

**MIDDLESEX COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

October 23, 2018

ATTENDANCE

Vice Chairman

Tom Vigna/ North Brunswick Township

Board of Chosen Freeholders Liaison

Freeholder Charles Kenny

Municipal Representatives

Bask Patel, Woodbridge Township

Mike Gelin, Woodbridge Township Engineer

Robert Hudak, Monroe Township Planner

Sandford Gardner, East Brunswick Township Traffic Committee

Brian Wahler, Mayor Piscataway Township, MCIA

Les Varga, Plainsboro Township Planner

Brian Tobin, Borough of Metuchen and Assemblyman Wayne DeAngelo 14th District

Other TCC Members

Kevin Dunn, New Jersey Turnpike Authority

Donald Drost, Middlesex County College

Mathew Malat, for State Senator Sam Thompson, Assistant Chief of Staff

Seth Levin, for Assemblyman Roy Freiman District #14

Paul Onish, for State Senator Linda Greenstein #14th District

Michael Beletranena, Coach USA/Suburban Transit

Christiane Osawe, Coming Home Middlesex County

Bill Neary, Middlesex County KMM, Inc.

Jeff Perlman, NJTPA Staff

Laila Caune, Middlesex County Office on Aging and Disabled Services

County Staff

George Ververides, Director of County Planning

Louie Greenwell, Director of Comprehensive Planning

Richard Wallner, County Engineer

Anthony Gambilonghi, Middlesex County Office of Planning

Bruce McCracken, Office of Planning

Stan Olszewski, Office of Planning

Denise Nickel, Office of Planning

I. Call to Order

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.

II. Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of May 22, 2018 and June 26, 2018 were made by Mr. Paul Onish and seconded by Mr. Sandy Gardner. Motion carried.

III. Welcome/ Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Vigna invited all members communicate any requests for agenda items to him, or George Ververides and Tony Gambilonghi so items can be identified for action. He also reminded the public to sign the attendance sheet.

Correspondence

Staff reported on a NJ Transit sent advisory that was sent by Tom Clark informing the public that work has started on the contract to repair the Metropark Center westbound platform stairs and stairwell which has been temporarily be closed.

With regard to our request for NJ Transit to repair the deterioration on the metal stairwell to the Eastbound Platform at Easton Ave./ NJ-27 it was reported that it will be included in the overall station improvement package contract.

The Princeton Dinky service will be suspended until after the positive train control project is complete. The shortage of engineers required a reassignment of trained and certified personnel. As a result, temporary shuttle bus service will be used in place of the Dinky service to bring commuters from Princeton Jct. Station to the Downtown Princeton Station.

Freeholder Comments

Freeholder Charles Kenny thanked everyone who was able to make this meeting. Alternating nighttime meetings with daytime meetings will better accommodate the schedule of members who have conflicts at nighttime while also providing meetings that accommodate the schedule of people that work during the day.

Introduction of TCC Members

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

IV. Special Items

A. Approval of the TCC By-Laws

Louie Greenwell and Vice Chairman Tom Vigna reviewed the status of the proposed TCC By-Laws which were presented at the September meeting. Discussion on the revised by-laws included a question by Paul Onish on why a quorum was set at 20% of the voting members. Mr. Greenwell explained that this was to encourage participation since it was thought that a low quorum would facilitate appropriate action by the TCC to advise the Freeholder Board. Mr. Vigna also noted that when participation increases, representing more of the 25 towns, the quorum could be raised.

Approval of the revised By-Laws were moved by Mike Gelin of Woodbridge and seconded by Paul Onish representing State Senator Linda Greenstein District 14. The revised By-Laws and approved unanimously. The revised By-Laws will be recommended for acceptance subsequently by the Board of Freeholders

B. NJDOT State Aid Discussion, Richard Wallner, County Engineer

A copy of a nine-page project list entitled Capital Transportation Program State Aid) 2010 – 2019 was distributed to TCC members. The ten-year list of projects was inclusive of projects which the County is in various stages of development.

Mr. Wallner explained that up to page 4 the list provides the historical record of projects the County has undertaken. From Page 5 to page 9 the projects listed will go for engineering and construction bid on a on a first come first serve basis. In 2019 the County is receiving \$11,115,819 in State Local Aid funds to design and construct eligible projects. NJDOT is anxious to have these funds spent quickly and the County is anxious to get the work out. Other projects on pages 5 through 8 can be funded as they advance with other sources of money.

