

**MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES  
JULY 23, 2019**

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**Attendance**

**Officers**

Tom Vigna, Acting Chairman

**Facilitator**

Trish Sanchez, Voorhees Transportation Center Public Outreach Engagement Team (POET)

**Municipal Representatives**

Mayor Brian Wahler, Piscataway

Jessica Dunne, Dunellen

Sanford Gardner, East Brunswick

Brian Tobin, Metuchen

Bask Patel, Woodbridge

**State Legislative/Congressional Representatives**

Paul Onish, representative of Senator Linda Greenstein, 14<sup>th</sup> District

Don Newton, representative of Assemblyman Craig Coughlin, 19<sup>th</sup> District

Matthew Malat, representative of Sam Thompson, 12<sup>th</sup> District

**County Transportation Management Association, KMM**

Bill Neary, Executive Director

Morteza Ansari, Program Manager

**Educational Institutions**

Ian Henderson, Rutgers IP&O

Brendan Torres, Rutgers University

**Others**

Peter Bilton, NJTPA

Douglas Grof, Edison Resident

Andras Holzmann, Somerset County Planning Department

John Witsch, Union County Planning

**Middlesex County Staff**

Khalid Anjum, Director, Department of Infrastructure Management

George Ververides, Director of Office of Planning

Ron Sendner, Acting County Engineer

Denise Nickel, Principal Planner, Office of Planning

Tony Gambilonghi, Supervising Transportation Planner, Office of Planning

**Middlesex County Staff**

Bruce McCracken, Principal Planner, Office of Planning  
Mirah Becker, Supervising Planner, Office of Planning  
Stan Olszewski, Supervising Planner, Office of Planning  
Nick Tufaro, Principal Planner, Office of Planning  
Roma Patel, Planning Trainee, Office of Planning  
Jessica Alvarez, Planning Trainee, Office of Planning  
Devin Hayes, Office of Information Technology  
Alex Zakrewsky, Principal Planner, Office of Planning  
Carla Cefalo, Office of Economic and Business Development  
Laila Caune, Office on Aging  
Kevin Kurdziel, Office of Business Development and Education

**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 the Pledge of Allegiance.

- **Moment of Silence**

Acting Chairman Vigna noted at the last meeting how lucky we are not to have tornadoes and bad storms. He next noted that the moment of silence was for everyone to reflect on our blessings and to give gratitude for our good fortune.

- **Introductions**

Each of those present introduced themselves by name and affiliation.

- **Approval of the May 28, 2019 Minutes**

The minutes of the May 28, 2019 meeting were distributed to the members. A motion was made by Mr. Sanford Gardner, seconded by Paul Onish and passed unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.

**II. Welcome Remarks**

Mr. Vigna expressed his best wishes to everyone for a good summer. He noted that Freeholder Kenny was not present at today's meeting.

### **III. Correspondence**

Anthony Gambilonghi noted that the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority has completed the Freight Rail Industrial Opportunity Study (FRIO) in which Middlesex County has participated and is the subject of today's meeting. Staff has also been following the progress of the Gateway Program.

### **IV. Special Presentation**

#### **A. The Freight Rail Industrial Opportunity Study (FRIO)**

Acting Chairman Vigna introduced Anne Strauss-Wieder, Director of Freight Planning at NJTPA. He welcomed her back after a year ago at which time her jam-packed presentation coincided with a fire alarm which created an exciting ending to the meeting.

Anne started by saying that the FRIO Study aims to have our industrial sites provide modern train access in terms of dimensions of height and weight by fostering collaboration among private and public entities to address barriers to freight access to industrial properties. Two databases were developed to advance decision making and investments. They are:

- Restriction Locations and
- Industrial Opportunities

Four corridors in Middlesex County were looked at (Raritan Valley, Amboy, the North Jersey Coast Line Corridor and the Northeast Corridor). The FRIO study examined how the freight cargos currently move. The study identified the following:

- Existing customers and potential parcels that could gain freight rail access in the future
- Restrictions and potential range of engineering solutions
- Industrial Opportunities
  - Parcel Database:
  - Two stage screening to identify sites:
    - Stage 1: Rail access feasibility
    - Stage 2: Other considerations
  - Thirty parcels identified and placed into two categories:
    - Existing rail shippers
    - Potential rail-served industrial opportunity parcels

Anne noted that there is a shortage of rail served property. If your property does not have national standard access, it is off the table. It cannot be considered for use that requires rail freight. What the study did was to develop the first comprehensive inventory of restriction locations in the North Jersey Planning area (including Middlesex County) in three counties as well as identify all the industrial opportunities. We developed a series of corridors to fit our consideration of how rail moves which often is not from Point A to Point B. It is often up then back down and a variety of ways it moves.

