

APPROVED
MIDDLESEX COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE NJTPA PLAN 2045 PUBLIC OUTREACH SESSION

MINUTES
May 23, 2017

Attendance

Freeholder Representative and Officers

Freeholder Director, Ronald Rios
Chairman Paul Larrousse, National Transit Institute
Vice-Chair Tom Vigna, North Brunswick Township

NJTPA Representatives

Ms. Zenobia Fields, Director Department of Planning
Mr. Ted Ritter, Special Projects Manager, External Affairs
Mr. Jeff Perlman, Manager, Environmental Planning and Mobility Programs

Municipal Representatives

Mr. Sanford Gardner, East Brunswick Township
Ms. Teri Jover, Administrator, Highland Park
Mr. Brian Tobin, Metuchen Borough
Mr. Les Varga, Plainsboro Township

County Representatives

Ms. Gerry Mackenzie, Dept Head, Department of Community Services
Ms. Laila Caune, Director, Office of Aging and Disabled Services
Mr. Richard Wallner, County Engineer
Ms. Carla Cefalo, Office of Economic and Business Development
Ms. Denise Nickel, Economic Development Representative

Others

Mr. Paul Onish, 14th Legislative District
Mr. Daniel Lebar, Esq., 18th Legislative Districts
Ms. Janet Werner, Resident

Office of Planning

Mr. George M. Ververides, Director, Middlesex County Office of Planning
Mr. Anthony Gambilonghi, Supervisor, Transportation
Mr. Bruce McCracken, Principal Planner, Transportation
Ms. Mirah Becker, Supervisor, Comprehensive Planning, Parks & the Environment
Mr. Nicholas Tufaro, Principal Planner
Ms. Laurie Sobel, Senior Planner, Environment
Mr. Stan Olszewski, Supervisor, Land Development Review
Mr. Joe Peake, Information Technology Department

Total in Attendance –26

I. Call to Order

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

II. Minutes

Chairman Paul Larrousse, stated that the distribution of the April 25, 2017 minutes and approval of the February 28, 2017 minutes will be done at the next meeting because of the special agenda for this meeting involving the presentation of the NJTPA Plan 2045 and public outreach.

Chairman Larrousse then introduced Freeholder Director Ronald Rios for his welcoming remarks and statement relating to the Plan 2045 presentation that will follow.

III. Freeholder Statement

Freeholder Director Ronald Rios welcomed the NJTPA staff and thanked everyone for attending this meeting to provide input on very important transportation issues affecting the region and Middlesex County. He remarked that we still consider Middlesex County to be the “Greatest County in the Land.” With regard to transportation needs and solutions he made reference, as an example, on the need to address the rail operational and capacity problems involving Amtrak that have been occurring recently, and the impacts from travel delays on riders from Middlesex County and the region. Needed repairs that will be done over the summer to the aging infrastructure at New York Penn Station can affect the 1300 daily train movements that occur each day in and out of Penn Station, New York.

In his statement the Freeholder Director Rios encouraged everyone to join in the conversation and participate in the update of the NJTPA regional transportation plan, Plan 2045, Connecting North Jersey. He stated that the Plan will serve as a guide over the next three decades to improve our mobility, and make our roads and transit systems safer and more accommodating for all users. He noted that Middlesex County is the second most populous County within the NJTPA and in the State, and a key stakeholder in this regional long-range transportation planning process.

Middlesex County has one of the most strategic locations in the Northeast. It sits at the intersection of regional road, rail and marine transportation facilities. This, along with its regional State and County roadways and bridges; rail, bus and waterborne transportation facilities makes Middlesex County one of the nation’s major transportation corridors. This strategic location contributes to Middlesex County having among the highest levels of vehicle miles traveled of all 21 Counties in the State and a wide range of facilities and services that attract people to live in, work in, or visit Middlesex County.

The County’s significant network of passenger rail facilities and bus routes serve intercity commuter travel to jobs in such regional destinations as New York, Newark, Trenton, and Philadelphia. Notably among these are the Northeast Corridor Amtrak and NJ Transit Line, the North Jersey Coast Line and the Raritan Valley Line.

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, which is responsible for the update of the Regional Transportation Plan for which we are seeking public input at this meeting, is the federally authorized Metropolitan Planning Organization, or MPO, for the 13 counties in northern and central New Jersey.

Its membership also includes representatives from the major State and regional transportation agencies including the Department of Transportation, NJ TRANSIT, the Port Authority of NY & NJ, the Governor's Office and a Citizen's Representative.

