

APPROVED
MIDDLESEX COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE
MINUTES – June 24, 2014

Attendance Officers

Mr. Richard Zipp, Vice-Chairman

Municipal Representatives

Mr. Sanford Gardner, East Brunswick Township

Mr. Mike Costello, Monroe Township

Mr. John Riggs, Monroe Township

Mr. Thomas Valenti, New Brunswick City

Mr. Rizwan Baig, South Brunswick Township

Ms. Cynthia Urbanik, South River Borough

Mr. Thomas Cornell, Woodbridge Township

Others

Mr. Chuck Kassinger, Academy Bus Company

Ms. Jael Davis, 6th Congressional District

Mr. Richard Lowe, 12th Legislative District

Mr. John O’Sullivan, 16th Legislative District

Mr. Daniel A Lebar, Esq, 18th Legislative Districts

Ms. Kathleen Tirpak, 19th Legislative District

Ms. Dorothy Le, Department of Transportation and Safety – Rutgers University

Mr. Bruce Barrett, East Brunswick Resident

Mr. Michael Kruimer, East Coast Greenway

Ms. Anne Kruimer, East Coast Greenway

Mr. Morteza Ansari, Keep Middlesex Moving

Mr. Bill Neary, Keep Middlesex Moving

Ms. Carla Cefalo, Middlesex County Department of Business and Education

Ms. Laila Caune, Middlesex County Office of Aging and Disabled Services

Mr. John Ferguson, Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management

Mr. Keith Hamas, North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Mr. Thomas Marchwinski, New Jersey Transit

Mr. Lou Venech, Port Authority of New York/ New Jersey

Mr. Mark Muriello, Port Authority of New York/ New Jersey

Mr. Vince Grover, Suburban/ Coach USA

Mr. Ronald Kohn, Suburban/ Coach USA

Staff

Mr. George Ververides, Director, Office of Planning

Mr. Anthony Gambilonghi, Supervisor, Transportation Division

Mr. Bruce McCracken, Principal Planner, Transportation Division

Ms. Danielle Britton, TCC Secretary, Transportation Division

Total in Attendance – 33

I.

Call to Order

- **Statement an Open Public Meetings Act**
- **Pledge Allegiance**

II.

Minutes

April 22, 2014 Minutes were distributed for approval at the next meeting.

Motion to approve the March 25, 2014 Minutes, as amended, was made by Mr. Thomas Cornell seconded by Mr. Daniel Lebar and motion carried unanimously.

III.

- A. **Welcome/ (Vice) 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 Pledge of Allegiance.
- B. **Sign in Reminder** – Members were reminded to sign the attendance sheet. Announcement was made to sign-up for a copy of the Northwestern Middlesex County Transit Study produced by students from Rutgers University, Transit Planning Studio.
- C. **Correspondence** – Mr. Gambilonghi stated that Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association (GMTMA) announced a new route change for NJ Transit Bus #655, which went into effect Monday June 23, 2014. The route serves Princeton and Plainsboro, and route changes were made to expand service area and increase overall ridership.
- D. **Comments** – None

IV.

Introduction of TCC Members –

Mr. Richard Zipp introduced himself as Vice-Chairman of the Transportation Coordinating Committee. All persons and members in attendance of the meeting introduced themselves and what organization(s) they represented.

V.

Special Item: Planning for Interstate Bus Network Service Improvements

Presented by Mark Muriello, Assistant Director, Tunnels, Bridges, and Terminals Department, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ), and Lou Venech, General Manager, Regional Transportation Policy Development, Planning Dept., PANYNJ.

Mr. Muriello provided an overview on the current conditions, challenges and potential solutions with respect to the New York and New Jersey Midtown Corridor. Long-term planning needs and actions were discussed. 79,000 New Jersey commuters ride NJ Transit buses into various terminals each morning. Three (3) terminal stations include the Port Authority Bus Terminal, George Washington Bridge Bus Station, and Journal Square

Transportation Center. Six (6) tunnels and bridges that connect New York and New Jersey are heavily utilized; they include the Holland Tunnel, Lincoln Tunnel, George Washington Bridge, Outerbridge Crossing, Bayonne Bridge, and the Goethals Bridge. There are 24 carriers that service the Port Authority Bus Terminal and a vast majority are commuter carriers.

