

MINUTES
Morris County Board of Transportation Meeting
Tuesday, April 24, 2012
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, Chairperson	Lisa DiTaranti, VHB	Deena Cybulski
Freeholder Gene Feyl	Amy Magnuson, NJTPA	John Hayes
Ilene Dorf Manahan	Chris Mazzei, M&E Railway	Gerald Rohsler
Frank T. Reilly, Vice Chairperson		
Judith Schleicher		
Art Valand		
Joe Wells, Alternate #1		
Dudley Woodbridge, Secretary		
Roman Zabihach		

I. Call to Order: Chairperson Melverne E. Cooke called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm.

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

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

IV. Welcome and Introductions: Chairperson Cooke welcomed Lisa DiTaranti, Amy Magnuson, Chris Mazzei, and all attendees.

V. Approval of Minutes from January 17, 2012: Approval of the minutes was moved by Ilene Dorf Manahan and seconded by Dudley Woodbridge, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

VI. NJ 124 Corridor Transit Access Improvement Study: Lisa DiTaranti, PE, the Northeast Director of Transit and Rail at VHB Engineering, Surveying and Landscape Architecture, P.C. presented an overview of the NJ 124 Transit Study. The study will analyze and recommend station access improvements at the three NJ Transit commuter rail stations in the NJ 124 Corridor: Chatham, Madison, and Convent Station. The municipalities in the study area and the public have indicated that access to the Morris &

Essex Line is restricted due to limited parking and congested roads. The goal of the study is to determine the most effective and acceptable course of action to improve access to the train stations for all users. This study is funded through the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's (NJTPA) Subregional Studies Program and managed by the Morris County Division of Transportation (MCDOT). The project began in January 2012 and is anticipated to be completed in March 2013.

Ms. DiTaranti also provided a status report on the progress of the study. The project team is currently focusing on data collection and gathering public input. The first Technical Advisory Committee Meeting was held on February 8. Seven focus group meetings were conducted during the week of March 26 with over 30 representatives from government, universities, and advocacy groups. A Public Open House was held at the Madison Train Station on March 29. The study webpage was launched at www.MorrisDOT.org/NJ124 and provides a place for public comments to be submitted to the project team. Current and upcoming team efforts include a parking utilization analysis, a train rider and non-train rider travel survey, safety analysis, transit demand forecast analysis, and strategy development.

Judith Schleicher asked about attendance at the focus groups meetings. She noted that commuters prefer a one-seat ride to their work place and inquired as to the typical cost per parking space in a garage.

Ms. DiTaranti specified that the focus group meetings averaged five to six people in attendance. On average, a parking space in a garage costs \$20,000 per space and the deck needs to be at least four floors to be cost effective.

Art Valand identified the issue of illegal commuter parking in retail lots and suggested that the property owners might not see it as a problem as those commuters may shop in their stores in the evening. Mr. Valand stated that more parking such as a multi-level parking deck at the stations is needed, and described the underestimation of demand for parking when Mt. Arlington Train Station was constructed.

Ms. DiTaranti indicated that a parking garage would probably be a long term strategy, but for the near term, new parking management strategies could be implemented. She noted that many factors would need to be considered, including financing and traffic impacts, due to the construction of a garage. She added that there are unsuccessful parking decks where demand was overestimated. The parking garage in Montclair Station is now leased by Montclair State University after rail commuter demand failed to live up to expectations.

Ms. DiTaranti indicated that for a private developer to build a parking garage there has to be sufficient opportunity to make a return on the investment. A developer will not build parking without a balance of sellable units; it is difficult to make an acceptable level of return through parking alone.

Frank Reilly suggested that the addition of a train station between Chatham and Madison Station along the utility power line property be considered as a long term solution, as a low-cost alternative to the construction of a parking deck.

Ms. DiTaranti responded that the location suggested for a new station would be too close to the other two existing stations, and NJ Transit tends to avoid constructing infill stations.

Ms. Manahan stated that clear, easily accessible information is important to encouraging transit ridership. She inquired as to if there has been any discussion regarding shared parking opportunities with Rod's Steak House or Saint Thomas More Church at Convent Station. Ms. Manahan also thought it would be good to consider the construction of a new station between Chatham and Madison Stations.

Ms. DiTaranti responded that Saint Thomas More Church leases parking to Morris Township and provided some additional examples of shared parking/leased parking between churches, municipalities, and transit agencies.

Chairperson Cooke asked about the parking occupancy at the new garage at Morristown Station.

