

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

JAMES GIANNELL
Planning Board Chairman



Anthony Garaguso
Council Chairman

DRAFT Minutes for the Meeting of the
Monmouth County Transportation Council
Tuesday, June 9, 2020
Monmouth County Planning Board
One East Main Street
Hall of Records Annex Building, 2nd Floor
Freehold, NJ 07728

I. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 PM

II. ATTENDANCE – ROLL CALL

Members Present

Garaguso, Anthony
Vernick, Jeff
Nelson, Eric
Nicholas Ponzio
Grbelja, Nancy
Barrett, Betsy
Frost, Barry

Staff Present

James Bonanno – Staff Advisor
David Schmetterer

Members Excused

Van Nortwick, Peter
Ben Lucarelli

III. REVIEW OF MINUTES

The Council's approval of the May 12, 2020 minutes was sought by Mr. Garaguso. Ms. Grbelja motioned to accept the May 12th minutes which was seconded by Mr. Ponzio and accepted unanimously by the Council.

IV. PRESENTATION

- Keith Hamas, Principal Planner: Safety Planning North Jersey Transportation Authority – Borough of Keyport: Complete Streets Policy and Implementation Guide

Mr. Garaguso introduced Mr. Hamas, a Principal Planner at the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority. Mr. Hamas thanked Mr. Garaguso for the introduction and began his presentation of the Planning for Emerging Centers Program taking place in the Borough of Keyport. He explained that the Planning for Emerging Centers program is intended to assist municipalities who are in need of sustainable planning that integrates housing, land use, transportation, and environmental planning by making North Jersey Transportation Authority (NJTPA) staff,

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such as Mr. Hamas available to municipalities. This program allows the NJTPA to help municipalities grow in accordance with their municipal master plan while coordinating with wider regional plans.

Mr. Hamas explained that Keyport applied for the Emerging Centers Program to assist with Complete Streets implementation within the Borough. He defined Complete Streets implementation as maximizing the accessibility and efficiency of roadway space to all users. With the help of a consultant the project team plans to review existing policy, plans, and best practices that may apply to the Borough of Keyport, create a complete streets ordinance, and develop a Complete Streets Design and Implementation Guide. Mr. Hamas continued that the Design and Implementation Guide would provide the municipality with a context sensitive approach to designing their roadways with all users in mind as well as provide recommendations for roadways and sites through the use of cross sections.

Mr. Hamas stated stakeholder and public outreach will be the most important part of this project and will include Steering Advisory Committee of Borough residents and officials, stakeholder interviews, surveys, publicly available interactive maps, focus groups, and a demonstration project. Mr. Hamas mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic will require the project team to adapt some of these stakeholder and public outreach initiatives to online forums or other safe environments to ensure public safety.

Mr. Hamas described the demonstration project as temporary tangible products that will help convince Borough residents and visitors of the usefulness and effectiveness of the suggested infrastructure improvements at very little cost. He gave an example of beginning with simple paint markers to show bicycle lanes or curb extensions. As people come to see the new infrastructures' benefits the town could install more permanent infrastructure such as expanded curbs or more durable paint.

Mr. Hamas expressed his gratitude to the Council for allowing him to attend their meeting and introduce them to this project. He assured them he would be coordinating with Monmouth County staff on all county roads and Henry Hudson Trail crossings. He stated that the project team is still in the early stages of the project and does not have much to report but would be willing to answer any questions the Council may have to the best of his ability.

Mr. Vernick asked when the demonstration project is scheduled to take place. He added that he understands the COVID-19 outbreak has the potential to alter the schedule. Mr. Hamas responded that while they are unsure what the demonstration project will be this early on, they believe it will be taking place in the fall.

Mr. Garaguso asked how the Council could follow the project's progress. Mr. Hamas assured him that Monmouth County staff will be participating in this project and will be kept apprised of all information and project progress. He added that they intend to hold a meeting with Monmouth County in the near future to discuss County facilities and the extent of County staff involvement.

