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Looking Toward t

Bloomfield, Essex County



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lan 2045 presents a long term vision and framework to help the NJTPA Board of Trustees make decisions year-to-year on where and how investments can be made to meet regional goals. As detailed in Chapter 3 and addressed throughout these pages, the region will see travel demands steadily increase—driven by population growth of 17 percent and employment growth of 14 percent by 2045—placing increased stress on all aspects of the transportation network. All the while, the region will face a host of uncertainties that could greatly impact transportation—new technologies, changes in climate and sea levels, new locational preferences by businesses and families and more.

● Based on extensive public and stakeholder outreach (Chapter 2) and technical analysis, Plan 2045 offers a set of principles and guidelines for future investments (Chapter 4) and specific strategies and policies to meet the needs of key facilities and address major issues (Chapter 5). The plan’s financial element (Chapter 6) offers a realistic approach to pay for needed improvements, with consideration of alternative funding scenarios. ● Implementing this plan will require close cooperation with partner agencies—including NJTPA subregions, NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT, the Port Authority and the TMAs—and with numerous interests and groups in the state, and could include partnerships with commercial or philanthropic organizations for local initiatives. Of particular importance, the NJTPA will continue its leadership and participation in the Together North Jersey consortium as it works to make

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Sparta, Sussex County

the region more **competitive**, **efficient**, **livable** and **resilient**. As highlighted throughout this plan, the NJTPA will seek to use its investments and planning programs to support these broad themes and the strategies and actions recommended in the Together North Jersey plan. Continued involvement with Together North Jersey will ensure that NJTPA's transportation planning supports strengthening communities and bringing economic progress to all segments of the region.

In addition to Together North Jersey, other plans and planning documents, referenced previously, will help shape how the NJTPA implements Plan 2045. Among them:

Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)—Developed in cooperation with Together North Jersey partners, the CEDS seeks to increase access to opportunities and prosperity by advancing regional priorities through local actions.

Regional Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan—This plan identifies transportation priorities for meeting the needs of the special

mobility challenges facing seniors, low-income people, veterans and people with disabilities.

New Jersey Statewide Freight Plan—This federally required document was developed by public agencies in the state, with input from the private sector and other interests. Finalized in fall 2017, it addresses the full range of freight issues facing the state and region.

Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)—Completed in 2005, the state's plan identifies several priority emphasis areas for improving safety: lane departures, aggressive driving, drowsy and distracted driving, intersections, mature drivers, and pedestrians and bicycles.

The Connected Corridor—Completed in 2014, it includes technology standards and protocols—called the state ITS architecture—and addresses strategies for improved management of transportation systems and their operation.

State Development and Redevelopment Plan—This plan designates planning areas that share common development and environmental conditions as areas for growth, limited growth, or conservation.

Highlands Regional Master Plan—This plan guides implementation of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act of 2004.

In addition to attending to needs on the existing transportation network, the NJTPA and partner agencies must continue to preserve and study possible multimodal transportation use of abandoned rights-of-way. One example is the Bergen Arches in Jersey City, which was once a rail corridor but was abandoned decades ago. Another, as discussed in chapter 5, is the route of the Morris Canal now undergoing study to complete a continuous greenway through six counties.

Beyond these planning efforts, the NJTPA must continue to assist counties and municipalities in pursuing the goals and policies articulated in Plan 2045 and help adapt them to local conditions and needs.

To this end, as noted, NJTPA's involvement with Together North Jersey includes many locally-focused efforts. In addition, the NJTPA's subregional programs—such as grants for studies of local needs, data collection, master plan updates, the exploration of project concepts and other activities—are helping address priority local issues. A particularly important locally focused effort will be continuing to expand the Street Smart NJ pedestrian safety campaign (see Street Smart NJ p. 95) to more communities, with the help of TMAs.

NJTPA also must continue to apply its staff resources, expertise and technical tools to better address regional mobility needs. This includes coordinating studies of key corridors, performing computer modeling and GIS mapping, serving as a repository for transportation data, assisting in engineering and environmental reviews for project delivery, working with communities to pilot innovative planning approaches, and managing and administering the TIP, among other responsibilities.

A performance-based approach will continue to underpin much of this work, emphasizing ways in which progress toward NJTPA goals can be measured and how potential actions and investments can be systematically evaluated. This includes the NJTPA's ongoing Congestion Management Process, prioritizing projects with defined performance criteria, and new federally required monitoring and regional target setting.

All these activities will be undertaken at the direction of the NJTPA Board of Trustees and its standing committees. The Board will draw upon this plan in preparing an update of the agency's Strategic Business Plan, with the goal of improving the organization to better meet the many challenges and opportunities Plan 2045 identifies and to better serve citizens of the region. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Board will receive important feedback on the impacts of its decisions through implementation of federally mandated performance measures whose targets will be set and monitored by NJTPA and its state planning partners.

While these and other efforts to implement Plan 2045 appropriately focus on issues and needs within the region, the plan's vision extends beyond North Jersey. The region's economy is closely tied to the larger New York and Connecticut metropolitan area and to the mega-region extending throughout the northeastern United States. Coordination and cooperation among the NJTPA and neighboring MPOs on cross-border issues and on sharing best practices will continue to be accomplished through the Metropolitan Area Planning (MAP) Forum, which meets periodically and has ongoing staff communications.

The most pressing metropolitan-wide need—identified as the highest investment priority in this plan (see Trans-Hudson Travel p. 58)—is to complete a new Hudson River rail tunnel and to accomplish the

Highlands, Monmouth County



larger Gateway Program. It will provide new travel capacity and accommodate new rail services feeding into the Northeast Corridor. The NJTPA has joined with MPOs in the larger metropolitan region, as well as with state and local agencies to document the vital need for these improvements to support the economic wellbeing of upwards of 30 million people in the region and beyond. Non-profit, academic, research and advocacy organizations—including the Regional Plan Association—have contributed their visions and plans for future development, which complement and present alternatives for many of the strategies offered in Plan 2045. All recognize the essential need for new trans-Hudson rail capacity. Advancing the tunnel and Gateway Program will be a sustained focus of efforts to implement Plan 2045.

Attending to such metropolitan level needs while also effectively supporting regional and local level priorities, as noted above, follows the mandate for comprehensive planning under federal law required of the NJTPA and MPOs across the country. In addition to being comprehensive, MPO planning must be continuing and cooperative—rounding out the so-called “3C process” required by law. For NJTPA, the cooperative aspect is evidenced by the growing number of partners it has engaged in the planning process. NJTPA’s leadership and participation in Together

North Jersey, which helped shape this plan represents a substantial broadening of cooperation, extending NJTPA support and involvement to many groups and issues outside of traditional MPO planning. It is an exciting direction that has already yielded new approaches and innovations in serving the needs of the region.

The third “C,” continuing planning, is embodied in this plan itself. The strategies, policies and projects contained in Plan 2045 represent commitments by the NJTPA and its partners to undertake the steps needed to improve mobility in particular locations, in specific ways and with a focus on achieving particular goals and objectives—an ongoing process that will continue over the life of this plan. Indeed, with adoption of this plan, efforts commence to monitor and assess progress in meeting these commitments, to take stock of new challenges and conditions as they unfold and to take mid-course corrections when needed—all in preparation for the next long range plan update in 2021. Plan 2045 provides the foundation for comprehensive, cooperative and continuous planning to ensure citizens and businesses will be well prepared for future uncertainties and be able to fully realize the benefits of improved transportation in supporting economic progress, safeguarding the environment and strengthening communities.