

**MIDDLESEX COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

Meeting of September 25, 2018

ATTENDANCE

Chairman / Vice Chairman

Vice Chairman Tom Vigna/ North Brunswick Township

Board of Chosen Freeholders Liaison

Freeholder Charles Kenny

Municipal Representatives

Ms. Diana St. John, Carteret Borough

Sgt. Paul F. Stentellapa, Carteret Borough

Mr. Sanford Gardner, East Brunswick Township

Mr. Brian Tobin, Metuchen Borough/ 14th Legislative District (Assemblyman DeAngelo)

Mr. Les Varga, Plainsboro Township

Others

Mr. Paul Onish, 14th Legislative District (Senator Greenstein)

Mr. Mike Kruimer, East Coast Greenway Alliance

Ms. Anne Kruimer, East Coast Greenway Alliance

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

Mr. Tom Clark, New Jersey Transit

Mr. Brendan Torres, Rutgers University

Mr. Stan Olszewski, Middlesex County Planning Staff

Mr. Walt Lane, Director Somerset County Planning

Mr. Anthony Gambilonghi, Middlesex County Planning Staff

Mr. Bruce McCracken, Middlesex County Planning Staff

Mr. Louie Greenwell, Director Middlesex County Comprehensive Plan

Mr. George Ververides, Director Office of Planning

Call to Order

- **Statement on Open Public Meetings Act**
- **Pledge Allegiance**
- **The TCC had a moment of silence for those lost in 9/11**
- **As well as for those affected by the ongoing Hurricane Florence**

II. Minutes

Meeting minutes of May 22, 2018 and June 26, 2018 were approved.

Motion to approve the minutes of May 22, 2018 and June 26, 2018 were made by Mr. Onish and seconded by Mr. Kruimer. Motion carried.

III. Welcome/ Chairman's Remarks

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

Sign in Reminder

Vice Chairman Vigna reminded the public to sign the attendance sheet.

Correspondence – None.

Freeholder Comments – Freeholder Charles Kenny welcomed everyone.

Introduction of TCC Members

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

IV. Special Items

A. BYLAWS

Vice Chairman Tom Vigna led a review of the Revised Bylaws. He noted that the TCC was created and authorized on April 1, 1976 by the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders. Starting with the Roberts Rules of Order which describes in detail the ordering meetings, Mr. Vigna led a forum of questions and answers for each of the eight ARTICLES of the proposed Revised BYLAWS which include:

1. AUTHORITY
2. PURPOSE
3. MEMBERSHIP
4. OFFICERS
5. MEETINGS
6. SUBCOMMITTEES
7. GENERAL RULE – PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE - ORDER OF BUSINESS
8. AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS

In response to a question by Mr. Brian Tobin, Mr. Vigna noted that the proposed revisions are of the 1993 version of the prior bylaws of the TCC and are intended to be the operating manual for the TCC and to provide more consistency with the operations of other County Committees.

George Ververides noted that the new TCC structure will serve a better fit with the new County Comprehensive Master Plan and provide a powerful structure to support its implementation. Mr. Louie Greenwell commented that this is probably the only time the County has undertaken to update Bylaws of any of the County Committees in perhaps 20 years. As such we will probably use these Bylaws revision as the template for other County committees.

B. Comprehensive Plan Kickoff and TCC Participation

Louie Greenwell, Director of Comprehensive Planning Middlesex County

Mr. Greenwell presented a power point slides on the Comprehensive Plan Middlesex County 2040. The Plan will look forward 20 years to what it may look like here in Middlesex County. He discussed what we hope to achieve, about the process, how we hope to include this committee in that process. A great quote to share is “Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now,” by Alan Lakein.

We will look out into the future then pull it back to today. In the area of transportation, we need safe, effective and efficient transportation. How do we do that? Our process has been to think strategically.

Our internal planning team at the County has been looking at many of the elements of the Comprehensive Master Plan. There are 20 elements total, of which we are starting by looking at 6, Land use, Economic Development, Public Health, Housing, Transportation and mobility, and Demographics. These elements operate as a system. For example, when thinking about transportation it directly relates to economic development such as warehouse distribution, land use which impacts traffic mobility, and demographics which works across all of those groups. Hence, strategic action beyond the local level at a regional level is where we are going.

We are just starting this process and our first step is to determine who needs to participate. There have been meetings internally with others in the County Offices. The Office of Planning is taking a lead role in meetings with County Departments including Infrastructure Management, Finance, Public Safety and Health, Community Services, Business Development and Education, and Administration. We are looking to meet with subject matter experts in those areas. So, the step by step process we are going to follow as we reach out is, Vision. Establish the vision for the element that we are looking to do. What is the County’s Mission? And, what is required for the County to achieve that Mission? What are the objectives? What do we want to accomplish and by when? And then, what are the specific strategies at the department level? And, to whom will it Fall that these actions will be carried out by specific people.

