



## **North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, Inc.**

### **FREIGHT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Charles Kenny, Chair

#### **Meeting Minutes April 19, 2021**

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#### **I. Roll Call**

Freight Initiatives Committee Chair Commissioner Charles Kenny, Middlesex County, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Eleven voting members were present for the virtual meeting.

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

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2021 meeting was made by Hudson County seconded by Sussex County and carried with 10 affirmative votes. The City of Newark abstained.

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

Anne Strauss-Wieder, Central Staff, said the NJTPA has published “The COVID-19 Pandemic and North Jersey Freight,” a report now available at NJTPA.org. She noted that the pandemic has accelerated many freight trends, such as the rapid growth of e-commerce, including store pickup. This growth has increased the demand for industrial properties in the region.

Mr. Strauss-Wieder also reported that more than 30 freight-related companies responded to a recent survey about the most effective ways of communicating information to truck drivers. Findings from the survey will be presented at a future FIC meeting. Ms. Strauss-Wieder said TRANSCOM is working with the MAP Forum and other agencies to address the need for emergency truck parking in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut.

Ms. Strauss-Wieder noted that, this past March, the Port handled its highest-ever volume of containerized cargo. She also reported that the Fiscal Year 2021 Freight Concept Development Program is underway with two projects in Morris and Somerset counties.

#### **IV. Presentations**

##### **1. Conrail**

Ryan Hill, Conrail, briefed the Committee on several capital projects implemented by this regional rail service, which serves the shared asset areas of CSX and Norfolk Southern, two national Class I railroads. He said Conrail’s capital investments will ease congestion at the port through added capacity and flexibility. The projects he discussed included the following:

- The Hackensack to Kearny Double Track project is nearing completion and service is expected to begin in July. The project extends double track operation at the site east by over a mile. Conrail partnered with NJDOT and the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ) to fund the project.

- The Waverly Loop Project on the P&H line allows progressive moves of freight cars north from the Greenville Yard and provides an additional routenorth from Port Newark. The project began in 2019, and service is expected to begin by early 2022.
- The Oak Island Support Tracks 5 & 6 project is in preliminary design. Conrail is planning to add two more tracks within Oak Island Yard between the Garden Crossing and Upper Bay Bridge.
- The Southbound Connector & Garden State Secondary (GSS) Improvement project will allow southbound arrivals and departures for trains serving the Port. Conrail is working with the PANYNJ on design concepts for the project, and construction is expected to begin by 2023.
- The Point No Point Bridge Replacement project will replace the 120 year-old movable bridge between Kearny and Newark with a single leaf bascule bridge, which will be built on a new alignment to avoid delays to train traffic during construction. Construction is expected to begin in 2022 for two and a half years.

## 2. PANYNJ Cross Harbor Railcar Float

Matt Masters, PANYNJ, provided an overview of New York New Jersey Rail, a shortline railroad owned by PANYNJ. He said, now that the Cross Harbor Rail Car Float operation infrastructure has been built-out to accommodate 24,000 annual carloads, commercial efforts to grow the railroad are underway. He said the rail line is working with a business development team to hold a series of briefings with potential customers to promote three services:

- Interchange with New York & Atlantic Railway providing access to customers in Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island.
- 65<sup>th</sup> Street Transload Space, a secure rail-to-truck transload and storage facility in Brooklyn.
- Direct rail service to a cluster of warehouses in Port Jersey.

## 3. New Jersey Rail Freight Assistance Program

Genevieve Clifton, NJDOT, provided an update on the New Jersey Rail Freight Assistance Program, which provides \$25 million a year to preserve, rehabilitate, and enhance rail freight infrastructure. She highlighted several of the 35 Rail Freight Assistance Program projects awarded by the Department, three quarters of which will be implemented in the NJTPA region. Ten projects totaling over \$29 million have been selected for the 2021 program, and one of them, the Dover and Rockway Rail Realignment project, is a graduate of the NJTPA Freight Concept Development Program. The application process for the 2022 Freight Rail Assistance Program will open in July.