Deena Cybulski responded that lot is open and well used by commuters. She noted the tendency for municipalities to give priority for parking at municipal-owned lots to their own residents and asked if the study could identify incentives for municipalities to offer more spaces to non-residents.

Ms. DiTaranti agreed that municipalities feel they have to focus on their residents first. Addressing access will require a mix of solutions.

Chairperson Cooke thanked Ms. DiTaranti for presenting to the Morris County Board of Transportation.

VII. Staff Reports:

- 1. TransAction Conference:** John Hayes reported that Planning and Development staff attended the annual TransAction transportation conference in Atlantic City. www.njtransactionconf.com/. Mr. Reilly reported that over 800 people attended the very successful conference.
- 2. Rail Activities:** Mr. Rohsler reported that the engineering for improvements to the Kenvil Team Track, located in Roxbury off of US 46 and Berkshire Valley Road, is being conducted by CHA. The engineering should be completed in four months and then the project will go out to bid for construction. Mr. Woodbridge asked what improvements will be made. Mr. Rohsler described the transloading operations that occur at the site and the site improvements that will be made. Mr. Rohsler stated that an additional track

would be installed, a new larger fenced in area would be created, landscaping would be provided, and direct truck egress from the site to US 46 was being explored. Mr. Rohsler noted that the lease to operate on the county-owned railroads is out to bid and that applications are due by May 15.

- 3. Walkable Community Workshop:** Mr. Hayes reported that a Walkable Community Workshop will be held on April 26 at the County College of Morris in Randolph. The workshop will be conducted by NJTPA for the intersection of NJ 10 and Chester Grove Rd. Ms. Cooke requested that a copy of the report be sent to the Board of Transportation.
- 4. NYS&W Bicycle and Pedestrian Path:** Mr. Rohsler provided an update on the design for the New York, Susquehanna, and Western (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, the NJTPA, and the consultant team are investigating constructing the path on the existing rail bed as an alternative to alongside it. The Morris County Park Commission prefers the on-rail alternative. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) seems agreeable to constructing the path on top of the rail bed. Mr. Woodbridge asked how the land was acquired. Mr. Wells asked if any fencing would be needed. Mr. Rohsler responded that some of the rail was active until three years ago and will be acquired through easements. Some fencing will be required near the Norfolk Southern crossing.

VIII. Old Business: None

- 1. East Hanover Avenue Corridor Traffic Study:** Mr. Rohsler gave an update on the East Hanover Avenue Corridor Traffic Study. The East Hanover Avenue Corridor Traffic Study will analyze the existing and future traffic along East Hanover Avenue (650) from Speedwell Avenue (202) to Whippany Road (511). This 2.4 mile corridor in Morris County traverses Hanover, Morris Plains, and Morris Township. The study will design infrastructure improvements to address current and predicted 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. Technical Meeting 2 was held on January 30 where the consultant team from Stantec presented several alternatives for corridor-wide and intersection specific improvements. Mr. Rohsler described the alternatives preferred by Morris County that will be discussed with the municipalities and the consultant. More information on the study can be found at www.morrisdot.org/accessories/transportation-ehanoveravecorridorstudy.asp.

Ms. Schleicher noted that the driveway through the Frelinghuysen Arboretum was closed to through traffic due to the volume of traffic using the driveway to avoid eastbound congestion at the intersection of East Hanover Avenue and Whippany Avenue.

Mr. Mazzei asked if there are any plans to make eastbound West Hanover Avenue two lanes around Stiles Avenue.

Roman Zabihach stated that the corridor study is a proactive plan with solid recommendations for addressing traffic congestion. The addition of more lanes on West Hanover Avenue is not part of this study, but will be considered in the near future.

IX. New Business:

Mr. Woodbridge inquired about the replacement of the bridge on US 202 over the Passaic River and how NJDOT's Completes Streets policy was involved in the design. Mr. Hayes had inquired with NJDOT. The consultant design team responded that the funding is restricted to the replacement of the bridge due to the poor condition of the structure, and the width of the bridge could not be extended to accommodate bicyclists or pedestrians due to severe environmental restrictions.

Chairperson Cooke thanked Freeholder Feyl for his years of service on the Morris County Board of Chosen Freeholders and wished him well in his future endeavors.

X. Public Comments: None

XI. Next Regular Meeting: July 24, 2012, at 2:00 pm in the 4th floor conference room, 30 Schuyler Place, Morristown, NJ.

XII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

Minutes prepared by John Hayes