In the past our plan may have stopped at the objective level. This plan takes it all the way to the implementational level and to the operational level by attaching actions and strategies at the Departmental level. So, the TCC is asked to help in achieving these goals especially as they relate to transportation. The goal of all this will be to have a vision across County Government. Municipal representatives’ participation in all this is to have their municipalities to offer their plans as valuable input. We will not create any plans that supersede the local municipal plans.

We will be looking at gaps, differences, and ways the County could be helpful. We see the TCC as a Key stakeholder for the transportation piece to provide input as Tom mentioned. We will be setting up subcommittees for Bike/Pedestrian, Transit, Freight, and Roads and Bridges. Other subject areas suggested were Complete Streets, Vision Zero, and Transportation Equity.

We will be sending letters out this November asking for municipal participation and specifically requesting that the people selected be appropriate to serve on the subcommittees. Appointees would be knowledgeable on transportation and particularly desiring for service on the subcommittees of joint interest for the municipality. Whatever the buzzwords are that describe the problems the County is looking to solve we clearly need methods and a regional approach to provide safe, efficient, and accessible Transportation. The TCC is a key stakeholder group we will work with , expand and support.

The larger scope of the County Master Plan Study will involve reaching out to large numbers of the public through surveys asking quality of life assessments, wants and needs in many areas of what concerns the public. For this the County will work with the Rutgers Public Outreach and Engagement Team. We are looking to create exciting and innovative ways that they are going to help us get engagement and a high-level series of meetings where we set a path to the strategies to achieve our Vision, and Mission, through a terrific action plan.

Under the Key Tasks & Schedule, the Public Engagement Sessions run from October 2018 to March 2019 which involves work with RUTGERS Public Outreach and Engagement TEAM.

They are suggesting attending Rutgers Football games and asking people what they like about life in Middlesex County? What don't they like? Do people feel safe walking in their neighborhoods? These are people whose life matters and is the subject matter of our vision and mission and objectives.

Mr. Greenwell then invited questions.

Mike Kruimer asked, how are we going to get the public to participate? He pointed to an example: The State Department of Transportation to participate with us on the Plan? On the Route 1 improvements at Route 18 and the reconstruction of the Morris Goodkind Bridge DOT may have reached out at some official level to us on their plans but not in a way that we could make a difference with bike/pedestrian issues.

Mr. Greenwell, replied this plan will employ a wide range of engagement tactics, a whole range of issues will be examined, and there will be lots of subject matter experts involved informing views to shape plan priorities. We want and desperately need that input and they will continuously be listened to and be heard. We won't be going to them at the end. Our approach will be to go to them at the beginning before preliminary action on problem solving scenarios.

Freeholder Kenny asked if we will engage at street fairs like NJTPA does with their long-term plans and most recently their Regional Transportation Plan, Connecting North Jersey, Plan 2045?

Mr. Greenwell said, all of the above. We will reach out at street fairs, senior centers, ideas of trivia nights at a local pub. It's a very wide range of tactics. Rutgers did the Ciclovía table in New Brunswick for NJTPA and they have proven experience which led us to hire them for our reach out to work with our marketing team.

Paul Onish asked how many of the some 850,000 of the County's population would be surveyed or interviewed?

Mr. Greenwell answered that it would be a statistically relevant number and likely be many thousands.

Vice-Chairman Vigna asked, how are we going to enroll the many smaller towns or towns who are not now participating in the TCC to get on board the County Master Plan Bus?

Mr. Greenwell said in November there will be a High-level Meeting of the Mayors for the purpose of enrolling the municipal representatives to register in the opportunity to assist in the creation of the Middlesex County Master Plan.

Denise Nickel commented that there will be other areas in addition to transportation involved.

Mr. Greenwell explained that the teams are just forming.

He introduced Denise Nickel as the person on staff who will lead The HOUSING element, and Stan Olszewski who will Lead the TECHNOLOGY AND LAND USE element and Tony Gambilonghi who will lead the TRANSPORTATION element.

Vice-Chairman Vigna made the point that many of the municipalities don't realize the importance of this Regional level of government. What will take shape and the impacts of implementing a Middlesex County Master Plan are visions and a mission which challenge this Committee.

The point was made that a master plan can be a powerful document which the courts support to shape development.

Mr. Greenwell noted that our team has assembled every existing municipal master plan in existence in the County. He explained that the context of the County Plan determines the future. If the context for transportation is safe, efficient, accessible and effective transportation then vision zero design principals are relevant to implement meaningful change and having those conversations and dialogues maybe appropriate and lift participation.

Vice-chairman Vigna suggested that Public Safety departments when requested can provide the most dangerous intersections or incident locations for our subcommittee analysis.

Freeholder Kenney cautioned that work with municipal officials can be very productive and does require nurturing a relationship of mutual or common interest.

V. Staff Reports;

A. Transportations Funding Notices and Programs- Denise Nickel

Ms. Denise Nickel introduced herself , her County assignment office, and affiliation with the Office of Planning, and that she transferred from the Middlesex County Improvement Authority where she worked on transportation and land use issues such as brown field projects.