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

- Stephanie Finch, PANYNJ, said March data show an increase in Port activities over the previous year and a new high. She said container imports rose by 12 percent for Express Rail; PATH is still down about 75 percent on weekdays; and bridge traffic volume is increasing, although it is still below March 2019 numbers.

- Ms. Clifton said NJDOT has finalized a statewide rail GIS database, which will serve as a foundation for rail asset tracking and analyses. She also said that NJDOT is planning for the Federal Highway Administration 2022 State Freight Plan update.
- Ken Wedeen, Somerset County, reported that Somerset County is working with NJTPA on the Port Reading Secondary South Main Street Grade Crossing Elimination Project in Bound Brook as part of the NJTPA Freight Concept Development Program.
- Commissioner Bette Jane Kowalski, Union County, said the draft final report for the County's Truck Mobility Study is expected to be issued in May. She said the study focuses on planning efforts to improve the movement of truck traffic on the 174-mile county roadway network, while recognizing and balancing the needs of all other users.

VI. Next Meeting: June 14, 2021

VII. Adjournment

At 2:34 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made by Union County, seconded by Sussex County and carried unanimously.

Freight Initiatives Committee  
ATTENDANCE  
April 19, 2021

VOTING MEMBERS	
Hon. Charles Kenny (Chair)	Middlesex County
Hon. John Kelly	Ocean County
Hon. Kathy DeFillippo	Morris County
Hon. Bette Jane Kowalski	Union County
Byron Nicholas	Hudson County
Trevor Howard	City of Newark
Tom Drabic	Sussex County
Paul Drake	Somerset County
Genevieve Clifton	NJDOT
Alan Kearns	NJ TRANSIT
Stephanie Finch	PANYNJ
OTHER ATTENDEES	
Chris Helms	Bergen County
Katie Kirk	Cambridge Systematics
Alice Cheng	Cheng Solutions
Kristen Scudder	DVRPC
Bob Werkmeister	GPI
Tom Visée	HDR
Katherine Fullerton	Hunterdon County
Nicole Somers	Inch and Meter
Scott Parker	Jacobs Engineering
Doug Greenfeld	Middlesex County
Vijayant Rajvanshi	Middlesex County
Mike Nei	Monmouth County
John Hayes	Morris County
Lou Millan	NJ TRANSIT
Reema Loutan	NJDEP
Andrew Ludasi	NJDOT
Yevgeniy Galinski	NJDOT
Various members of Central Staff	NJTPA
Anne Strauss-Wieder	NJTPA
Beverly Morris	NJTPA
Jakub Rowinski	NJTPA
Blythe Eaman	NJTPA
David Behrend	NJTPA
Elizabeth Johnson	NJTPA
Gabrielle Fausel	NJTPA
Jeffrey Perlman	NJTPA
Joanna Doyle	NJTPA
Karen Rosenberger	NJTPA
Keith Hamas	NJTPA
Lois Goldman	NJTPA
Mark Solof	NJTPA

Mary Ameen	NJTPA
Melissa Hayes	NJTPA
Ted Ritter	NJTPA
Rick Crawford	Norfolk Southern
John Ernst	Ocean County
Mark Jehnke	Ocean County
Matthew Masters	PANYNJ
Blair Wegescheide	PANYNJ
Hilary McCarron	PANYNJ
Jay Shuffield	PANYNJ
Sal Presti	Passaic County
Liza Betz	Union County
Alan Meyers	WSP
Debbie Hartman	WSP
Stephen Chiamonte	WSP
Adam DiSarro	
Al Meyer	
Alexander King	
Benjamin Peacock	
Bhavin Kapadia	
Denise Nickel	
Frank Capo	
George Bulow	
Jack Kanarek	
James Hess	
Jelena Matic	
Jobi Odeneye	
Josh Amsler	
Kelly Pollard	
Kelvin MacKavanagh	
Kristen Figaro	
Luke Peterson	
Matt Van Hattem	
Michael Angell	
Miki Krakauer	
Nusrat Jahan	
Richard Jackson	
Rickie Clark	
Robert Conway	
Ronald Klempner	
Rutuja Patil	
Ryan Hill	
Sanja Zlatanic	
Tom Phelan	
William Sheppard	