

MINUTES
Morris County Board of Transportation Meeting
Tuesday, April 23, 2013
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 Leary
Ilene Dorf Manahan	Amy Magnuson, NJTPA	Gerald Rohsler
Frank Reilly	Leigh Schopp, MCEDC	John Hayes
Judy Schleicher		Joseph Russo
Joe Wells		

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. Four voting members were present during roll call.

IV. Welcome and Introductions: Chairperson Cooke welcomed all attendees. Deena Leary introduced Leigh Schopp, Economic Development Manager with the Morris County Economic Development Corporation.

V. Presentation – 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 the findings of the NJ 124 Transit Study. The project team analyzed and developed station access improvement recommendations at the three NJ Transit commuter rail stations in the NJ 124 Corridor: Chatham, Madison, and Convent Stations. The study was conducted because for years the residents and government leadership of the municipalities in the NJ 124 corridor have identified train station parking and access as major problems. The municipalities asked Morris County and the NJTPA to conduct this study.

The project began in January 2012. A technical advisory committee was formed to guide this project. The committee included the six municipalities in the study area (Madison, Chatham Borough, Morris Township, Chatham Township, Florham Park, and Harding) along with NJ Transit, NJDOT, NJTPA, and TransOptions. Project recommendations

included low cost and short term improvements such as signage and striping, and higher cost and longer term projects such as parking garages, shuttle routes, and transit oriented development. A large transportation data collection effort and analysis was part of this study, as well as rail ridership and parking demand forecasts. Additionally, a preliminary financial analysis of the potential for a private developer to construct commuter parking as part of a transit oriented development was conducted.

Joe Wells asked how substantial are the NJ Transit rail fare differences between the three stations and if riders more likely to get a seat if they board further to the west. He suggested that the county should work on implementing the easier recommendations and that the county bicycle map be updated. He agreed with the study that more housing options near train stations for both seniors and young adults are needed.

Ms. DiTaranti responded that there was about a \$30 difference in the cost of a monthly pass between each of the three stations to the typical work destinations of New York City or Newark, and that riders are still likely to find a seat regardless of which of the three stations they board eastbound morning peak trains.

Ms. Schopp explained that the crosswalk with pedestrian flashers at the New Brunswick Train Station, shown as an example in the presentation, is effective at stopping traffic to allow pedestrians to safely cross after getting off the train. She discussed that real estate companies are getting more into the multi-family housing market, in urban areas, and shifting out of the suburban office space business. Additionally, development of transitional housing types is important.

Judy Schleicher noted that pedestrian flashers on US 46 at Gardner Field in Denville was found to be not sufficient, and a pedestrian bridge was built. She suggested that a how to ride a bus video is created. She asked how the county can move forward on these recommendations and what the Board of Transportation can do to help.

Ilene Dorf Manahan asked about the occupancy rate of Morristown development and questioned where the satellite parking lots were in relation to the study's three stations. She described that walking and bicycling is not just about saving money, but also provides exercise. She stated that the board does not want to see the final report sit on a shelf; the board wants to get the recommendations implemented.

Ms. DiTaranti stated that the project team did not get Morristown Station's TOD's occupancy rate. She reported that the satellite parking lots are in the vicinity of Chatham Station and they are used as overflow lots when the primary lots, in closest proximity to the station, are full.

Chairperson Cooke asked for clarification on location of unofficial parking spaces at Covent Station. She also asked about the reaction and feedback to the study's recommendations, questioned who would take the lead so that the study's recommendations are implemented.

Ms. DiTaranti indicated that unofficial parking is being used by riders boarding at Chatham and Madison Stations. Convent Station boarders, who drive to access the station, are parking in official train station lots. She announced that as part of the next steps there will be a presentation on the study's findings at each of the three municipalities who host the stations.

Ms. Leary asked for additional explanation of housing needs in the study area, and asked if balance of the amount of resident versus nonresident parking permits was examined. She noted the NJ Transit website provided a good amount of parking information. In response to board members questions about implementation of the study's recommendations, she stated that the board can make this a priority, assist with gathering political support, and identify specific recommendations to focus staff efforts.