The Regional Transportation Plan, *Plan 2045: Connecting North Jersey* is the 25-year blueprint that will help guide how infrastructure investments are made over this time. In order for the region to continue to receive federal funding, the NJTPA is required to update this regional plan every four years.

Challenges to be addressed by the Plan include:

- Population growth in the NJTPA region by 1 million people (17 percent) to 7.7 million by 2045, requiring additional housing, jobs and transportation.
- Increase in jobs in the region by 13 percent to 3.4 million by 2045.
- Transportation infrastructure is aging: By 2045, many of the nearly 4,900 bridges throughout the entire region will be nearing the end of their life expectancy.
- Finding adequate funding resources to carry out the projects and strategies identified in the Plan.
- The ability to make the region more Competitive, Efficient, Livable and Resilient and hence, fulfill the four themes identified by the Together North Jersey consortium that consisted of over 100 organizations in a plan completed in 2015.

Freeholder Director Rios encouraged members of the public, the Middlesex County Transportation Coordinating Committee, State, and local transit providers and customers to take advantage of the opportunity to help steer the direction and priorities of the new Regional Transportation Plan for both the short- and long-term. He commended the members of the TCC, the mayors and their staffs, all our State Legislators, the NJTPA, the NJDOT, the NJ Turnpike Authority, and NJ Transit for their hard work and dedication.

He also thanked the NJTPA membership, Executive Director Mary K. Murphy and her staff for their vision and excellent work in developing Plan 2045, and encouraged everyone to take the Plan 2045 survey at [njtpa.org/Plan 2045](http://njtpa.org/Plan_2045).

IV. NJTPA Plan 2045 Presentation, Mr. Ted Ritter

Mr. Ritter thanked the Freeholder for a comprehensive overview on the NJTPA new Plan with a 30 year horizon to 2045 and began his power point presentation. Mr. Ritter was joined by Zenobia Fields and Jeffrey Perlman of NJTPA staff in providing background about the NJTPA and the development of Plan 2045, explaining that it sets a vision for the northern and central New Jersey region's transportation future.

Mr. Ritter began his power point presentation, which is included in the attachment, with a description of the 13 county NJTPA region in the northern and central part of the State, and explaining the relationship of the Plan to the NJTPA Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Transportation Improvement Program which serves as that capital plan to implement the projects that originate from the Regional Transportation Plan. He stated that the Plan talks about the problems that we are seeking to solve and the implementation strategies to address these problems.

NJTPA is nearing completion of an extensive outreach effort aimed at getting input from a broad cross-section of residents in the 13-county NJTPA region. He said the NJTPA has been conducting public outreach at community events, public meetings like this, and special workshops all across the region. The NJTPA also has a Plan 2045 survey, covering the following seven topics: getting around, safety, great places, economy, environment, resiliency, and technology. He said the NJTPA asks survey participants questions about these topics from today's perspective and also looking out to Plan 2045's 30-year horizon.

Five priority goals include growing a strong regional economy; creating great places to live and work; increasing access to jobs and other opportunities; protecting the environment; maintaining a safe, reliable transportation system; and working together to promote a region that is competitive, efficient, livable and resilient.

Mr. Ritter then invited the audience to take out their smart phones to participate in the interactive polling and survey exercise of the four key topic areas of the Plan's transportation issues selected by the County. These included the topic areas affecting safety with the goal of zero deaths; ability to get around and utilize transit services; the economic challenges we face and how we can improve future prospects; and what is considered the most pressing environmental issue. TCC members and other attendees had the option of participating on their smart phones or by traditional paper survey. Mr. Ritter also distributed bookmarks with the Plan 2045 survey link www.njtpa.org/Plan2045 and encouraged TCC members to share this link and/or participate in the full survey on line, as also mentioned earlier by Freeholder Director Rios.

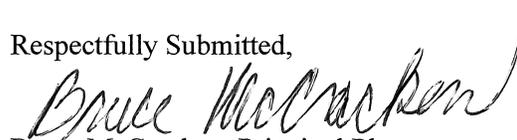
Fourteen people participated in the interactive polling exercise and nearly that many submitted written surveys or other comments. These comments will be reflected in the public outreach section of the Plan. The Plan is scheduled for approval by the NJTPA Board of Trustees later in the year.

Chairman Larrousse then thanked everyone for coming and offering their comments.

V. Adjournment

On a motion made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Bruce McCracken, Principal Planner

Middlesex County Transportation Coordinating Committee