The facilities at the Port Authority Bus Terminal (PABT), a block east of the Lincoln Tunnel, are obsolete. The design originally accommodated smaller size buses (98"X 35') in the 1950's and fewer passengers, but capacity issues have caused regular delays for NJ Transit buses and passengers, which accounts for a large percentage of terminal traffic. Many of the modern buses are now bi-leveled and sized roughly at 102"X 45'. There are now opportunities to take advantage of new technological advances of services such as Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Connected Vehicle Technology.

Mr. Muriello explained what makes the Midtown Corridor work, integrated facilities, which create value. Mr. Muriello used the Lincoln Tunnel as an example because of its three (3), 2-lane tunnels that run 2-ways in-and-out of New York City. The roadways are configured in a way that saves the commuter time (20-30 minutes) by accessing the one-seat ride Exclusive Bus Lane (XBL) between New York and New Jersey, compared to automobiles.

Over 1,800 buses travel weekdays into Manhattan carrying over 65,000 passengers on a single lane of highway on the XBL. Currently the XBL is at capacity. Mr. Muriello stated traffic demands have reached its peak, and bus congestion at the Lincoln Tunnel corridor and Port Authority poses another challenge. There was discussion on alternatives for expanding the XBL capacity such as a new treatment of bus priority into the tunnel, but capacity and modernization designs must be addressed first.

During calamities over the years; such as super storm Sandy and the 2003 black out, buses were used to transport people when other transportation segments and modes were down. Mr. Muriello stated the terminals exercised great resiliency and redundancy within the Trans-Hudson Transportation Network.

Mr. Muriello advised of a tremendous scarcity of bus parking and staging in midtown Manhattan. Existing demands already exceeds the capacity of the Port Authority Bus Terminal and a growing number of services are operating on city streets. Buses waiting for entry to their gates are often forced to idle outside the terminal or drive around the huge facility contributing to congestion and pollution. In addition empty buses are sent to New Jersey after the morning rush; buses return empty to pickup homeward bound commuters in the evening. Unreliable travel times contribute to congestion inside the PABT and on city streets, along with over 200 spaces lost due to construction on the West Side.

The construction of a new parking facility was proposed for buses to address the shortage of bus parking and staging in Midtown, and to alleviate inefficiencies at the PABT and Lincoln Tunnel. The proposal in addition would help reduce bus and overall traffic congestions in

New York and New Jersey and improve service reliability and on time performance in the peak evening hours. Southbound bus route diversion was addressed. The Port Authority applied for a \$230 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to help pay for a new \$400 million parking and staging facility at Galvin Plaza between 11th and 10th Avenue. The grant would also pay for a platform and ramp for the terminal.

Trans-Hudson forecasts indicated more growth ahead. Buses carry more passengers across the Hudson River than all other transit modes combined. With over 430,000 trips per day, buses now account for over 30% of Trans-Hudson passenger trips. Much of the growth happens during peak hours, with an increase of 200 buses expected in the evening. The Port Authority experiences excessive passenger wait and overcrowding during the evening rush. Mr. Muriello stated terminal capacity and infrastructure deficiencies pose major challenges to the network. There are high costs to maintain aging structures and building systems; physical obsolescence of buildings and ramps must accommodate modern, heavier and taller bus designs because the existing layout is inefficient. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey also seeks to develop a new bus terminal to include in the 10yr. Capital Plan.

There was discussion on a range of options to address various corridor challenges, assessments and project undertaking efforts in partnership with agencies such as North Jersey Transportation Planning and Authority, and NJ Turnpike Authority. Topics included:

- Lincoln Tunnel Corridor Traffic Simulations;
- XBL Expansion Feasibility Study;
- Midtown Corridor Management Options Study;
- Lincoln Tunnel Helix Replacement;
- West Midtown Bus Parking and Staging;
- Port Authority Bus Terminal Slab Replacement; and
- Interstate Bus Master Plan.