She discussed NJ's Electric Vehicle Charging Grants which were presented on the handouts - "It Pay\$ to Plug In" and stated that the applications are due October 5th. She recommended making the application and when complete can be re-submitted later.

Vice-Chairman Vigna made the point that Electric Vehicles are the wave of the future and for a long list of reasons doing this application and projects will generate excellent returns.

Paul Onish asked Freeholder Kenny if the County has passed any resolution or ordinance in support of Electric Vehicles or charging stations?

Freeholder Kenny was aware that Wawa stores have been locating charging stations on their sites and that charging stations in the County are increasing.

Vice-Chairman Vigna will be presenting on Electric Vehicle Charging Stations and the North Brunswick Ordinance at the October 23rd TCC meeting.

B. New Jersey Department of Transportation – Scott Stephens – Not present

C. New Jersey Transit -Tom Clark

New Jersey Transit Continues to make progress on the Federally-mandated PTC Positive Train Control improvements. Consult the handout you received re: Service Adjustments for details or the app with current time status.

On the Northeast Corridor the Princeton Dinky service will be suspended temporarily and replaced by buses.

Denise Nickel asked about TOD properties. TRANSIT ORIENTED PROPERTIES are being looked at for assessing their status around NJ Transit Stations Statewide. A Bill in the legislature calls for evaluation of sites. Avenel in Woodbridge was an example of a private Developer designing and building housing, parking and circulation accessing the Avenel station. West Windsor is another site under review for TOD. Even East Brunswick is proposing TOD sites. With Home Rule setting the structure for development, NJ Transit works with Municipalities through their Zoning and Planning Boards, or redevelopment agencies like DEVCO in New Brunswick. NJ Transit works with the Counties and planning agencies through Conferences such as TRANSACTION, League of Municipalities, NJAPA, NJ Future, Regional Plan Association, NJTPA, DVRPC. Freeholder Kenny noted that The Avenel station was proposed to be closed but with the assistance of the Mayor at the time it was retained and improved. Another example of redevelopment success is the NYC the High Line.

D. North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority – Peter Bilton – Not present

E. New Jersey Turnpike Authority – Kevin Dunn - Not present

F. Rutgers, the State University – Brendan Torres

Mr. Torres reported that Rutgers has now implemented a way to check vehicle parking by reading License Plates. Regarding the Bus Fleet President Barchi has requested that the Legislature purchase electric buses and start that transition with the next round of Bus purchases. George asked for an update on the Bike Share program which Brendan said the DOT Bike/Ped Division has put it on hold and is still stopped.

G. Keep Middlesex Moving, Inc. – Bill Neary or Morteza Ansari – Not present

H. Middlesex County Area Transit Services – Laila Caune

MCAT has just put 15 new white Buses on the routes. They have one green stripe across the side and the MCAT Logo up high in the side and back. Our regular 5 Shuttle routes provide bus service to many Senior complexes and routes in the County. b

I. Middlesex County Engineering Office – Richard Wallner – Not Present

J. East Coast Greenway New Jersey Alliance – Mike and Anne Kruimer

Bike Events –

10/7 Sunday East Coast Greenway Alliance annual Hudson Loop Ride 25 miles

10/14 Sunday New Brunswick Cyclovia

4/4/2019 Mid-Atlantic Greenways & Trails Summit Philly ECGA hosting event

K. Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management - John Ferguson – Not Present

L. Academy Bus- - Chuck Kassinger Not Present

M. Suburban Transit/ Coach USA – Mike Beltranena – Not Present

N. Middlesex County Business Development and Education – Kathleen Shaw and Carla Cefalo - Not Present

O. Transportation News media – Bruce McCracken

Noted Amazon's Growing Footprint with freight distribution centers in Edison, Carteret, Woodbridge, and 12 more locations. He also noted that after 60 years, I-95 has been completed.

P. Staff Activities – George Ververides

Mr. Ververides mentioned the recent meeting that NJDOT held earlier in the day on the Route 27 pedestrian crossing issues to the Metropark train station with Woodbridge Township Engineer Mike Gelin, NJ Transit and other representatives to review the Problem Statement that was submitted which will be revisited and a search for solutions explored. The dangerous crossings on NJ Route 27 continue to challenge commuters there.

VI. Member Comments - Post meeting session with Sanford Gardner on concerns along Ryders Lane to be discussed with County Planning Staff.

VII. Public Comments

Walter Lane Director of Planning at Somerset County invited Our TCC and Staff to review their Vibrant Community Stakeholder Advisory Committee and attend their presentation on Monday October 15th at 1pm at Somerset County Planning Offices in Somerville.

VIII. Next meeting of the TCC will be held on Tuesday, October 23, 2018 at 2:00 pm at the Middlesex County Administration Building, Board of Chosen Freeholders Meeting Room.

IX. Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Bruce McCracken, Principal Planner

Middlesex County Office of Planning