

MINUTES
Morris County Board of Transportation Meeting
Tuesday, October 18, 2011
Morris County Department of Planning & Development
30 Schuyler Place, 4th Floor Conference Room
Morristown, NJ

In Attendance:

Board Members	Other Attendees	Staff
Melverne E. Cooke	James Gilligan, NJ TRANSIT	Deena Cybulski
Freeholder Gene Feyl	Amy Magnuson, NJTPA	Erik DeLine
Ilene Dorf Manahan, Chairperson		John Hayes
Frank T. Reilly		Gerald Rohsler
Judith Schleicher		
Art Valand, Vice Chairperson		
Dudley Woodbridge, Secretary		
Roman Zabihach		

I. Call to Order: Chairperson Ilene Dorf Manahan called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

II. Open Public Meeting Statement: Chairperson Manahan read the Open Public Meetings Act compliance statement.

III. Roll Call: Gerald Rohsler read the roll call. Seven voting members were present during roll call.

IV. Welcome and Introductions: Chairperson Manahan welcomed all attendees and the guest speaker, James Gilligan from NJ TRANSIT.

V. Approval of Minutes from July 19, 2011: Approval of the minutes was moved by Roman Zabihach and seconded by Art Valand and the minutes were unanimously approved.

VI. Special Presentation: Bus Services in Morris County

James Gilligan, Director of Bus Service Planning for Northern New Jersey at NJ TRANSIT (NJT) gave a presentation on the recent history of NJT bus service in Morris County. NJT proposed fare increases and the elimination of the Morris County Metro (MCM) Bus 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and the Wheels 966 in the spring of 2010. Due to turnout at the public hearing and Morris County government support for bus service, the majority of

the bus routes were saved. The MCM 4, 5, and 7 were eliminated in July 2010 because of low ridership. The remaining MCM and Wheels 966 buses were rebranded and restructured into the NJT 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 878, 879, and 880 routes in October 2010, followed with some refinement in November 2010. Many of the changes had been recommended in the Northwest New Jersey Bus Study to better match service with existing customer demand.

NJT made additional route changes to redistribute limited resources to areas of higher passenger demand and in response to customer feedback on September 5, 2011.

Mr. Gilligan discussed the current service and route for each of the Morris Local Buses, and the ridership levels since the fall 2010 route reconfigurations. NJT will purchase and replace the entire Morris Local Bus fleet with low-floor smart technology buses. NJT has activated the My Bus Program in Morris County. My Bus allows riders to call NJT to receive the next bus departure times from their stop. The combination of the new GPS equipped smart buses and the My Bus program will allow real time information to be shared with riders. Online NJT Trip Planner allows customers to plan their trip using buses and trains.

- Chairperson Manahan inquired into efforts to reach out to the Spanish speaking community in Dover.
- Freeholder Feyl recommended contacting the chambers of commerce for contacts.
- Deena Cybulski noted that efforts to reach the community will probably be coordinated with human services.
- Mr. Valand noted the benefits of providing real time information to transit riders, and asked if schedules in Spanish were printed and if buses were equipped technology to affect traffic signals.
- Mr. Gilligan stated that NJT and Morris County are still working on better connecting with Spanish speaking communities. In addition to Spanish speaking riders, there are many other non-English speaking riders served by NJT; however, it would not be feasible to print the schedules in multiple languages. The language on the schedules has been simplified and reduced while the timetable layout and map has been redesigned to be more user-friendly. Traffic signal preemption and queue lane jumps were examined as part of the North West NJ Bus Study; the new buses will have the needed technology.
- Frank Reilly questioned the reduction in ridership since the bus system was redesigned in October 2010. He asked if the bus system should be reverted back. He stated concern that the buses in Morris County may again be targeted for elimination if ridership does not improve.
- Mr. Gilligan stated that the system redesign was necessary to meet passenger demand, and NJT has been responsive to feedback and has restored some service to areas such as Wharton. However, ridership is down 4% system-wide in the past year. The job losses in the region have reduced ridership demand, especially in the suburbs.
- Ms. Cybulski expressed Morris County's support for the efforts NJT Bus Planning group to improve ridership and the local bus system. She noted that

expenses for NJT have increased but the funding available for the Morris County routes has not increased.

