

# MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

**JAMES GIANNELL**  
Planning Board Chairman



**Anthony Garaguso**  
Council Chairman

Minutes for the Meeting of the  
**Monmouth County Transportation Council**  
Tuesday, December 8, 2020  
Monmouth County Planning Board  
One East Main Street  
Hall of Records Annex Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Freehold, NJ 07728

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## **I. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 PM**

## **II. ATTENDANCE – ROLL CALL**

### Members Present

Garaguso, Anthony  
Vernick, Jeff  
Grbelja, Nancy  
Barrett, Betsy  
Frost, Barry  
Van Nortwick, Peter  
Ponzio, Nicholas

### Staff Present

Bonanno, James – Staff Advisor  
Schmetterer, David

### Members Excused

Nelson, Eric  
Lucarelli, Ben

## **III. REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Approval of the Council's November 10, 2020 minutes was sought by Mr. Garaguso. Ms. Grbelja motioned to accept the November, 10 minutes which was seconded by Ms. Barrett and accepted unanimously by the Council.

## **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

### *- NJ TRANSIT 10-Year Strategic Plan and 5-Year Capital Plan*

Staff informed the Council that NJ TRANSIT's Assistant Regional Manager Chis D'Elia has received the council's review and recommendations regarding NJ TRANSIT's 10-Year Strategic and 5-Year Capital Plans. He thanked the Council and Monmouth County and stated he will be forwarding the information to the appropriate parties within NJ TRANSIT. Mr. Garaguso directed Staff to invite Mr. D'Elia to attend a future Council meeting in possibly February or March of 2021 for a follow up discussion on this topic.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

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## *- NJ TRANSIT Positive Train Control Implementation*

Mr. Vernick reminded the Council of the federal requirement of installation of Positive Train Control (PTC) on trains and rail lines. The Federal Rail Administration has been monitoring all railroads for PTC installation progress and had identified concern that NJ TRANSIT may not complete work by the December 31, 2020 full PTC implementation deadline. He continued by outlining the potential ramifications for missing the deadline such as heavy daily fines until implementation is complete, being unable to use AMTRAK rail lines such as the North East Corridor and Hudson River Rail Tunnels, which could lead to the possibility of a temporary shutdown of some rail services. NJ TRANSIT has responded to these concerns by assuring riders and the State of New Jersey that they have made significant progress since the Federal Rail Administrations review in September of 2020, and they are confident they will meet the December 31, 2020 deadline.

Mr. Frost informed the Council of a rail accident that occurred in the past involving a freight train and asked if freight engines and rail lines were also required to install PTC or if this only pertained to passenger rail. Mr. Vernick responded that to his knowledge all freight locomotives traveling along shared rail lines with passenger rail must be equipped with PTC but he is not aware of the requirements for freight exclusive rail lines and locomotives.

## *- AMTRAK On-Time Performance Rules*

Mr. Vernick updated the Council of new legislation that requires freight rail operators to give AMTRAK train priority when operating on freight lines to ensure on-time performance by AMTRAK passenger services. AMTRAK schedules will be certified and a minimum on-time performance standard of 80% must be maintained for any two consecutive calendar quarters. Mr. Vernick explained that this will help AMTRAK trains stay on time and offer better passenger rail services nationwide.

## *- 2021 Transportation Council Meeting Calendar*

Mr. Garaguso introduced the draft Transportation Council 2021 Meeting Calendar. Staff explained all 2021 meetings are currently planned to take place online via Webex on the second Tuesday of every month other than August which does not have a scheduled meeting. The new schedule reflects the change to online meetings and directs interested meeting participants to subscribe for meeting agenda and information email notifications. Staff and Council members briefly discussed possible meeting date conflicts with federal and religious holidays as well as Council member's personal and professional responsibilities. The Council decided to continue with the 2021 meeting calendar as currently drafted and reevaluate potential conflicts before the calendar is finalized in January at the Council's reorganization meeting.

