

APPROVED

**MIDDLESEX COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

MINUTES – January 28, 2014

Attendance Officers

Mr. Charles E. Tomaro, Freeholder
Mr. Richard Zipp, Vice-Chairman

Municipal Representatives

Mr. Dennis McFadden, Carteret Borough
Mr. Robert Seader, Dunellen Borough
Mr. Bruce Barrett, East Brunswick Township (Traffic Committee)
Ms. Shannon Spillane, Jamesburg Borough
Mr. Thomas Gibbons, Jamesburg Borough
Mr. Thomas Valenti, New Brunswick City
Mr. Rizwan Baig, South Brunswick Township
Mr. Deven Patel, South Brunswick Township
Mr. Thomas Cornell, Woodbridge Township

Others

Ms. Carla Cefalo, County Department of Business Development & Education
Ms. Jael Davis, 6th Congressional District
Mr. Mike Kruimer, East Coast Greenway Alliance
Mr. Morteza Ansari, Keep Middlesex Moving
Mr. Richard Lowe, 12th Legislative District
Mr. Daniel Lebar, Esq., 18th Legislative Districts
Ms. Kathleen Tirpak, 19th Legislative District
Mr. Andrew Cargiano, New Brunswick Today
Ms. Dorothy Le, Rutgers University

Staff

Mr. George M. Ververides, Director, Planning
Mr. Anthony Gambilonghi, Supervisor, Transportation Division
Mr. Bruce McCracken, Principal Planner, Transportation Division

Total in Attendance – 23

I.

Call to Order

- Statement on Open Public Meetings Act
- Pledge of Allegiance

II.

Minutes

November 26, 2013 Minutes were distributed for approval at the next meeting.

Motion to approve the October 22, 2013 Minutes was made by Mr. Thomas Cornell, seconded by Mr. Mike Kruimer and motion carried unanimously.

III.

- A. Welcome / Chairman's Remarks - Vice-Chairman Zipp called the meeting to order in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. He welcomed all that were in attendance of the meeting and administered the Oath Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Chairman Zipp announced that Freeholder Tomaro and the Mayor of Dunellen, Mr. Seader, were in attendance.

- B. Sign in Reminder – Members were reminded to sign the attendance sheet.

- C. Correspondence – Mr. Gambilonghi notified the TCC that the Department of Transportation will conduct a public information session in regards to the Route 27 Six Mile Run Bridge that connects between Franklin Township (Somerset County) and North Brunswick Township (Middlesex County). The meeting will be held on February 13, 2014 from 4pm-7pm at the Somerset County Administration Building, Freeholder's Meeting Room, Third Floor at 20 Grove Street in Somerville.

The Office of Planning has created a report entitled, "*Middlesex County Transportation Plan, Proposed and Completed Projects: By Subregion and Municipality*". The document provides a table of proposed and completed projects since the adoption of the Transportation Plan. The report provides an essence of direction in the type of action, strategies and investment(s) that the Plan supports to improve the County's transportation system. Projects are listed by Subregion and are geographically displayed in map format for illustration.

Mr. Gambilonghi further noted that students from Rutgers University will make a "Transit Studio" presentation to the TCC on April 22, 2014, which New Jersey Transit is co-sponsoring. The presentation will discuss ways to expand and improve transportation services in our region (*Route 22 to the North; Route 1 to the South; 531 in Metuchen to the East; Raritan River to the West*). Mr. Paul Larrousse from the National Transit Institute is the Facilitator on the project.

Staff has completed and submitted an application to NJTPA for a study along Route 529 Corridor from Edison to Green Brook under the FY 2015-2016 Subregional Study Program. The study seeks to improve automobile, transit and intermodal mobility (e.g. bikeway paths) along the Corridor including connections between bus and rail and accommodations to access destinations and train services along the Northeast Corridor and Raritan Valley rail lines.

- D. Comments – None

V. **Introduction of TCC Members –**

Mr. Richard Zipp introduced himself as Vice-Chairman of the Transportation Coordinating Committee. Mr. George Ververides introduced himself as Director, Office of Planning. All persons and members in attendance of the meeting introduced themselves and what organization they represented.