- Chairperson Manahan thanked Mr. Gilligan for coming to speak with the Board of Transportation.

VII. Staff Reports:

- 1. Rail Freight Update:** Erik DeLine reported on several rail issues and events in Morris County.
 - Route 10/High Bridge Branch and Route 46/Chester Branch Crossing Replacements – Morris County is upgrading the railroad grade crossings to improve the safety and condition of this crossing and roadway, bringing our infrastructure up to a state of good repair. On Friday, October 14, Route 46 will be closed in the area of Railroad Avenue at about 7:00pm for approximately 24 hours, weather dependant. On Friday, October 21, Route 10 will be closed in the area of Commerce Boulevard. Eastbound lanes will be closed at about 6:00pm, and westbound lanes will be closed at about 8:00pm. Both directions will be closed for approximately 24 hours, weather dependant.
 - FRAC Update –The Freight Rail Advisory Committee (FRAC) Meeting was held on October 11. At the meeting, Alvin Siebold, Morris & Erie (M&E) Director of Safety, and August Greiner, M&E Chief of Police gave a presentation on the M&E Emergency Service Program outlining track safety and security. The Operation Lifesaver Program is receiving attention again due to the recent deaths of pedestrians on railroad tracks. Mr. DeLine noted that he has been trained and is certified to give the Operation Lifesaver presentation.
 - Mr. Reilly reported that the M&E has also provided first responder training in Cedar Knolls. He also noted the effectiveness of the FRAC, identifying the resolution of support passed by Roxbury for the Lake Junction Reconstruction Project.
 - Chairperson Manahan inquired if there is process to identify rail crossing safety issues, how raising awareness among adults can be improved, and what type of presentation is given to children.
 - Mr. DeLine stated that the NJDOT has a crossing safety program to identify areas of concern. Operation Life Saver is a national program started in 1972 which targets the safety of adults and children. The presentation is standardized and presenters are trained so that the message is clear and consistent. Visit the Operation Lifesaver website for more details www.oli.org.
 - Toys for Tots – On Saturday and Sunday, December 10 and 11, a special train will run in Northern New Jersey, including along the Morris County-owned High Bridge Branch and Dover & Rockaway Railroad, to collect donated toys

for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots campaign. The train will stop at 13 locations where the public can drop off toys, board the caboose to see Santa Claus, experience a variety of working railroad equipment, and meet members of the Marine Corps and Operation Toy Train. Visit the Operation Toy Train Website for more details. <http://www.swapmeetdave.com/Toytrain/>

- Morris Warren Rail Corridor Study - The NJTPA will conduct the Morris/Warren County Rail Corridor Study to assess the conditions and constraints along the Washington Secondary, which is Norfolk Southern's primary freight rail route serving Warren and Morris County. The Washington Secondary begins in Phillipsburg, connects to the NJ Transit Morristown Line at Hackettstown, and continues on to Morristown, the study's eastern limit. This corridor also connects a number of other branch lines to the national freight rail network. This study was generated from the NJTPA Subregional Studies Program "Morris County Infrastructure and Land Use Analysis." Jacob Rowinski of the NJTPA will be the project manager.
 - Freight Planning at the Local Level – Mr. DeLine distributed copies of the article "Freight Planning at the Local Level," written by Freeholder Feyl, which appeared in the October 2011 issue of New Jersey Municipalities Magazine. The article reported on the Chester Branch Reconstruction funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the coordination of regional freight initiatives at NJTPA's Freight Initiatives Committee, the formation and purpose of the Morris FRAC, and two of the products of the Morris County Freight Infrastructure and Land Use Analysis: The Municipal Guide to Freight Planning and the Marketing Plan.
2. **NJ 124 Corridor Transit Access Improvement Study:** John Hayes reported that the MCDOT is undertaking a consultant-supported study of access, for all modes and users, to the three railroad stations along NJ 124 in southeast Morris County. The three stations are, from west to east, Convent Station in Morris Township, Madison Station in Madison Borough, and Chatham Station in Chatham Borough. These three municipalities along with the neighboring municipalities, Harding Township, Florham Park Borough, and Chatham Township, have expressed the need for expanding transit options. The NJ 124 Corridor Transit Access Improvement Study is federally-funded through the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) Subregional Studies Program. The Request for Proposals was advertised on September 23 and bid proposals are due by October 21. The Consultant Selection Committee will meet on November 15 and plans on selecting a consultant in time for Freeholder resolution at the December 14 Board of Chosen Freeholder meeting. The study is expected to begin at the end of 2011 or early 2012.
 3. **East Hanover Avenue Corridor Study:** Mr. Rohsler described the purpose of the East Hanover Avenue Corridor Study. It will analyze the existing and future traffic along East Hanover Avenue (650) from Speedwell Avenue (202)

