

MIDDLESEX COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE
Meeting of March 26, 2019
MINUTES

Attendance

Officers

Acting Chairman, Tom Vigna – North Brunswick Township

Municipal Representatives

Diana St. John, Carteret

Sanford Gardner, East Brunswick Traffic Advisory Board

Vincent Sciuto, Township of East Brunswick

Brian Tobin, Metuchen

Dorian Kerber, Councilwoman Milltown

Jeff Rauch, Perth Amboy

Les Varga, Plainsboro Township

State Legislative/Congressional Representatives

Brian Tobin, ASM Wayne DeAngelo – 14th District

Paul Onish, ASW Linda Greenstein

Dorothy K. Power, ASM Joe Egan – 17th District

Kate Bradley, ASM Daniel Benson – 14th District

Matthew Malat, Senator Samuel Thompson – 12th District

Special Guest/Presenter

Cheryl Kastrenakes, Director Greater Mercer TMA

Others

Louis Hoffman, NJTIP, VTC, Rutgers

Sean Meehan, Voorhees Transportation Center, Rutgers

Peter Bilton, NJTPA

Mike Beltranena, Coach USA

James Karamanos, Highland Park Resident

Trish Sanders, Rutgers Voorhees Transportation Institute

Denise Peck, NJDOT Community Relations

Meredith Hammond, NJDOT Community Relations

Megan Facker, NJDOT Community Relations

Mike and Anne Kruimer, East Coast Greenway Association

Morteza Ansari, Keep Middlesex Moving (KKM, Inc.)

Staff

Denise Nickel, Middlesex County Office of Planning

Bruce McCracken, Middlesex County Office of Planning

Anthony Gambilonghi, Middlesex County Office of Planning

Ron Sendner, Middlesex County Engineer

Louie Greenwell, Director Middlesex County of Comprehensive Planner

George Ververides, Director Middlesex County of Planning

John Ferguson, Middlesex County Office of Engineering Management

Stan Olszewski, Middlesex County Office of Planning

David Gregor, Middlesex County Traffic Safety Program

James Polos, Executive Director Middlesex County Improvement Authority

Josh Cole, Middlesex County, IT Support Specialist

Total in Attendance: 36

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Acting Chairman, Tom Vigna.

- **Statement on Open Public Meetings Act**

Mr. Vigna noted that the meeting is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975 and that appropriate notices have been sent.

- **Pledge of Allegiance**

Acting Chairman Vigna called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

- **Moment of Silence**

Acting Chairman Vigna said that having a moment of prayer or quiet reflection at our meetings allows for us to be grateful for our blessings and for us to proceed with grace and ease.

II. Approval of the February 26, 2019 Minutes

Mike Kruimer moved to approve the February 26, 2019 Minutes. Seconded by John Ferguson with amendments to include the Signal Resolution and PowerPoint, Complete George.

III. Welcome Remarks

A. Acting Chairman Vigna reviewed an invitation sent to members to participate in a Bicycle/Pedestrian Subcommittee of the TCC being formed at the April 23rd meeting.

B. Correspondence
None.

C. Sign in Reminder.

D. Parking invoices given to staff for validation.

IV. Special Item

Vision Zero Traffic Safety Initiative

A. Cheryl Kastrenakis, Director, Greater Mercer (TMA) Transportation Management Association

Cheryl is extremely knowledgeable in the movement to reduce traffic deaths locally and in locations in New York, the nation, and world. Greater Mercer TMA covers Plainsboro in Middlesex County and is the connection point to Keep Middlesex

Moving in Middlesex County. Cheryl started her presentation of Vision Zero making the point that the bottom line is safety in transportation. Safety is the commitment of Vision Zero.

We have a Power Point which sets the problem and framework for doing something about preventing traffic deaths. Safe systems, roads, vehicles, speeds, safe people. Strategies are implemented by policy, engineering, education, enforcement. Proven safety measures are street design to reduce speed, automated speed enforcement, neighborhood traffic calming and by identifying Hotspots, aka knowing where crashes are occurring. To educate, start with safe routes to school and Street-Smart programs. START with Commitment, Leadership Policy, Public Health, Police. We have the power. Performance is action. Effective action is what we are building.