The study looked at how the freight enters and leaves the national system and serves our industrial properties directly. One example of that which was implemented in the study area was access off the National Standard on the Northeast Corridor into Raritan Center, and Bayshore Recycling because of the agreements made between Conrail and Amtrak are in

place for five years. They have access for x number of cars going through to their customers. We do think in corridors. We develop profiles of each of these corridors. We can't just fix one thing, we rather have to bundle fixes. Many site owners were interviewed to look for parcel locations that could work with solutions to restrictions.

#### Restriction GIS Location Database

There are seven (7) FRIO Corridors and four (4) of those corridors run through Middlesex County. Anne thanked the rail partners for providing the data and field access in the study area. The study team and engineers visited six locations on NJ Transit, 20 locations on Conrail {some in Middlesex County}. These visits allowed the restrictions to be located and logged in a GIS database on the over 300 miles of rail in the study area.

The Restriction Summary totaled 91 restrictions, 57 weight, 24 clearance.

Restriction Solutions include vertical restrictions:

- Steel tie Installations
- Undercutting
- Raise/Jack Superstructure
- Replace Superstructure

And

Load Rating Restrictions Solutions:

- Instrumentation analysis
- Rehab Structure
- Replace Superstructure

The cost of these solutions varies, and the estimated costs by corridor were presented by range for improvements for the 91 identified restrictions.

#### Identifying Industrial Opportunities

With all impediments addressed and ready for freight uses, benefits to the economic value to the State of New Jersey could be as much as:

- Nearly 223,800 direct on-site jobs
- Over 519,300 total jobs in New Jersey
- More than \$165.4 billion in annual business activity
- \$37.8 billion in annual personal income
- \$16.8 billion in annual state and local tax revenues

There is one basic rule underlying all the improvements, the guiding principle with regard to NJ Transit and AMTRAK: any freight improvement on a passenger right-of-way has to be paid for by freight dollars. There are multiple sources of funds that may be used for building the FRIO improvements which we are looking to create as we move into the next phrase of FRIO.

Mr. Vigna questioned what revenue or resources are they targeting? Anne said there are public monies available, and sometimes the private railroads step up and invest in restriction solutions. They are now inventorying all the possible funds they can create to deal with these

projects. For example, the Black River and Western is funding the hole in the wall in Warren County; the Port Authority and Conrail are doing a lot of projects right now at the Greenville Yard. They could not do it without everyone participating and working together.

Mr. Douglas Gross asked if there are plans to expand rail access to Port Newark which would reduce trucks delivering containers traveling through Newark neighborhoods polluting the air. Perhaps like the Alameda Corridor in California where rail makes a difference? Anne said she had visited the Long Beach Alameda Corridor and was aware of lessons learned there. FRIO is for corridors and the question opens up a possibility for the future which we can all use to create our next project.

Anne next looked at Port and Rail by showing the Neo-Panamax special which can fit through the new locks of the Panama Canal. The one pictured has 14,400 20' TEU's and we are planning for 18,000. Right now, the Port of NJ has 85 percent truck and 15 percent rail. Rail is growing for discretionary cargo going to Pennsylvania, Upstate New York, Massachusetts or Chicago. The reason freight is increasing here is because we have the largest consumer population and it is coming to our warehouses.

### New Jersey is the Supply Chain State

There are over 500,000 workers employed in transportation, logistics and distribution in New Jersey. There is 1.1 billion square feet of industrial space in New Jersey. Anne shared the following statistics on industrial property in Middlesex County from data that was provided from CB Richard Ellis:

• Exit 10 / I-287	105 million square feet
• Exit 8A	78 million square feet
• Carteret	26 million square feet
Total	235 million square feet

Middlesex County has played an important role in the industrial warehouse distribution movement which is cleaning up industrial brownfields and reusing the sites. It is a red-hot market now with five million square feet proposed for Trembly Point with Greek Development doing that. The price per square foot just seems to go up, and again we are the largest port on the Eastern Atlantic.

