

MEETING MINUTES
Morris County Board of Transportation Meeting
 Tuesday, July 18, 2023
 Morristown Airport, DM Airports
 8 Airport Road, Morristown, NJ 07960

In Attendance:

Board Members	Additional Attendees	Staff
Milverne Cooke	Denise Chaplick, Morris County Park Commission	Chris Vitz
Jack Holland	Ryan Gerhardt, Chesapeake & Delaware RR	John Hayes
Darren Large		Dede Murray
John Sobotka		Kevin Stephens
Ilene Dorf Manahan		
Manuela Schuster		
Jigar Shah		
Commissioner Shaw		
Joe Wells, Chairperson		

I. Call to Order: Chairperson Joe Wells called the meeting to order at 2:33 pm.

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

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

IV. Approval of Minutes from April 25, 2023 Meeting: Approval of the minutes was moved by Commissioner Shaw, seconded by Melverne Cooke, and unanimously approved with Manuela Schuster abstaining.

V. Reports:

A. Road & Bridge Projects:

Chris Vitz, County Engineer reported that the County’s annual paving program is fully underway, and it has been a busy summer. Paterson Hamburg Turnpike (511A) in Riverdale, John Street (CR 671) and a section of James Street (CR 663) in Morris Township, Whippany Road (CR 511) in Hanover Township, and Main Street / Mendham Road (CR 510) in Mendham Borough and Township were resurfaced.

He also reported on several of the County's Bridge projects. The rehabilitation of Bridge 229 on Schooley's Mountain Road (CR 517) in Washington Township should be completed in about two weeks. Millbrook Avenue Bridge over Mill Brook in Randolph is planned to be completed before school starts. The County continues the demolition of several buildings as part of the Landing Road Bridge Project in Roxbury.

Mr. Hayes reported that Morris County has signed up with the NJTPA to develop a Safety Action Plan for the County. NJTPA will be managing the development of plans for eight counties in their region. Safety Action Plans provide a framework for improving safety, with the ultimate goal of eliminating fatal and serious injury crashes. The project will have a large public outreach component and be data intensive. The plan will present recommendations to improve safety through design, education, and enforcement. Adoption of the plans by the County Commissioners will make the County eligible to apply for implementation funding through the Federal Safe Streets and Roads For All grant program.

Ms. Cooke asked about the project's schedule and data. Mr. Hayes responded that it is anticipated to kick off in November 2023 and be completed by December 2024. The study will use available crash data, likely through NJDOT's Safety Voyager, to identify priority areas and trends. Ms. Cooke asked if Safety Voyager is publicly accessible. Mr. Hayes said that it is not available to the public, the data compiled in the study will be public.

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 contractor is performing grading and paving work south of Newark Pompton Turnpike. The boardwalk in Wayne is under construction, and the repair of the bridge over the Pompton River continues.

Ms. Cooke asked if any of the trail was open to the public. Ms. Murray responded the County knows the public is excited, however it is still an active construction zone and therefore it is not open. Commissioner Shaw asked what the completion date is. Ms. Murray said that it is anticipated to be completed in the summer of 2024. Chairperson Wells asked about emergency access to the trail at the southern end. Ms. Murray reported that Meadow Road is one of the emergency access locations. Additional access points along the trail were discussed. Chairperson Wells asked about who is responsible for landscaping and weed control. Mr. Vitz reported that landscaping is being performed by the contractor while weed control has been handled by the County.

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. All NJDEP permits have been acquired and the County is working on finalizing the construction bid package with the design consultant.

Berkshire Valley Road Railroad Crossing Replacement: Ms. Murray reported that the High Bridge Branch and Berkshire Valley Road (642) crossing improvement project was completed on June 30. The crossing was replaced with precast concrete panels.

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 and meetings have been held with the design team to discuss field investigation findings.

Ms. Cooke asked for clarification about where the railroad is planned to be relocated and noted that these are congested roads where the crossings are located. Ms. Murray said that the rail and crossings would be removed in downtown Dover, but service would have to be maintained to an existing customer located west of Salem Steet, and the connection to NJ Transit's railroad would be moved from the west to the east of Dover. This would improve the efficiency of rail freight service along this rail line.

John Sobotaka reported that C&M Metals, one of the current rail customers, is considering building a siding off the main track as the company is interested in potentially shipping 15 rail cars of scrap metal per month. Howmet is doing a remediation project and is considering using rail to remove 680 rail cars of dirt for incineration. The County's contractor is continuing to clean up garbage along the Dover & Rockaway Railroad under Route 15 in Dover. Last year the railroad had paid for the removal of 3.5 tons. The garbage along the rail is a safety issue and they are trying to work with town to address the issue. He thanked the Board of Transportation for years of support for the Toys for Tots program that the railroad operator participates in with the US Marines.

Manuela Schuster asked about the plan to address garbage in Dover and asked where it was generating from. Mr. Sobotka said there have be discussions with the mayor, code enforcement officer, and NJDOT. It is being generated by a homeless encampment. Ms. Schuster asked if human services were involved. Mr. Vitz said Human Services have been contacted and the town has spoken with the people staying there, however as people move out, others move in.

Commissioner Shaw asked for clarification on the Dover & Rockaway Runaround project. Mr. Sobotka described how railcars and the locomotive are currently repositioned along the existing rail line, and how the runaround will help operations, safety, and efficiency.

D. Airport Activities:

Darren summarized the runway rehabilitation project that the Board toured prior to the meeting. The main runway should be back open in August. The next phase of the runway rehabilitation project is out to bid, and construction should occur in early 2024.

Chairperson Wells thanked Mr. Large and the airport for the tour and hosting the meeting.

VI. Old Business:

Ms. Schuster asked about the status of the Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan. Mr. Hayes reported that the final TAC meeting was held in May and the final report is being drafted. She asked that the project team be invited to come back and present at a future Board meeting.

VII. New Business:

Commissioner Shaw asked about status of Columbia and NJ 24. Mr. Vitz noted that it has funding and is on the TIP. Mr. Hayes said the public comment period for the TIP will be announced shortly and the NJTPA Board of Trustees will vote to adopt the TIP in the fall.

VIII. Public Comments: None

IX. The Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at 2:00 pm.

X. Adjournment: Adjournment of the meeting was moved by Ms. Cooke, seconded by Ms. Manahan, and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 3:22 pm.

Minutes prepared by John Hayes, Division of Engineering & Transportation