developers will need to get more creative to meet the growing demand for space. He noted that site constraints and the cost of land in New York City have led to the creation of multi-story industrial developments, and it remains to be seen if this strategy comes to New Jersey.

Commissioner Kenny noted the importance of coordination between warehouse lessees and local governments to address transportation options for warehouse workers.

#### V. Two-Minute Reports on Freight Activities from Committee Members

Janice Marino-Doyle, NJDOT, said senior leadership at the agency is reviewing Rail Freight Assistance Program award recommendations, as well as the draft Statewide Freight Plan update, which will then be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration for approval. She said the NJDOT Office of Freight Planning is considering truck parking strategies and intends to analyze truck parking safety factors and solutions in coordination with industry partners and the metropolitan planning organizations.

Stephan Pezdek, Port Authority of New York & Jersey, reported that, despite the record increase in container traffic at the port, ships are facing less waiting time, reflecting the ability of the

freight network to move containers despite congestion. He noted that Terminal A at Newark Airport would open soon and that, along with the expansion of terminals at JFK Airport, it may add freight capacity.

Ken Wedeen, Somerset County, said the County continues to work with NJTPA freight staff and a consultant team to advance the Freight Concept Development Program study of the Port Reading Secondary South Main Street Grade Crossing Elimination Project in Bound Brook. He said the study team expects to brief local officials on the study early in 2023.

Trevor Howard, City of Newark, said the City applied to NJDOT for a grant through the Local Freight Impact Fund for a Foundry Street project. He said the city has received funding for Doremus and McClellan avenues and Avenue P as it works to improve port area infrastructure. Dolores Martinez Wooden, City of Newark, said such incentives are crucial for projects being implemented in Newark, especially in the port area.

Doug Greenfeld, Middlesex County, said a public meeting was held for a NJTPA-funded subregional study focused on freight movement and conflicts in Monroe, Cranbury, South Brunswick, Jamesburg, and surrounding municipalities. He said 150 people attended, and the project team received good input and feedback to guide the development of potential solutions for addressing the impact of increasing truck traffic on neighborhood streets.

VI. Next meeting: Tuesday, February 21, 2023.

VII. Adjournment

At 2:27 p.m. a motion to adjourn was made by Union County, seconded by the City of Newark and carried unanimously.

**Freight Initiatives Committee**  
**ATTENDANCE**  
**December 12, 2022**

VOTING MEMBERS	
Hon. Charles Kenny	Middlesex County
Hon. Bette Jane Kowalski	Union County
Tom Malavasi	Hudson County
Dolores Martinez Wooden	City of Newark
John Ernst	Ocean County
Andras Holzmann	Passaic County
Ken Wedeen	Somerset County
David Dech	Warren County
Genevieve Clifton	NJDOT
Lou Millan	NJ TRANSIT
Jay Shuffield	PANYNJ
Dorian Smith	Governor's Authorities Unit
Jared Rodriguez	Citizens' Representative
OTHERS	
Jim Katzenberger	Accelerx Group
Will Sherman	Arup
Christopher Helms	Bergen County
Katie Kirk	Cambridge Systematics
Alice Cheng	Cheng Solutions
Trevor Howard	City of Newark
Bill Waxman	Cushman & Wakefield
Dan Farina	DVRPC
David Antonio	Essex County
Dr. Jobi Odeneye	Essex County
Rickie Clark	FHWA
Bob Werkmeister	GPI
Matt Van Hatter	HDR Inc.
James Humphries	Highlands Council
Bob Hornby	Hunterdon County
Katherine Fullerton	Hunterdon County
Scott Parker	Jacobs Engineering
Mike Dannemiller	Middlesex County
Doug Greenfeld	Middlesex County
Andrew Lappitt	Middlesex County
Linda Weber	Middlesex County
Dede Murray	Morris County
John Hayes	Morris County
Tim Evans	NJ Future
Alan Kearns	NJ TRANSIT
Nipa Maniar	NJDOT

Janice Marino-Doyle	NJDOT
Andrew Ludasi	NJDOT
Devyn Cordero	NJDOT
Adam DiSarro	NJT
Various members of Central Staff	NJTPA
Leslie Fordjour	NYMTC
Yevgeniy Galinski	NYSDOT
Mark Jehnke	Ocean County
Blair Wegescheide	PANYNJ
Stephan Pezdek	PANYNJ
Carlos Mandeville	PANYNJ
Hilary McCarron	PANYNJ
Andras Holzmann	Passaic County
Jesse Harty	Prologis
Tom Drabic	Sussex County
Matthew Dolly	Transwestern
Liza Betz	Union County
Ryan Conklin	Warren County
Steven Beyda	Woodmont Industrial Partners
Stephen Chiaramonte	WSP
Connor Jaeger	
Mark Russo	
Syd Chan	
Miki Krakauer	
Zac Werkmeister	
George Bulow	
Julio Mora	
B Vandervliet	
Chris Bauers	
Carlos Mandeville	