to Whippany Road (511). NJDOT is funding this consultant-supported study, which is being conducted in close coordination between and among the county and the three municipalities the corridor traverses, Hanover, Morris Plains, and Morris Township. The study will design infrastructure improvements to address current and future circulation, mobility, and safety issues, while considering the needs of all users. The planning, concept, and design work effort will provide a comprehensive plan for the corridor across the three municipalities. The project kickoff meeting was held with NJDOT, Morris County, the municipalities, and the consultant team from Stantec on October 5. A project webpage has been created where the scope of work, meeting information, and study documents can be found.

<http://www.morrisdot.org/accessories/transportation-ehanoveravecorridorstudy.asp>

- Mr. Zabihach expressed support for the study noting that it will analyze the total impact of anticipated redevelopment in the corridor rather than a piecemeal approach.
- Melvere Cooke stated that it will be good to have a single unified report to guide developers' transportation improvements.
- Chairperson Manahan inquired into the municipal participation in the study.
- Ms. Cybulski reported that all three municipalities will be involved throughout the study and representative from each have attended the project kickoff meeting.

4. **NYS&W Passenger Rail Study:** Mr. Rohsler provided some background on the New York, Susquehanna, and Western Railway (NYS&W) and discussed the resolution supporting the reactivation of commuter rail service in order to reduce automobile congestion and improve commuter mobility along the NJ 23 corridor. Passenger rail service was discontinued on the NYW&W along the NJ 23 corridor on June 30, 1966. Freight service on the rail line continues. The reactivation of the service was studied by Morris County, Sussex County, and NJ Transit in 1995. The Federal Transit Administration gave the proposed reactivation a "Finding of No Significant Impact" in regards to environmental impact. This finding authorized the project to receive Federal funding. However, the reactivation was not advanced because of the lack of capacity at New York Penn Station and the lack of projected passenger demand in Sparta. However, ridership projections were significant to Stockholm, which would be a good location for a large train station park and ride.
5. **NYS&W Bike Path Update:** Mr. Rohsler provided an update on the design for the NYS&W Bicycle and Pedestrian Path. The path will be a 4.8 mile shared use path located primarily along the existing NYS&W railroad beginning at River Drive in Pequannock and ending at the Mountain View Train Station in Wayne. Currently, Morris County and the consultant team are investigating constructing the path on the existing rail bed as an alternative to along the rail bed.

VIII. Old Business: None

IX. New Business:

1. Mr. Rohsler requested that the Board of Transportation consider an amendment to the By Laws to adopt a daytime meeting schedule due to recent changes in building security, parking policy, and staff numbers. Mr. Reilly put forward the motion for the daytime meeting schedule. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.
2. Mr. Reilly requested MCDOT find about plans for Ridgedale Avenue railroad grade crossing improvements.

X. Public Comments: None

XI. Next Regular Meeting: January 17, 2012, at 2:00 pm.

XII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Notes prepared by John Hayes