

APPROVED

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

October 24, 2017

Attendance Officers

Chairman Paul Larrousse, National Transit Institute

Municipal Representatives

Mr. Jeffrey Van Woeart, Carteret Borough

Mr. Sanford Gardner, East Brunswick Township

Others

Mr. Paul Onish, 14th Legislative District

Mr. Mike Kruimer, East Coast Greenway Alliance

Ms. Anne Kruimer, East Coast Greenway Alliance

Mr. Daryl Kraswuk, Hudson County

Mr. Peter Bilton, NJTPA

Mr. Karim Ahmed, ReThink Studio Inc. (Presenter)

Mr. Liam Blank, ReThink Studio Inc. (Presenter)

Mr. Brendan Torres, Rutgers the State University of New Jersey

Mr. Vincent Viera, Rutgers the State University of New Jersey

Mr. Mike Beltranena, Suburban Transit/COACH USA

Staff

Mr. George M. Ververides, Director, Middlesex County Office of Planning

Mr. Anthony Gambilonghi, Supervisor, Transportation Division

Mr. Bruce McCracken, Principal Planner, Transportation Division

Ms. Julia Gerdes, Administration, Enterprise Software Office

Mr. Joe Peake, Information Technology Department

Total in Attendance – 18

I. Call to Order

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

II. Minutes

September 26, 2017 minutes were distributed for approval at the next meeting.

There was no quorum to approve the June 27, 2017 minutes.

III. Welcome/ Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Larrousse called the meeting to order in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. The Chairman welcomed all that attended the meeting and called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Sign in Reminder

Chairman Larrousse reminded the public to sign the attendance sheet.

Correspondence – None.

Freeholder Comments – Not Present.

Introduction of TCC Members

All persons and members in attendance of the meeting introduced themselves and the organization(s) they represented.

IV. Special Item: RUN – Regional Unified Transit Network. ReThinkNYC. Expansion through Revival. A Discussion of ideas and proposals for improving the regional transit system in the NYC Metropolitan area. Presented by: Mr. Karim Ahmed; Feasibility Analyst, ReThink Studio, Inc.

Mr. Ahmed is an Analyst for ReThink Studio Inc., a planning firm that specializes in transportation and develops transit improvement for a proposed Regional Unified Transit Network (RUN).

Mr. Ahmed discussed how the RUN system would make operations of Penn Station and train movements more efficient, in-turn increasing train capacity, allowing for more trains to service more destinations and create a more pleasant experience for commuters. The connection of the Long Island Railroad, Metro-North, and New Jersey Transit lines, together, would allow for new service patterns to speed transit both into the Manhattan core and between outlying areas. Terminal functions that are poorly handled by Penn Station would be distributed to new stations, and terminals would be designed to service this new role.

Proposed improvements were described: (1) widen and lengthen the platforms at New York Penn Station, (2) build a short tunnel and railyard in the Bronx, and (3) build a new station in Sunnyside Queens. Utilizing the principles of RUN to specific transit challenges will permit connectivity of every suburban transit line, fix Penn Station, and build a multimodal transit hub outside of Manhattan. It was mentioned that applying these efforts would allow better access to the transit centers between New York and New Jersey, making it simple to transfer from the regional network to local transit services.

Mr. Ahmed showed a brief video that emphasized transit improvements for the four major transit hubs:

- Secaucus Junction Train Station, Secaucus, New Jersey.
 - Provide terminal function for Long Island Railroad and Metro-North trains instead of Penn Station.
 - Make it possible to move between New Jersey and New York City without relying on cars and buses.
 - Provides access to a new Port Authority Bus Terminal.

- Sunnyside Long Island Railroad Station, Queens, New York City.
 - Serve all three of New York's commuter rail agencies and Amtrak.
 - Efficient through running station and transfer points between subway, local bus and commuter rail.
 - Provides terminal functions for Amtrak instead of Penn Station.

- Port Morris Branch Station (serves northside and westside) Bronx, New York City.
 - Provides terminal functions for New Jersey Transit instead of Penn Station.
 - Provides access to LaGuardia Airport via AirTrain.
 - Establishes a new convention center, transit hub, and access for South Bronx communities.

Mr. Ahmed stated that hubs can provide seamless transfers between all three stations so commuters have access to the entire region's transit network. RUN distributes the terminal functions that Penn Station currently handles and allows for concentrated, transit – oriented development centered at the four major transit centers. These hubs would provide greater mobility and enhance connectivity of every mass transit station in the region.

The proposed plan seeks to modify and improve Amtrak's existing Gateway Program for the same overall budget. This includes the elimination of a proposed new Penn South terminal to be built adjacent to the existing Penn Station. Plan also includes building a set of four shared tracks on the Northeast Corridor; two new tracks from Newark to New York including new Hudson River tunnels to eliminate the current two-track bottleneck on the Northeast Corridor. Expansion of the Secaucus station to accommodate the same volume of trains as New York Penn Station and create a loop at Secaucus to link trains from New Jersey's Transit Pascack Valley, Bergen, and main lines to the Northeast Corridor. This would alleviate problems that currently affect both Newark and New York train stations.

Other items discussed include improving the tracks and platform at Penn Station by creating sufficient capacity and circulation to accommodate faster moving trains. Build a new station and yard at Port Morris in the Bronx to accommodate all-through service on Metro-North and Amtrak as-well-as any New Jersey Transit train that would terminate. At the South Bronx connection, construct a tunnel to connect the Northeast Corridor with Metro – North's Harlem and Hudson lines.

Staff Reports

A. New Jersey Department of Transportation – Raymond Tomczak

Not Present.

B. New Jersey Transit –Thomas Clark

Not Present.

C. North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) – Peter Bilton

Mr. Bilton reported that Regional Plan 2045 is under the public comment period from October 10th through November 9th on TIP and State TIP.

- D. New Jersey Turnpike Authority – Kevin Dunn**
Not Present.
- E. Rutgers – The State University – Jennifer Stuart, Leigh Ann Kimber**
Not Present.
- F. Keep Middlesex Moving (KMM) –William Neary, Morteza Ansari**
Not Present.
- G. Middlesex County Area Transit Services – Laila Caune**
Not Present.
- H. Middlesex County Engineering Office – Richard Wallner**
Not Present.
- I. East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA) – Mike and Ann Kruimer**
No Report.
- J. Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management – John Ferguson**
Not Present.
- K. Academy Bus Co – Chuck Kassinger**
Not Present.
- L. Suburban Transit / Coach USA – Michael Beltranena**
No Report.
- M. Business Development and Education – Kathaleen Shaw, Carla Cefalo**
Not Present.
- N. Transportation News Update – Bruce McCracken.**
Transportation events articles were provided as part of the meeting packet.
- O. Staff Activities – George Ververides**
No Report.
- V. Public Comments – None.**

VI.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danielle A. Britton, Secretary
Middlesex County Transportation Coordinating Committee