Mr. Muriello concluded that the interstate bus master plan intends to guide the growth and development for a combination of facilities needed (parking, staging, terminal, etc) and where best to locate these facilities, over the next 30 + years. Goals of the Master Plan include:

- Functional and Structural Issues;
- Transportation Strategy;
- Implementable Plan;
- Enhance Urban Design;
- Promote Economic Development and Increase Revenue Generation; and
- Incorporate Public Participation and Feedback.

Mr. Muriello provided a website (www.panynj.gov/bus-terminals/pabt-master-plan.html) for TCC members to give feedback on the master plan and all other topics that were discussed. At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Muriello and Mr. Venech responded to questions from the committee.

Mr. O'Sullivan, 16th Legislative District, questioned the cost of the proposed project and would highway tolls increase. Mr. Muriello stated that the Port Authority is investigating different possible funding sources, one being the grant application that was submitted to FTA, and another is the sale of air rights along Dyer Street properties between 10th and 11th Avenue that Port Authority owns. Private funding partnerships may also be a possible alternative.

Mr. Kohn, Suburban Transit, asked if it's feasible to construct another bus terminal in lower Manhattan. Mr. Muriello said that options are limited because the World Trade Center area is designed for tour buses that provide services to the museum and memorial. Mr. Venech added that after 911 the idea to construct a terminal was discussed with agencies; sites were identified, but constraints were found with respect to structural design.

Mr. Gardner, East Brunswick Township, inquired about bus staging locations from New Jersey instead of New York City or a monorail system. Mr. Muriello stated that options in New Jersey are continually being researched. The idea is to rebuild on the existing parcel, but other options may be to build offsite operations that support the terminal, such as a Secaucus Transfer Station or North Bergen Park-and-Ride. Various options are being studied.

Mr. Lowe, 12th Legislative District, discussed the issue of bus congestion that occurs habitually on the Exclusive Bus Lane at exit 16E in New Jersey. At the base of the tunnel; regular traffic is mixing with the buses as they simultaneously merge to enter the tunnels. Mr. Muriello stated that the "left lane" to the tunnel is dedicated to buses only, but needs to be greatly enforced so that the lane is not blocked by other traffic. He further stated the 'bottle neck' issue occurring at exit 16E may be due to the Pulaski Skyway closure, also the timing of buses mixing with the traffic during peak hours will need to be reviewed by the bus operators. All areas are being reviewed for improvements.

Mr. Lowe responded that due to the congestion at the Port Authority Bus Terminal where the buses are coming in, commuters become confused as to what bus lane to stand at and no employee assistance is available during those peak hours. Mr. Muriello stated there are now customer service representatives on the floors to assist the public, and the reps have direct communication with the dispatchers.

Mr. Lebar, Esq, 18th Legislative Districts, commented on parking and staging options via the construction of a (bus) parking deck alongside development on the Westside. Mr. Muriello concurred and stated all options will be reviewed. There was further discussion on decks and ramps that would connect to the PABT.

Mr. Gambilonghi asked about any plans for expanded parking to accommodate buses being sent back to New Jersey after unloading passengers in the morning. Mr. Muriello stated funding has been utilized for a new facility that would be built in two years for extra capacity. Mr. Venech added that after 911, the Port Authority restricted access to the Holland Tunnel to tractor trailers. Feasibility studies are being conducted with respect to lower Manhattan traffic congestion and on the Canal Street corridor in New York which accumulates congestion from the Holland Tunnel.

Mr. Kruimer, East Coast Greenway, asked about additional bicycling paths to New York. He stated pedestrians can only use the George Washington Bridge or the ferries. Mr. Muriello stated a project is underway for year 2015 that will make improvements to the sidewalks on both New York and New Jersey to and from the crossing. Bridge will be constructed with bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

VI. Staff Reports

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

- B. New Jersey Transit – Thomas Marchwinski**
Mr. Marchwinski stated a press release went out regarding the Princeton-Plainsboro #655 bus route modification effective Monday, June 23, 2014. The change in route will provide more direct and expanded access to destinations between the two towns. Free rides are being offered from June 24th to June 26th.

NJ Transit was awarded a grant for Congestion Management Air Quality (CMAQ).

The Score Card Customer Survey and Response Initiatives are still being implemented and monitored. Mr. Marchwinski also reported on the one-seat ride to the New Jersey shore on the North Jersey Coast Line Service from New York to Point Pleasant.