A priority is safe travel. Responsibility is causing safe travel which starts with the individual and includes each and every one of us.

Creating it happening requires going beyond the ordinary. Being extra ordinary will require that commitment to making the Vision Real. That means REAL Change.

Cheryl showed that implementing Vision Zero is most clearly shown by looking at the Netherlands where traffic deaths per million population is 34 compared to the United States where traffic deaths per million is 103. It happened when public became outraged by traffic deaths.

In the United States, 37,000 people are killed from motor vehicle crashes each year. That is 100 each day. New Jersey is very low in deaths because we have lots of traffic congestion which slows speeds and lowers deaths. NJ had 668 deaths in 2018, 624 in 2017, 555 in 2016. The recent problem in NJ has been the increase in bicycle/pedestrian crashes which is now 30% of all deaths.

Safety, health, and mobility for all leads to the core of the Vision Zero around which core principles are that traffic fatalities are preventable, people make mistakes, Safe Travel is a priority, Safe systems require more than individual behavior change, and speed must be managed. High speeds make crashes more likely and deadly.

Vision Zero – First Steps

Political Commitment includes a resolution or policy that commits to goals and a timeline.

Form a Vision Zero Task Force – Mayors, public health, transportation, police, others.

Create an Action Plan with clear strategies, “owners” of strategies, timeline, performance measures.

Questions and Answers

1. Tom Vigna asked if narrow lanes are safer?

Answer: Yes. People slow down in narrow lanes.

2. Paul Onish asked, “Do you recommend narrowing 14-foot lanes to 10-foot lanes and a bike lane?”

Answer by Cheryl: Look at the data. Safety is data driven and, in many cases, it works.

Answer by Peter Bilton: Hoboken was creating its Vision Zero Task Force at the same time starting their Complete Streets – Design Guide. Each supported the goals, actions and performance proposed.

3. Tony Gambilonghi – Re: Speed on big roads, Turnpike, State Highways.

Answer by Cheryl: Start with Hotspots and data identification. Speed problem is enormous.

4. George Ververides – The SUV problem of vehicle size, height causing pedestrian incident increases – and what are problems in college towns Princeton/Rutgers campus?

Answer by Cheryl: There are lots of pedestrians and be extra cautious where there is a college age cohort.

5. Tom Vigna – in North Brunswick and New Brunswick speed bumps work. There are 40 in North Brunswick on local roads which slow drivers down.

6. Bruce McCracken – Article NY Times Germany does not require helmets – Transportation Minister advertising with models...be aware “Helmets save lives”. People don’t look good in helmets. People want to look good and saving your life is more important than looking good.

Cheryl: Education – acknowledge that speed kills and helmets save lives.

In conclusion, Cheryl declared traffic deaths are a crisis – Call it a Crisis – urge Public Health Officers to Call it a Crisis.

Push it as a public health crisis at care centers such as hospitals do in Mercer County.

Health channels can lead the way in public information.

V. Staff Reports

A. Destination 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan – Louie Greenwell

Let's talk about safety and in East Brunswick. The Master Plan upgrade will require digging deeper into street design. The discussion with officials blossomed into East Brunswick can bring its improvements to other towns as in cross sections of County roads for example. Kicking off the Bike/Pedestrian Subcommittee for the 2040 County Master Plan (CMP) is a powerful way to bring real change to 2040 now as in coordination with the Mercer County Bike/Pedestrian Plan being designed in 2019.

B. Office of Planning Staff Activities – George Ververides

The Raritan Valley Rail Coalition meeting about the Gateway project, the Tunnel, the Portal Bridge, the Port Authority Bus Terminal, and the Moynihan Station, all of which are on hold seeking a major multibillion-dollar initiative will be held tonight. I will be there to add our voice to the many who are urging action to move forward on this important future.