There are more than 830 million square feet of industrial space in the NJTPA area, with nearly 7 million under construction. To date in 2019, 17 buildings were added. In 2018, 31 buildings were added and in 2017, 45 buildings were added. In 2018 we reached nearly 7.2 million TEUs capacity.

Nearly 30 percent of all containerized cargo at the port is now carried on vessels with the capacity to handle 9,000 or more TEUs. Port Newark is the second largest container port in the world behind Los Angeles; It surpassed Long Beach by 40,000 containers last month. We have a robust rail freight network which includes two class one rail operators – Norfolk Southern and CSX. Other operators include Conrail and short lines. There is also an extensive roadway network.

## The Changing Last Mile of Retail

There is a massive shift in on-line retail shopping from malls to package delivery to residences and offices. Anne asked, “Who here took advantage of Prime Day?”. Amazon Prime Day is the annual shopping holiday that’s exclusive to Amazon Prime subscribers, who get exclusive sales and savings on hot-ticket items. It’s the fifth year for the sale and first time it was open for 48 hours, giving those who are on Amazon’s premium subscription service the chance to access deals on more than one million items. Amazon began operating in New Jersey in 2012 and has since grown its workforce to 17,500, plus full-time employees across the state. Currently Amazon operates fulfillment centers in Avenel, Carteret, Cranbury, Edison, Florence, and Robbinsville ...

The origin points to fulfillment centers, brick and mortar stores like Barnes and Noble, Target. They are all moving to transportation modes UPS, US Post Office, Fed Ex. They are players now with Amazon’s white vans, Google, biker messengers in NYC and now deliveries are made to alternative destination points in addition to post offices like Amazon lockers or UPS stores. The nature of retail... Amazon just raised the bar to next day delivery.

### AMAZON Facilities

- 18 Facilities in NJ
- 10 Facilities in the NJTPA region
  - 4 fulfillment centers over one million square feet
  - 1 sortation facility
  - 2 food distribution facilities
  - 2 delivery stations
  - 1 Amazon Prime Now (1-hour delivery service)

Amazon codes that are on their packages are named after the nearest airports; if you know the code you can trace the package from the warehouse or facility from its source to the end point. That is from “mid-mile and last-mile facilities”.

Now with the new facilities with lots of employees you need parking and access at shift changes. The number one concern for site selection for distribution centers is with all that parking. Can I get the workforce that I need? Bill Neary, from KMM, commented that he has been working with Amazon in Carteret for five years with limited results. “They talk a better game than they perform”. Anne noted that Amazon in Robbinsville has been linking up with shuttle buses with the help of Greater Mercer TMA. It costs much more to onboard

workers, train them and develop their commute than to keep them if they don’t learn quickly and achieve needed skills and workable habits and attitudes. Teaching the automation skills required by workers is a major challenge for Amazon. Often, they are pre-training workers in nursing skills if sorting gigs is too much for applicants to learn.

### Emerging Technology, Equipment and “Disrupters”

In the next 10 years change will happen and create whole new ways our lifestyles adopt to evolving generational demands. Food for example is changing, and the nature of food. Anne asked who here has tried an Impossible Burger, special on Prime Day, Burger King, a bunch of others are going toward the Impossible Burger. We have similar efforts going for salmon, tuna, and chicken. The idea is it is no longer sustainable or desirable with animals and fish. There is a move toward cultured protein products. We are going to see a lot more in the future. The picture of the hydroponic farm in Newark is vertical urban farming. The nature of the food we eat is changing.

With regards to trucking, fully automated trucks and semi-autonomous trucking are here where the nature of the drivers’ job changes. This will occur much sooner and could make the job more desirable. Platooning which determines how closely together trucks can be spaced will be seen frequently in the future. 3D printing, geo tracking drones, tracking our packages, on time delivery, there are a lot of technology changes which support the changes we are making as customers.

### A shameless plug NJTPA Defining the Vision Shaping the Future

Finally, NJTPA Freight Initiatives are the subject of a committee which next meets in August and looks at supply chain changes. We have the FRIO Program which we have presented today. We also have Goods Movement Strategies for communities which is live and active. Truck Parking Capacity inventory is on-line and may be used for solutions to problems communities have with trucks that have been effectively applied elsewhere and are easily accessed. In the fall NJTPA will have presentations on Port Performance.

