

MEETING MINUTES
Morris County Board of Transportation Meeting
 Tuesday, April 25, 2023
 Web-Ex Virtual Meeting

In Attendance:

Board Members	Additional Attendees	Staff
Melverne Cooke	Laura Cerutti, Avenues in Motion	John Hayes
Ronald Francioli	Ted Ritter, NJTPA	Dede Murray
Jack Holland		
Frank T. Reilly		
Len Resto		
Jigar Shah		
Commissioner Shaw		
Joe Wells, Chairperson		

I. Call to Order: Chairperson Joe Wells called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm.

II. Roll Call: John Hayes read the roll call. Eight voting members were present during roll call.

III. Welcome and Introductions: Chairperson Wells welcomed all in attendance.

IV. Approval of Minutes from January 17, 2023 Meeting: Approval of the minutes was moved by Len Resto, seconded by Melverne Cooke, and unanimously approved.

V. Reports:

A. Road & Bridge Projects:

Mr. Hayes reported on the following projects that the County is advancing:

NJTPA Local Safety Program: The NJTPA Board of Trustees awarded Morris County two grants through the NJTPA Local Safety Program on March 13. Grants were approved for safety improvements on East Main Street/Mendham Road (CR 510) between Tempe Wick Road (CR 646) and Cold Hill Road in Mendham (\$1,885,000), and South Morris Street (CR 643) between Millbrook Avenue/Munson Avenue and Byram Avenue in Dover (\$1,175,000). The grants are for design and construction. The projects will include corridor, intersection, and pedestrian safety improvements. Both projects are in the vicinity of schools and have a high number of children walking to school.

Two other projects funded through previous rounds of the Local Safety Program are advancing. Morris County advertised the construction contract in March for the Center Grove (CR 670) and Quaker Church Road Intersection Improvements Project in Randolph Township. The design for the Morris Avenue (510) and Ridgedale Intersection Improvements Project in Morristown has recently started.

Columbia Trail Pedestrian Crossing Improvements Project: The kickoff meeting for the county-funded design project was held on March 15 with Washington Township officials and the consultant team. The project design improvements for six pedestrian and bike crossings along the Columbia Trail in Washington Township: West Mill Road (CR 513), Middle Valley Road, Schooley's Mountain Road (CR 517), Fairview Avenue, Naughtright Road, and North Four Bridges Road.

Ash Trees Removal Program: The ash tree removal program along County routes continues. The emerald ash borer beetle has infested trees throughout the County. The County is addressing this safety issue within its right-of-way. The third ash tree removal contract is nearly complete, and the fourth contract is underway. An inventory of trees for a fifth contract is being prepared. Ash trees are also being removed as part of some county paving projects and by utility companies, such as JCP&L.

Traffic Counts: Morris County awarded the contract for the spring season of the annual traffic count program. The consultant will collect traffic volume at 30 locations throughout the County while school is in session.

Paving Program: The County's annual paving program has started. Paving of Jackson Avenue (CR 680) in Pequannock was completed. Paterson Hamburg Turnpike (CR 511A) in Riverdale will be resurfaced by the end of next week. Bid packages for paving John Street (CR 671) and a section of James Street (CR 663) in Morris Township, and Whippany Road (CR 511) in Hanover Township will be advertised soon. The Main Street / Mendham Road (CR 510) resurfacing project in Mendham Borough and Township will be bid in the next 30 days.

Bridge Projects: As part of the Landing Road Bridge Project, demolition of several buildings is expected to begin within the next two weeks. The replacement of a large 72" metal culvert under Cherry Hill Road (CR 654) will be completed by Friday.

B. Pompton Valley Rail Trail Updates:

Dede Murray provided a status update of the Pompton Valley Rail Trail Project, formerly named the NYS&W Bicycle and Pedestrian Path. She reported that the construction project is moving along on schedule. The required tree clearing is complete. Approximately two miles of the trail have been paved. Paving was suspended during the winter and will resume this spring. The contractor is performing grading work south of Newark Pompton Turnpike to prepare for additional trail paving.

