



FREIGHT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

Commissioner Jason Sarnoski, Chair

Commissioner Sara Sooy, Vice Chair

Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2023

I. Roll Call of Members

Freight Initiatives Committee (FIC) Chair Commissioner Jason Sarnoski, Warren County, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. There were 13 voting members of the Freight Initiatives Committee present.

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2023 meeting was made by Middlesex County, seconded by Somerset County and carried with 12 affirmative votes. Warren County abstained.

III. Update on Key NJTPA Freight Division Activities

Anne Strauss-Wieder, Central Staff, updated the Committee on the industrial real estate market. She said, like the supply chain industry, the ever-increasing cycle of demand appears to be over. While some buildings are still under construction, the pace has slowed, and some of the buildings coming to market are now being delivered vacant. Many leases from the third quarter are third-party logistics companies and those shifting their port of entry from the West Coast to the East Coast.

Ms. Strauss-Wieder said NJTPA freight staff continues to enhance and update the Goods Movement Strategies Tool, noting that a rail freight module will be added. She said the Rail Grade Crossing Assessment Update and the current phase of the Freight Concept Development Program are concluding soon. Also, staff are working with the Eastern Transportation Coalition on their 2023 Freight Academy, which will be attended by one subregional representative and others from partner agencies. Ms. Strauss-Wieder noted that the MAP Forum Multi-State Freight Working Group hosted a virtual workshop on Off-Shore Wind Development Needs and Implications for Regional Planning and Transportation in March, and the presentations are available at <https://map-forum-njtpa.hub.arcgis.com/pages/freight>.

IV. Presentations:

Beth Rooney, Port Director, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ), said the Port has seen significant cargo growth, despite numerous international supply chain challenges. For five of the last seven months, the Port has been number one in the country, handling a container volume of more than 9.5 million TEU's (20-foot equivalent units). The Port is also seeing a recovery in the cruise ship business. Ms. Rooney noted that the Port is capturing a substantial portion of port volume from the West Coast that is being diverted due to labor concerns there and other factors affecting the inland movement of cargo from the west.

Ms. Rooney then focused on two upcoming PANYNJ projects to address access issues for the Newark/Elizabeth port complex that are receiving federal funds. One is the Port Street Corridor Improvement Project which involves widening access lanes in the area, among other upgrades. On the rail side, the Southbound Connector project will allow for greater efficiencies in train movements from the on-dock rail yard serving two of the major container terminals.

John Nardi, President of the Shipping Association of New York and New Jersey highlighted the organization's mission, which is to represent the interests of ocean carriers, terminal operators, and ancillary services in improving port operations. The association negotiates labor agreements and was instrumental in achieving New Jersey's withdrawal from the Waterfront Commission (a decision handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court the day after the FIC meeting). He said this will expedite New Jersey's ability to vet and recruit much-needed labor at the Port.

Mr. Nardi noted that the Shipping Association and the PANYNJ lead the Council on Port Performance, which participates in all aspects of the supply chain. The NJTPA is also a member of the Council. Priorities of the organization for 2023 include issues related to environmental policy, land use improvements, chassis availability measures, infrastructure development and marketing strategies.

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

- Jay Shuffield, PANYNJ, reported that air cargo volume at regional airports has decreased compared to last year, while truck traffic on vehicular crossings has increased. He noted that the American Institute of Architects issued an urban freight study focusing on first and last mile issues, and it is available on their website.
- Ken Wedeen, Somerset County, thanked all those involved in the Freight Concept Development Study for eliminating the rail grade crossing on Main Street in Bound Brook.
- Trevor Howard, Newark, said the City has received a grant for Foundry Street improvements from the state's Local Freight Impact Fund.
- Commissioner Charles Kenny, Middlesex County, announced that recommendations from the County's Freight Movement Study will be presented at a public meeting, and he thanked all involved in the project.

VI. Next virtual meeting: June 20, 2023, 1:00 p.m.

VII. Adjournment

At 2:23 p.m. a motion to adjourn was made by Middlesex County, seconded by Somerset County and carried unanimously.

Freight Initiatives Committee
ATTENDANCE
April 17, 2023

VOTING MEMBERS	
Hon. Jason Sarnoski (Chair)	Warren County
Hon. Charles Kenny	Middlesex County
Tom Malavasi	Hudson County
Dolores Rodriguez Wooden	City of Newark
John Ernst	Ocean County
Andras Holzmann	Passaic County
Ken Wedeen	Somerset County
Liza Betz	Union County
Dorian Smith	Governor's Authorities Unit
Andrew Clark	NJDOT
Alan Kearns	NJ TRANSIT
Jay Shuffield	PANYNJ
Jared Rodriguez	Citizens' Representative
OTHER ATTENDEES	
Jim Katzenberger	Accelerx Group
Chris Helms	Bergen County
Katie Kirk	Cambridge Systematics
Trevor Howard	City of Newark
Kristen Scudder	DVRPC
David Antonio	Essex County
Rickie Clark	Federal Highway Administration
Bob Werkmeister	GPI
James Humphries	Highlands
Kevin Force	Hudson County
Bob Hornby	Hunterdon County
Scott Parker	Jacobs
Andrew Lappitt	Middlesex County
John Hayes	Morris County
Dede Murray	Morris County
Lou Millan	NJ TRANSIT
Adam DiSarro	NJ TRANSIT
Devyn Cordero	NJDOT
Jamera Sirmans	NJDOT
Various members of Central Staff	NJTPA
Beth Rooney	PANYNJ
John Nardi	Shipping Association of New York and New Jersey
Tom Drabic	Sussex County
Ryan Conklin	Warren County
David Dech	Warren County

John Formosa	
Darian Darakananda	
James Gabriel	
Rich Werkmeister	
Ronald Klempner	