Approval by the TCC of the proposed resolution will be the first step in the agreement process with the State DOT in order for the County to receive the State Aid funding allocation.

Chairman Vigna asked Mr. Wallner to explain to the members what the process is to bring a potential project to the County for funding and how it may work its way onto the project list.

Mr. Wallner said that a municipality can approach the County and request the County to fund the project which will be reviewed and considered for funding from State or other funding sources. The project is reviewed and then a determination is made if the project meets the standards to move forward along the various pathways such as right of way, engineering, environmental permits, and construction.

Mr. Vigna noted the example of Finnegan's Lane redesign worthy of re-thinking for North Brunswick, South Brunswick and the County.

Freeholder Kenny noted many projects listed in Woodbridge. He then asked what caused the increase in the more than doubling of Local Aid funding levels in 2018 and 2019. Mr. Wallner said the increases were the direct effect of the increase in the gas tax which passed in 2017 and were reflected in NJDOT Local Aid grant increases. Mr. Wallner said that the

NJDOT has changed the program to reflect the legislated eight-year program. That works out to the previous allocation plus the first year of funding under the eight-year gas tax program.

Mr. Vigna then read the proposed resolution recommending the approval of the Local Aid Funding Program. The resolution was moved by Bob Hudak, Monroe Twp., and second by Sanford Gardner, East Brunswick. The vote passed unanimously.

C. North Brunswick Action Relating to Plug-in Electric Vehicles, TCC Chairman, Tom Vigna, North Brunswick Planner

Vice Chairman Vigna presented the results of his extensive research on electric-vehicle history which he has done for North Brunswick in developing a plug-in Electric Vehicle ordinance. A copy of the North Brunswick ordinance is attached to these minutes as Attachment A.

An important point of the presentation involved the type of actions that municipalities can take to support the use of electric vehicles by addressing the “range” anxiety associated with some alternative fuel vehicles of being able to easily replenish the needed fuel to reach a given destination. The use of electric vehicles helps to reduce the level of greenhouse emissions and its related adverse impacts on the climate.

Tom offered to assistance to other municipal officials interested in advancing similar ordinances that support electric vehicle infrastructure charging facilities.

V. Staff Reports-

A. Transportation Funding Notices and Programs - Denise Nickel

Denise presented the announcement of Murphy Administration of the New Jersey Transportation Infrastructure Bank Fund. Ms. Nickel stated that the I-Bank can help local government deliver successful transportation projects.

A second source of funds which was reported included the US Department of Transportation approved \$100 million in Greenway Build Grants for the East Coast Greenway. New Jersey did not apply for funding. Denise made the point that funding the East Coast Greenway will be a possible funding opportunity in the future.

B. New Jersey Department of Transportation – Appointee to be assigned

C. New Jersey Transit – Tom Clark -Not present

D. North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority – Jeff Perlman

Jeff reported that NJTPA did an Electric Vehicle (EV) Study focus on three towns Woodbridge, Secaucus, and Montclair and produced readiness plans. They looked at where to buy electric vehicles and where to charge them. A guide book along with readiness plan also came out of this study. Information on this is available on the NJTPA Web-site. Jennifer Fogliano of the NJTPA has been working with member subregions including Somerset County on EV follow up. NJTPA

has also been working with Bill Neary, Executive Director of KMM regarding EV events. There is also work on starting an EV charge network plan for the State. Funding is available from the mitigation funding allocation of \$72 million to New Jersey from the Volks Wagon settlement. There is also funding from the Greenhouse Gas Initiative. DEP has a listening site where people can post proposals for grants to qualify for EV projects. NJTPA is generating mutual interest in EV partnerships.

E. New Jersey Turnpike Authority - Kevin Dunn

Kevin Dunn reported on the Garden State Parkway Exit 125 Giant Bifurcation project. The Bridge construction is finished, and the traffic was shifted back to the eight-lane section approaching the Driscoll Bridge. The next part of the project is to raise the Bridge over Chevalier Avenue by two feet. That requires considerable grading and resurfacing to prepare for the access to the shopping center on the former National Lead property. That work will complete Garden State Parkway part of the project.