- C. North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) – Keith Hamas**
Mr. Hamas reported on the NJTPA Developing Opportunities for Information Technology (DO IT) workshop held on May 23rd, which included educational presentations by industry experts as well as hands-on exercises that showed participants how emerging technologies are being used by the transportation community.

- D. New Jersey Turnpike Authority – Richard Brundage**
Absent.

- E. Rutgers – The State University – Dorothy Le**
Ms. Le reported that the University will install bicycle lockers on campus, which should be completed in August 2014. There will be locations for students to have bicycles repaired. Other projects were completed in May; reports are unavailable at this time.

Ms. Le announced her certification as a LEED Bicycling Instructor. On campus in the fall semester, she will teach a course on bicycle education and safety.

- F. KMM – Keep Middlesex Moving - William Neary and Morteza Ansari –**
Mr. Neary highlighted KMM activities accomplished in year 2013. Annual reports were distributed.

- G. Middlesex County Department of Community Services – Laila Caune**
Ms. Caune reported the department continues to work with Middlesex County Area Transit (MCAT) on summer bus service hours. Ms. Caune announced the hiring of Mr. Phil Sheraton who will serve as Regional Manager; starting June 30, 2014.

- H. Middlesex County Engineering Office / Traffic Safety – Richard Wallner**
Absent.
- I. Middlesex County Board 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 Ann Kruimer**
On May 19, 2014, Mr. Kruimer stated he participated in the Cabot Cheese Tour (bicycle) ride from Trenton to Edison with a detour to Plainfield to partake in a Habitat for Humanity ribbon-cutting event. On May 20th, Cabot Cheese Tour riders went from Edison to New York. Mr. Kruimer noticed along a section of the tour on Route 1&9 the sidewalks were over- grown and covered with road grit, regular maintenance is needed. Mr. Kruimer reported on upcoming events:
- | | |
|------|--|
| 7/12 | New Brunswick Cyclovia |
| 8/2 | Princeton event hosted by the Princeton Freewheelers at Mercer County Park |
- M. TCC Transit Subcommittee – Paul Larrousse**
Absent.
- N. Academy Bus Co – Chuck Kassinger**
Mr. Kassinger reported that Academy Bus participated in surveys given from the Port Authority. He provided further insight on the matters bus drivers face with respect to traffic congestion.
- O. Suburban Transit / Coach USA – Ron Kohn**
No Report. Mr. Kohn thanked the Port Authority for the presentation and complimented their continuous communication efforts.
- P. Middlesex County Department of Business Development & Education – Carla Cefalo**
Ms. Cefalo reported the department has created a Geographic Information System (GIS) portal in efforts to improve and recruit business investments in the County. The dynamic search engine provides access to data with respect to commercial properties and incentives, business analysis, traffic reports, marketplace and demographic profiles, and properties and space for sale/rent.

Q. Transportation News Update – Bruce McCracken

Mr. McCracken highlighted news articles that were distributed in the packet for information. He urged members to read all the articles provided. Articles reviewed included:

Alibaba Site Thrives, But So Do Knockoffs	Pg. 2
New Investor Considered for Citi Bike	Pg. 5
New Brunswick study suggested traffic changes where 3 kids were struck	Pg. 10
Why Electric Cars Click for Atlanta	Pg. 29
Drivers in Europe protest Uber	Pg. 30

R. Staff Activities – George Ververides

Mr. Ververides thanked the Port Authority for their presentation. He shared his concern over the lack of transportation funding at the state and federal level, which continues to be a major challenge. Mr. Ververides asked the committee to reflect on funding for overall transportation and infrastructure improvements needed in the County, as the Trust Fund and federal monies continue to dwindle.

VII.

A. TCC Member Comments- None

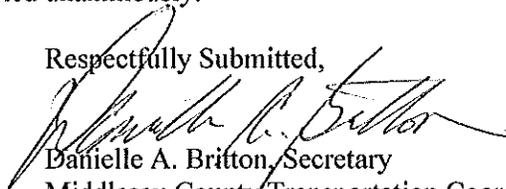
B. Public Comments - None

VIII.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted,



Danielle A. Britton, Secretary

Middlesex County Transportation Coordinating Committee