Paul Onish asked if they are looking at making new port facilities further South in New Jersey? Anne replied that there are a variety of different maritime mechanisms, international cargo, and on the east coast marine highway where Raritan Center is a platform on the Coastal transfer points for shippers, the Port Authority, NJTPA, NJDOT and carriers. New expanded container facilities are planned, and the Port Authority will be presenting those plans at NJTPA in the Fall.

At this point Anne turned that presentation over Trish Sanchez of POET for Rutgers for a discussion on the freight section of the new County Destination 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan.

Freight Facilities – General Discussion for Stakeholder Input to the County Destination 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan.

Ms. Trish Sanchez, facilitator from Rutgers Voorhees Transportation Center and Public Outreach Engagement Team (POET) recently contracted with Middlesex County to look at 10 issues for public and stakeholder outreach for the Master Plan update Destination 2040. POET has done all the Public Outreach and now is doing stakeholder and subject matter experts. During Phase I of the outreach, transportation was among the top five issues; so today we will start with Transportation subject matter experts.

Trish asked everyone to start by thinking about how they get and develop their product, and today they are looking at freight. We started with Anne, a high-level. She opened the discussion to everyone. She asked for their thoughts, ideas and issues regarding freight. Roma Patel noted the issues and solutions from the participants on a flip chart and are as follows:

Anne Strauss Weider suggested that we get on the web for the goods movement strategies tool particularly for trucks because these issues have been identified; and once you plug in the issue, you will see all the effective practices that have been put into use and will remain in use both in the US and overseas for that particular issue. It is on the NJTPA web site. Anne got on-line and brought it up. <https://www.njtpa.org/Data-Maps/Tools/Freight-Forecast.aspx> freight is a good neighbor scroll to tool on our freight page, pick your location (i.e. suburban area, truck traffic on highway, local streets or pick up/drop off. Picked local streets – kind of trucks – semis, local box, delivery trucks. Picked delivery trucks, coming during the day – the issues – development, mobility, road access – infrastructure, safety, environment pick ones you want to do. I picked you can pick as many as you want, it will show you all the different items, basis for it, off street parking management and then print out the full report.

NJTPA asks you to use the tool; and if you find issues missing, let us know. We want to know. Question? Is there anything not covered in the tool? A lot of it is covered.

Discussion points that were made during this part of the meeting are included in the attachment.

## **V. County Staff Reports**

### **A. Office of Planning Staff Activities – George Ververides**

George welcomed Tom Vigna back after he had a successful procedure at the hospital. George also thanked the IT Representative, Devin Hayes, for doing the technical presentation support.

### **B and C. Destination 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan and Transportation Funding – Denise Nickel**

Denise informed the TCC that the Public Engagement with the Master Plan update is still ongoing and requested members to take copies of a flyer “Welcome to Destination 2040 Middlesex County’s Comprehensive Plan” which asked people to take an on-line survey.

### **D. Transportation Events/New Developments – Bruce Mc Cracken**

There were three articles that were distributed with the handouts in the packet. Two articles were on the Port Authority Master Plan for expanding the Container Port and the major infrastructure demands. A third article was on Amazon Prime Day in its fifth year in New Jersey.

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

The Complete Streets Livingston Avenue federal aid project was authorized with New Brunswick and will be advertised in September and start construction in October or November. The cross section is for two travel lanes for vehicles, two bicycle lanes (five feet) with greenways and overhead lighting.

F. Middlesex County Office on Aging – Laila Caune

The County announced they will create a new Department of Transportation. On July 1, 2019 MCAT moved to the Department of Infrastructure Management, Office of Public Works which will be headed by Gary Vesce.

The Office on Aging is also sponsoring a Senior Art Show event at Middlesex County College, and the public is invited to participate.

G. Middlesex County Office of Public Works, MCAT – Gary Vesce

Not present

H. Middlesex County Business Development and Education – Carla Cefalo

Carla introduced Kevin Kurdziel the new Acting Director of the Department of Business Development and Education also Director of the Office of Workforce Development. She explained that they are newly reorganized and will continue to participate on this Committee. Carla said that the Department of Business Development and Education will relaunch the Business Portal 4.0 updated and useful to the Office of Planning and Transportation Coordination and this Committee. We plan to present it at a future TCC meeting.

I. Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management – John Ferguson

Not present.