Mr. Dunn also reported that the Edison Service Area will be shut down for reconstruction for a year or more. Truck parking will also be stopped during construction. This will leave a 55-mile gap between the Vince Lombardi area near the Meadowlands and the Molly Pitcher facility in Cranbury to the south. Electric Vehicle facilities are charging are provided on service area facilities on the Turnpike and Parkway.

F. Rutgers University – not present

G. Keep Middlesex Moving Inc. – Bill Neary, Executive Director

Recent activities reported included:

- Walk to school in Fall over 1000 students participated,
- Distracted driving training driver education students; over 700 participated
- Driving rodeo around flags in East Brunswick Oak Park big success
- Transit Guide update in the works for end of year
- Route 1 Corridor improvements ongoing through the Central Jersey Transportation Forum
- Work Program Funding secured for 2019 from NJT/NJTPA
- Consortium of Hospitals sponsored an ACCESS TO CARE program focus on Problems

H. Middlesex County Area Transit Services - Laila Caune

Ms. Caune acknowledged Bill Neary for an extraordinary session on Access to Care for Disabled and Senior Citizens and noted that the enormity off the problems are clearly a challenge.

New Busses for Middlesex County Senior and Disabled citizens are White With a Green stripe in agreement with the County Brand.

Ms. Caune will present the updated survey of the Coordinated Human Services Plan at the next TCC Meeting in November.

Middlesex County moved from number 3 senior citizen population in New Jersey Counties to number 2 recently and by 2030 estimates indicate that Middlesex will be number #1 of the 21 Counties.

I. Middlesex County College – Donald Drost

Concerning Traffic issues on Woodbridge Ave. (CR 514) near the County College, Mr. Drost noted that when there is an emergency shut down it takes up to two hours to clear the Campus. He asked what can be done to improve the traffic flow.

J. Middlesex County Engineering Office/Traffic Safety – Rich Wallner, County Engineer

Regarding the traffic congestion problem noted by Mr. Donald Drost, Rich Wallner said that his Office is working on designing a remedy to improve traffic including trucks from Mill Road to I-287. The grant request will take two years to develop and involve improvements to traffic signals and traffic patterns.

The TCC will be involved with truck traffic on local roads as a priority and participation is welcomed.

K. East Coast Greenway New Jersey Alliance – Mike and Anne Kruimer – Not Present

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

M. Academy Transit – Chuck Kassinger – Not Present

N. Suburban Transit/Coach USA – Michael Beltranena

Mr. Beltranena reported that the construction of the I-495 corridor has not been a big traffic problem at the Lincoln tunnel as predicted. However, the Holland tunnel has been a source of traffic congestion more so than usual.

Regarding Suburban Transit using electric buses Mr. Beltranena stated that they are running hybrid buses now. Going to EV buses is still a problem for the bus company due to charging time. Suburban Charter buses are on the road 24/7 which does not allow time for overnight charging. Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles would not be allowed by the Port Authority on the 4th level at the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York.

O. Middlesex County Business Development and Education – Kathleen Shaw, Carla Cefalo – Not Present

P. Transportation Report - Bruce McCracken

Bruce McCracken reported that Amazon is locating a break/ bulk warehouse in Franklin Township at I-287 Exit 12 Off Canal road. Some 680 semi-trucks per day are expected to access the site. Trucks on local streets are the concern of many local planners.

Q. Staff Activities – George Ververides

George Ververides stated that the Gateway project, the Portal Bridge, the bus terminal, and Penn Station Terminal have tremendous impact on Middlesex County. They are high priority important unresolved problems which require resolution.

He also noted funding issues impacting the gasoline revenues of the Federal and State Trust fund from the increase use of electric vehicles. This could affect the funding of infrastructure related improvements.

R. METROPARK ACCESS - meeting with NJDOT, WOODBRIDGE, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, KMM Inc.

Mike Gelin, Woodbridge Engineer, reported that the NJDOT meeting to review the problem Statement on Metropark Pedestrian access was held with a looking at the perception of the problem there now. It was pointed out that the traffic congestion problem may be bigger than the County adjusting the signal timing. The possibility of enlarging the scope of the project was suggested. Bill Neary added that the request for sidewalk on the NJ – 27 side alongside the tracks was raised.

The proposal for a grade separation at Route 27 and Wood Avenue dates back to the early 2000s. Mike Gelin noted that he would follow up with the officials from the Turnpike Authority, the County, Edison Township, NJ Transit, and AMTRAK with respect to addressing the larger scope of this problem.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:51pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce McCracken
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