C. Freight Activities:

Dover & Rockaway Railroad Runaround Track: Ms. Murray provided an update on the Dover & Rockaway Railroad Runaround Track project that is funded through NJDOT's Rail Freight Assistance Program. A runaround track is being designed to improve railroad operations along the D&R Railroad in Rockaway Township. The project team is discussing permitting with NJDEP. The County will go out to bid for construction once the permits are approved.

Berkshire Valley Road Railroad Crossing Replacement: Ms. Murray reported that the County will be upgrading the crossing of the High Bridge Branch and Berkshire Valley Road (642) with precast concrete panels. The contract was awarded, the preconstruction meeting will be held in the spring, and construction will occur at the end of June.

Dover & Rockaway Railroad Realignment: The Dover & Rockaway Railroad Realignment project was the first County railroad project to advance through NJTPA's Freight Concept Development Program. Ms. Murray reported that the County is now advancing to the design phase of this project, which is funded through NJDOT's Rail Freight Assistance Program. Currently, survey work is being conducted. Chris Vitz presented at the annual TransAction Conference in Atlantic City last week. He represented Morris County on the speaker panel alongside Jakub Rowinski of NJTPA and Scott Parker of Jacobs Engineering. The session showcased the success of NJTPA's Freight Concept Development Program that identified the preferred alternative for the railroad realignment which would remove 10 ungraded, at-grade rail crossings in downtown Dover.

Berkshire Valley Road Truck Circulation Project: Mr. Hayes reported that the Berkshire Valley Road Truck Circulation Project is nearly complete. The project is funded through NJTPA's freight concept development program. The study investigated options to eliminate the height restriction that the Chester Branch rail bridge creates on Berkshire Valley Road (CR 642) and to better accommodate trucks at the intersection of Berkshire Valley Road and North Dell Avenue in Roxbury. A public meeting was held on March 15 to present the preferred alternative. The preferred alternative is to replace the bridge with a new bridge that meets the standard height requirements. The bridge's sufficiency rating is too low to simply raise the existing bridge. And the preferred alternative for the Dell Avenue intersection is to realign the Dell Avenue so it intersects Berkshire Valley Road at Timber Court.

Frank Reilly asked about the timeline for completion of the Pompton Valley Rail Trail and noted it is great to see so many projects advancing. Ms. Murray replied that it is still anticipated to be completed and opened to the public in 2024. Chairperson Wells noted that there is a lot of excitement about the trail on social media and that he expects it to be a popular trail.

VI. Old Business:

Mr. Reilly reported that this year's TransAction Conference one the largest of these conferences with over 970 registrations and a sold-out vendor expo. It was the first in-

person conference for many attendees since Covid started. Ted Ritter agreed that it was a great conference and thanked Mr. Reilly, the conference chair, for overseeing the event.

VII. New Business:

Mr. Ritter provided an overview of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), the metropolitan planning organization for the region. He described how it is the NJTPA Board of Trustees' role to oversee \$2 billion in Federal disbursements. Commissioner Shaw is Morris County's representative on the Board. Mr. Ritter encouraged the Board to visit NJTPA's website and follow it on social media. The NJTPA tracks funding opportunities to help alert the region when grants become available. The website provides information on the various grant programs, including those available for municipalities, to support transportation infrastructure. Mr. Ritter discussed how the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is a great funding opportunity with a variety of grant programs. He announced that the next NJTPA Board of Trustees meeting is on May 8 and the Morris Canal Working Group meeting will be held on May 18.

Commissioner Shaw announced and invited the Board of Transportation members to attend the Volunteer Reception on May 9. He said it is the County's opportunity to thank the board and committee members for their service.

VIII. Public Comments: None

IX. The Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, July 18, 2023 at 2:00 pm.

X. Adjournment: Adjournment of the meeting was moved by Mr. Resto, seconded by Commissioner Shaw, and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm.

Minutes prepared by John Hayes, Division of Engineering & Transportation