VI. **Special Item**

Welcoming Remarks and Statement on Transportation Accomplishments and Perspective in 2014 Presented by Freeholder Charles E. Tomaro

Freeholder Tomaro stated he is pleased to once again to be the Freeholder Liaison to this important committee who interest and actions in transportation have made Middlesex County a statewide leader in various aspects of transportation.

There are requirements under the federally funded Subregional Transportation Planning Program that North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) complies with as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for 13 county regions including Middlesex. The mandate requires that we maintain an active public participation component with goals of informing and educating the public about transportation matters of concern and we must provide a proactive means of soliciting input and building local consensus.

Freeholder Tomaro stated there are many ways for TCC members to participate in our meetings such as providing comments and questions, requesting project status updates on new and ongoing proposals, and whatever else is a concern regarding transportation in a particular municipality, or statewide. He expressed gratitude to Vice-Chairman Zipp for his dual role as Vice-Chair and Acting Chair until a new Chairman is appointed by the Freeholders.

Some recent accomplishments of the TCC and staff included the update and adoption of the County's New Transportation Plan, "New Horizons in Mobility", the Route 9 Corridor Study that helped to initiate the MCAT #7 Shuttle Route which serves the Route 9 Bordentown Avenue area and the South Amboy Train Station, along with many other projects and informative presentations and discussions. Some major transportation projects that are underway include the Route 130 Reconstruction through North Brunswick, Route 529 Plainfield Avenue Reconstruction in Piscataway, along with many other projects throughout the region. There are many other projects that are in the development phase such as the Route 1 Widening and Capacity Improvements through South Brunswick, and research efforts to improve ridership on the #655 Bus Route between Plainsboro and Princeton.

Freeholder Tomaro noted that the county will continue coordination efforts with DOT and NJTPA in periodic reviews, updates and amendments of the ongoing Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) 2040, as needed. The county will also continue to seek public and private partnership arrangements where possible through the subdivision and site plan application review process.

In closing, Freeholder Tomaro wished everyone the best in the New Year and looks forward to working with the TCC in advancing much needed transportation improvements and implementing projects in 2014.

VI. **Staff Reports**

- A. **New Jersey Department of Transportation – Denise Peck**
Absent.

- B. New Jersey Transit – Tom Clark**
Absent.
- C. North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) - Keith Hamas**
Absent
- D. New Jersey Turnpike Authority – Richard Brundage**
Absent.
- E. Rutgers- The State University – Dorothy Le**
Ms. Le informed that the University is initiating plans to promote bicycle usage on campus, which will include bicycle repairs stations throughout the campus. Bicycle racks and lockers will be added for long-term storage on Livingston and Cook campuses.
- Ms. Le announced that on February 8, 2014 will be the New Jersey Walk Summit .Other events will be featured during the months of May, July, and October, 2014.
- F. KMM – Keep Middlesex Moving – Morteza Ansari**
Mr. Ansari provided copies of the transit guide for members to take.
- G. Middlesex County Office of Transportation – Laila Caune**
Absent.
- H. Middlesex County Engineering Office / Traffic Safety – Jim Markovich**
Absent.
- I. Middlesex County Transportation, Office of Social Services – Nancy Nicola**
Absent.
- J. TCC - Bikeways – Pedestrian Task Force – Guy Gaspari**
Absent.
- K. Middlesex County Improvement Authority – Denise Nickel**
Absent.
- L. East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA) – Mike and Anne Kruimer**
Mr. Kruimer recapped that on February 8, 2014 is the NJ Bike/Walk Summit to be held at Rutgers University, Bloustein School. Also the National Bike Summit will be held in Washington, DC from March 3rd -5th 2014.
- May 3rd will be the 30th Annual Bike Tour hosted by the Central Jersey Bike Club at Brookdale Community College. The Longest Day Ride event will be held on June 14, 2014.
- M. TCC – Transit Subcommittee – Paul Larrousse**
Absent.
- N. Academy Bus Co. – Chuck Kassinger**
Absent.
- O. Suburban Transit / Coach USA - Ron Kohn**
Absent.