Ms. DiTaranti described the study area as being primarily dominated by single family housing. There is not the density and housing types in the study area to attract people or retain existing residents who would like to live in a walkable community, such as empty nesters and young professionals. There is a growing demand to live in walkable communities. She explained that team reviewed permit allocation but found that there was not an oversupply of resident permit parking that could be shifted to non-residents.

It will take a partnership between multiple levels of government and the private sector to implement many of the recommendations. More information and the study documents can found at on the project webpage at www.morrisdot.org/NJ124/.

VI. Staff Reports:

- 1. Planning Initiatives:** John Hayes reported that the spring traffic count season began on April 1. The program will return to locations last recorded in 2008 and 2009 counts. Two planning interns will be working with the department this summer. Additionally, the final report of the East Hanover Avenue Corridor Study will be completed soon. Responses to public comments on the final report were drafted and compiled. More information on the corridor study can be found on the project website at <http://www.morrisdot.org/accessories/transportation-ehanoveravecorridorstudy.asp>. Morristown's project team is holding design studios and giving presentations this week on their development of master plan.
- 2. Rail Activities:** Mr. Rohsler reported that the Kenvil Team Track Design and Bid Specification project is almost complete. Morris County is discussing some final details with Roxbury Township. The engineering for the improvements to the Kenvil Team Track, located in Roxbury off of US 46 and Berkshire Valley Road, is being provided by CHA. Mr. Rohsler also discussed that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requires routine inspection of railroad bridges. In summer 2012, Morris County staff developed an inventory of all bridges and culverts along the three Morris County owned railroads. Using the inventory, the county issued a Request for Proposal for the inspection of nine county railroad bridges.

The awarding of the contract will be decided soon, and the inspection will begin in summer 2013.

- 3. Morris/Warren Rail Corridor Study:** Joseph Russo reported that the Morris/Warren Rail Corridor Study's second Technical Advisory Committee meeting was held on February 20. The study's purpose is to inventory the vertical height clearance and weight constraints along the rail lines within and connecting Morris and Warren Counties. The study also contains an economic analysis component, which includes the examination of vacant parcels near the railway corridor. Businesses within the counties of Morris and Warren receive freight rail service via the Washington Secondary from the Lehigh Rail Line in Phillipsburg.

Frank Reilly explained that companies are interested in moving into New Jersey and will move once railroads are able to accommodate the vertical clearance requirements of the national standard, Plate F (17'0") rail cars. Chairperson Cooke asked what funding sources are available for these improvements. Mr. Russo responded that the State Rail Plan funding is designed for these types of railroad improvements. Mr. Rohsler added that the country is upgrading to carry 300,000 pound rail cars; New Jersey is still primarily restricted to 286,000 pound rail cars. Ms. Schopp noted that this infrastructure capacity issue is similar to the Bayonne Bridge; if freight is unable to get into New Jersey, business will go elsewhere.

VII. Approval of Minutes from January 22, 2013: Approval of the January 22, 2013 meeting minutes was moved by Ms. Manahan, seconded by Mr. Wells, and unanimously approved.

VIII. Old Business: None.

IX. New Business:

- Ms. Manahan suggested that board members submit any ideas regarding the development of the Morristown master plan to either Mr. Rohsler or her; both Ms. Manahan and Mr. Rohsler are on the project's technical advisory committee.
- Ms. Schleicher identified the recent fertilizer plant explosion in Texas and briefly noted the regional differences and trends regarding land use regulation.
- Mr. Reilly reported that the annual TransAction transportation conference was held on April 17 to April 19 in Atlantic City. Over 800 people attended the successful conference. Visit the conference website for more information www.njtransactionconf.com/.
- Chairperson Cooke reminded board members that the county is looking for people to serve on the Board of Transportation and asked for any suggestions of potential candidates.

- Ms. Schopp indicated that MCEDC is interested in attending future board meetings.
- Mr. Rohsler requested a change of meeting dates from July 16 to July 23 to accommodate Mr. Scott Parker's schedule. He will be making a presentation on the Morris/Warren Rail Corridor Study at the next meeting.

X. Public Comments: None.

XI. Next Regular Meeting: July 23, 2013, at 2:00 pm in the 4th floor conference room, 30 Schuyler Place, Morristown, NJ.

XII. Adjournment: Adjournment of the meeting was moved by Mr. Reilly and seconded by Ms. Schleicher, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Minutes prepared by John Hayes.