C. Transportation Funding, Safety and Other Resources – Louie Greenwell

The New Jersey Infrastructure Trust for drainage improvements and emergency projects is offered to public officials in counties and authorities. Louis said Denise Nickel will invite the outreach team to present the programs available for loans at a future meeting.

D. Transportation Events/New Developments – Bruce McCracken

Not available.

E. Middlesex County Area Transit Services – Laila Caune

Not present.

F. Middlesex County Business Development and Education – Kathaleen Shaw, Carla Cefalo

Kathaleen Shaw is retiring this month. George Ververides acknowledged Kathaleen for having done an excellent job with Economic Development and close coordination with our Planning Office on freight sites, freight movement, and remediation of

environmentally polluted restorations. She has done a yeoman's job and we will miss her presence.

G. Middlesex County Engineering Office / Traffic Safety – Ron Sendner

Middlesex County has received the reviews required to proceed with contracting for building the Livingston Avenue Complete Streets Project. The redesign is a mile long and includes bicycle/pedestrian and traffic signal upgrades. The other NJDOT local aid project is Main Street in South Amboy which is a fully funded reconstruction which had sewer upgrades and utility work in 2018 with NJDOT delaying the contract.

H. Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management – John Ferguson

We are working on the County Hazzard Mediation Plan for 2025. So far, we have 13 of the 25 municipalities plans updated and 12 more to complete.

Louie Greenwell reported that we have two roads that have chronic flooding which must be included in the County Hazzard Mitigation Plan Update to be eligible for federal funding. There may also be roads in South Brunswick and Piscataway which need to be included.

I. Keep Middlesex Moving, Inc. – William Neary, Morteza Ansari

Not available.

J. Middlesex County College – Donald Drost, Jr.

Not present.

VI. TCC Member Comments/Reports

A. New Jersey Department of Transportation – Megan Fackler, Denise Peck

Megan Fackler introduced Meredith Hammond from NJDOT Community Relations who will be the official representative of our TCC.

B. New Jersey Transit – Tom Clark

Not present.

C. North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority – Peter Bilton

Peter updated the TCC on the NJTPA Street Smart Pedestrian Safety Education Campaign with the NJ Division of Highway Safety and Woodbridge.

D. New Jersey Turnpike Authority – Kevin Dunn

Not present.

E. Rutgers, The State University – Jennifer Stuart, Leigh Ann Kimber, Brendan Torres

Not present.

F. Academy Bus Co. – Chuck Kassinger

Not present.

G. Suburban Transit/Coach USA – Michael Beltranena

Apologized for the email blast sent by mistake.

H. East Coast Greenway Alliance – Mike and Ann Kruimer

Reported on the bike rides for:

- April 4 – 6 – ECGA Mid-Atlantic Summit in Philadelphia, PA
- April 28 – Sunday – Franklin Food Bank Ride
- May 11 – Saturday – Virginia Lap 2 Cap Ride on the Richmond to Williamsburg Trail
- May 19th Sunday – Edison & Metuchen Bicycle Tour
- May 4th Saturday – CJBC 35th Annual Farmlands Bike Tour
- May 5th Sunday – 5 Boro Bike Ride 35,000 Riders

Route 1 Goodkind Bridge Rework

Mike Kruimer requested staff to learn the status for bike pedestrian access to the Route 1 Goodkind Bridge reconstruction.

I. Other Members in Attendance:

Jim Polos from MCIA said “It was a pleasure to be here.”

VII. Public Comments

Jim Karamanos – Amtrak stops are in the long-term plans.

Tony Gambilonghi has seen those plans and reported high speed rail is still an active proposal for the Gateway alternatives.

Matthew Malat representing Senator Sam Thompson stated for the record that Senator Thompson is clamoring for funding the Gateway project.

VIII. Adjournment

Moved Mike Kruimer 4:30 p.m. unanimous

The next meeting of the TCC is scheduled for Tuesday, April 23, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the Middlesex County Administration Building. Board of Chosen Freeholders Meeting Room.