P. **Business Development and Education** – Kathaleen Shaw
No Report.

Q. **Transportation News Update** – Bruce McCracken
Mr. McCracken highlighted the following news articles that were distributed in the packet for information:

Letter: Derailment dangers (Carteret)	Page 5
South Amboy to privatize rail commuter parking lots	Page 9
One-seat ride to NYC to begin in March 2014 on Raritan Valley Line weekday off-peak	Page 11
Red-light camera: nightmare on ___ st.	Page 14
Congress may drive commuters away from train, bus	Page 19
NJ Transit looks at New Brunswick site to store trains in monster storms	Page 22
OP. Ed. Transit hubs: Ground zero for growth in NJ (Dunellen)	Page 23
Fluctuating temperature brings with it potholes. Potholes... 800-Pot-Hole (NJ DOT)	Page 25

R. **Staff Activities** – George M. Ververides
Mr. Ververides highlighted the efforts put forth by the TCC and the Office of Planning regarding the accomplishment of the Bicycle Program in New Brunswick after 10 years. He congratulated the committee on their persistence; passion and patience with project implementation.

Mr. Ververides also welcomed back Freeholder Tomaro to the committee.

VII.

A. **TCC Member Comments** –

In response to a question regarding the New Brunswick Bicycle Program, Mr. Gambilonghi stated that bids were received, and construction should begin sometime in the Spring, 2014. The project is essentially designed to improve the connectivity of Rutgers University campuses and would provide increased access for people biking into the city across the Route 27 bridge from Highland Park. The plans include bike lanes at least five feet wide going in certain directions, as well as various crosswalks and signals. Configuration will begin at Douglas Campus at the intersection of George and Bishop Streets, then across Commercial Avenue to Neilson Street and link to Albany Street where it will go left towards George Street. The bikeway will split into two spurs, one of which will go north towards the train station on Easton Avenue. The other will go along George Street and then turn left onto Huntington Avenue and right onto College Avenue. The path ends at Lafayette Street near Buccleuch Park.

Mr. Kruimer provided copies of the updated ECGA trail guide to take and he noted that New Jersey was the first state on the East Coast Greenway to develop a guide. He inquired about the renovation status to the Raritan Arsenal Dock, and proposed the creation of a bike lane along the rail corridor. Mr. Ververides stated he attended a meeting to discuss transporting goods utilizing waterways as an alternative to rail, unfortunately, there have been no updates. Mr. Ververides expressed his support for restoration to the dock and informed the committee that during the World War, the dock was a major distribution center to Europe for cargo movement. If restored, the corridor would be of great service to the region.

Mr. Gambilonghi informed Mr. Kruimer on a grant entitled, "Greenway Local Development Program" and a tour is scheduled for this upcoming Friday along the corridor to examine sections of the path for possible expansion to the greenway.

Mr. Lebar inquired about the updated status on the Lincoln Tunnel Hot Lane Feasibility Study at the Port Authority, in efforts to alleviate congestion. An article was distributed to TCC members for review. The last study done in year 2008 identified alternatives for easing traffic in the tunnel: carving a second bus priority lane out of New York, a second bus priority lane out of New Jersey, building a new priority lane for buses, building a new elevated roadway lane for local traffic, and the examination of how these specifics would function. Mr. Lebar commented on the importance of the study to the region and suggested a presentation from Port Authority on the status and pending results of the study. Mr. Wallner concurred that there are no current updates to the study. He also supported the idea of requesting a presentation from the Port Authority.

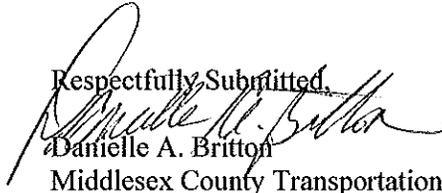
B. Public Comments – None

VIII.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Mike Kruimer, seconded and motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Danielle A. Britton

Middlesex County Transportation Coordinating Committee