## **VI. QUARTERLY TRANSPORTATION NEWSLETTER**

### *- Review of Draft January 2021 Winter Newsletter*

Staff presented the draft January 2021 Winter Newsletter to the Council and outlined the articles included starting with Motor Vehicle Commission Agency closures due to COVID-19. Multiple agencies statewide have been forced to close due to infected employees but the Motor Vehicle Commission provides a list of all open and closed facilities on their webpage which is linked in the newsletter. An article describing NJ TRANSIT's new My Active Trip feature which allows transit riders to set alerts for transit stops to ensure passengers don't miss their destination is included. Mr. Vernick asked if this feature is available to both bus and rail users. Staff was unsure and offered to investigate and report back to Mr. Vernick. Staff continued by outlining Electric vehicle rebate information as well as electric vehicle resources for local governments introduced to the Council by Ms. Friedman of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection at the Council's November meeting being made available in the newsletter. A newly updated waiting room in Penn Station New York is now available to NJ TRANSIT riders to help manage congestion in the station. Mr. Vernick added that the conversion of the Farley Post Office to an extension of Penn Station is scheduled to be complete in January 2021 and will greatly alleviate passenger circulation and congestion within the current Penn Station complex. Related to Penn Station, Staff also included an article explaining the possibility of beginning repairs to the Hudson River Rail Tunnels before the construction of two new

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tunnels as the current Gateway Project has planned. Mr. Vernick mentioned that there are some who believe this news could be detrimental to the progress of the Gateway Project's focus on replacement needs and suggested Staff include opposing arguments to ensure readers fully understand the discussion at hand. Staff agreed and offered to research and update the article to include additional information on this topic. Finally Staff announced the launch of the Monmouth Within Reach project webpage and its inclusion in the Winter Newsletter. The webpage includes a survey that is important to the data collection phase of the project and it is Staff's hope that the newsletter will help spark interest in the survey and project.

Mr. Garaguso asked if Staff is aware of how many people are currently subscribed to the Transportation Newsletter. Staff responded that there are currently 1,106 subscribers.

Ms. Barrett stated that the replacement of the Oceanic Bridge between Rumson and Middletown has become a contentious issue and asked if it was possible to include information on the project in the newsletter. Staff was unaware of any available information but offered to find something to include in the Newsletter. Mr. Garaguso added that the Engineering Department maintains a webpage on the Monmouth County site that offers information on all ongoing roadway and bridge projects including the Oceanic Bridge. He suggested this be included in the Newsletter so that information on all current projects could be made available, reaching a wider audience than just those interested in the Oceanic Bridge. Ms. Barrett agreed this would be the best course of action and Mr. Garaguso directed Staff to include this as an article in the Winter 2021 Transportation Newsletter.

## **VII. REPORTS OF STAFF**

### *- Tourism and Events Demand Management Update*

Staff briefed the Council that the study team has begun shortening the potential list of locations and is currently developing the materials needed to begin the criteria analyses process. This process will organize the information to assist the team in deciding which locations are to be included in the study. Staff explained their goal is to identify between 4 and 7 locations of varying event types to assure the travel demand measures generated by the project will apply to the widest array of events possible. As previously stated the project website is now available online and hosts a public survey. The study team is considering using the transportation council's agenda mailing list to spread awareness of the project and encourage Monmouth County residents and visitors to partake in the survey. Mr. Vernick asked if any other public engagement activities are currently planned for the study. Staff responded the study calls for stakeholder groups of involved citizens, governments, and businesses to be formed for each location. Public meetings will not be taking place as the study team does not foresee any infrastructure or public projects being recommended by the study. All recommendations and mitigation measures will focus on local government and business cooperation to solve congestion issues.

## **VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

## **IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Next public Monmouth County Transportation Council meeting will be – 7:00 PM Tuesday, January 12, 2021. The meeting will be held via Webex. Council members and members of the public will be provided with the Webex meeting information through the agenda notification system and email.

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

Following a motion to adjourn the meeting made by Ms. Grbelja and seconded by Ms. Barrett, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.