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

Bill Neary extended thanks to NJTPA and NJDOT, NJ Highway Safety and NJ Transit; their funds have been replenished and start July 1, 2019. The WCTC Radio Show Mobility Matters is over now after many wonderful guests and great radio shows. On July 22 Bill presented a resolution, in support of Gateway Funding by the Central Jersey Transportation Forum, which Bill chairs, to a special gathering of the Gateway Coalition at NJTPA. Lastly, Morteza Ansari is working on an update of data on the Middlesex County Park and Ride facilities. There are 40 facilities, and a presentation on the information gathered will be done at a future TCC Meeting.

K. Middlesex County College – Donald Drost

Not present

## **VI. TCC Member Comments/Reports**

A. New Jersey Department of Transportation – Meredith Hammond, Zenobia Fields

Not present

B. NJ Transit – Representative not yet available

Not present

C. North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority – Peter Bilton

The NJTPA TIP and CIP four-year plans were introduced and accepted for release and public comment. A hearing will be held on August 6 at NJTPA. The next NJTPA Board meeting will be September 9. Also, a Together North Jersey Meeting is scheduled for September 17<sup>th</sup>.

D. East Coast Greenway Alliance – Mike and Anne Kruimer

Not present

E. NJ Turnpike Authority – Kevin Dunn

Not present

F. Rutgers – Brendan Torres

No report. Brendan introduced a new planner, Ian Newsome, who has a strong transportation background from Greater Mercer TMA where he formerly worked.

G. Academy Bus Co. – Chuck Kassinger

Not present

H. Suburban Transit – Mike Beltranena

Not present

## **VII. Public Comments**

Brian Tobin – Metuchen and Rutgers (CAIT) and Senator Wayne De Angelo. Mr. Tobin called the members' attention to the post on the County web site on the Quest that is interesting and humorous. Also, the Intelligent Transportation Society of New Jersey (ITSNJ.org) will have its annual meeting October 28 in Plainsboro at the Crown Plaza Conference Center, 830 Scudders Mill Road., from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and will feature automated vehicles, and mobility on demand. The agenda will be live in September.

Paul Onish – Senator Linda Greenstein  
On the County roads in Middlesex County we need to consider protected left turns. Intersections where there are protected left turns, there is a problem where there are no

protected left turns in the opposing direction. Paul asked the County to look at locations where those left turns exist and where they may have been improved in other places in the US or abroad. George Ververides asked what protocol Paul was asking the County to follow to address the issue. Paul said he would make a list of intersections and provide them to Anthony Gambilonghi for discussion.

Tom Vigna asked how many municipalities are represented at the meeting. There were five municipalities represented. He suggested that we seek to expand the attendance of our municipal representatives.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

Next meeting will be September 25, 2019 at 3 p.m.

On a motion that was moved and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Mc Cracken  
Secretary

lak

p/transportation/tcc/2019 draft minutes/07.23.19

**Attachment**

**Discussion points / comments on Freight Issues**

Issues with Rail:

Possible Solutions:

Erratic schedules for rail cause traffic	Rails to Trails vs. Freight/Passenger Rail
Communication on what is being carried in cargo rail passing through towns	Emerging technologies for future solutions
Public education—misconception that rail will decrease housing value	Rail communication w/ the public and municipalities → present the facts
Identifying repair areas and relaying/updating the information with the public	<i>Truck parking on sites of distribution centers</i>
Highlighting benefit of rail for town so there is open communication and understanding/support	
Noise pollution	

Issues with Trucking:

Possible Solutions:

Small streets but large trucks; some local roads are not built to support large trucks.	Electric Trucks
Weight limits on county and local roads cannot support heavy trucks.	Maximize rail usage if available instead of relying 100% on trucks to move goods.
Damaged roads	Designate truck routes through municipal ordinances
Traffic Congestion	Utilize NJTPA Tool for possible solution strategies <a href="http://Goodsmovement.njtpa.org">Goodsmovement.njtpa.org</a>
What do you do with the containers when they are empty? ←→	Micro-housing with empty containers
Demand for warehousing is increasing but how do we address the increase in trucks?	
Climate Change	
Workforce- shortage of drivers	
Air quality	

**Issues with Waterborne:**

**Possible Solutions:**

Commuting – tunnel closures means preparing for re-routing commuting population.	Refer to Port Master Plan for possible strategies
Barging of freight	Synergies with ports
Optimizing freight in water	Study Maritime
Climate Change	Ferry terminals
Workforce in ports	