Mr. Vernick informed Mr. Hamas of the Transportation Council Quarterly newsletter and offered to help advertise meeting dates and locations for the project through the newsletter. Mr. Hamas thanked Mr. Vernick and offered to provide Monmouth County staff with a schedule of meetings once they are scheduled. Staff added that they had reached out to Mr. Hamas prior to this Council meeting and requested some information on the project which will be included in the July Newsletter.

Mr. Garaguso thanked Mr. Hamas for taking time to speak to the Council and requested staff provide updates on this project in Old Business whenever information becomes available.

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V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- Mr. Frost Railpace Article

Mr. Frost made the Council aware of an article in the magazine Railpace that outlines the history of The North Jersey Coast line that includes historic maps, and pictures. He recommended any Council members interested in the history of the rail line should seek out this article. Mr. Frost added that he planned on attempting to share the article with Council members if possible.

- Mr. Vernick NJ TRANSIT Strategic and Capital Improvement Plans

Mr. Vernick announced to the Council that as of June 8, 2020 NJ TRANSIT has released their 10-Year Strategic and 5-Year Capital programs. He encouraged the Council to review the plans which are available on NJ TRANSIT's webpage prior to the Council's July Meeting. Mr. Vernick explained that he has asked staff to place these documents on the July agenda for the Council to review and discuss and reminded the Council that at their previous meeting NJ TRANSIT staff encouraged the Council to review these two plans. The Council agreed and directed staff to add this item to the Council's July agenda and distribute a link to the documents.

VII. TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

- Draft July Newsletter

Staff presented the Council with a draft of the Transportation Council Quarterly Newsletter's Summer 2020 edition and outlined the articles to be included with subject matter pertaining to: New Jersey's expanding efforts to electrify the state's Transportation Network including additional grant money being made available for electric vehicle chargers, NJ TRANSIT's contactless ticketing pilot program, extensions to license and vehicle registrations, links to NJ TRANSIT's social media handles for Monmouth County services, information on Mr. Hamas's work being done in Keyport, and COVID-19's possible long lasting effects on the way we travel. Mr. Vernick requested that mention of and a link to NJ TRANSIT's recently released Capital Improvement and Strategic Plans be included in the newsletter as well. The newsletter is set to be distributed on July 1, 2020.

In an effort to increase subscribers, Mr. Ponzio suggested Council members each send the newsletter's subscription link to their personal contacts and asked if there had been any consideration to partnering with other news outlets around the state to cross-promote each other's newsletter or articles. Mr. Garaguso liked the idea but expressed concern that he feels the current sign up process is a bit confusing and requires a bit of webpage navigating that may deter some people from signing up. He asked staff to inquire whether the process could be improved or streamlined and in the meantime he offered to put together a tutorial for those interested in signing up for the newsletter. He asked for Council members to hold off on inviting people to subscribe until he could put this tutorial together. Staff was unsure about the process of cross-promoting the newsletter with larger news sources but was confident that cross-promoting with other local municipal newsletters would most likely be allowed. Mr. Garaguso asked the Council to let staff know of any and all local transportation news sources they may want their newsletter made available to so that staff can investigate cross-promoting with them.

The Council approved release in July and thanked staff for their hard work on the newsletter.

VIII. REPORTS OF STAFF

- Tourism and Events Demand Management Update

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Staff informed the Council that The Board of Chosen Freeholders passed a resolution on May 28, 2020 to hire Stantec as a consultant for the Tourism and Events Demand Management Study. Staff is currently working to bring Stantec under contract and are planning to have a kickoff meeting to begin the project as soon as possible.

- Resolution Thanking Front-Line Transportation Workers

Staff reported that the Monmouth County Planning Board approved the distribution of the Transportation Council's Front-Line Transportation Workers Resolution. The Planning Board directed staff to distribute the resolution with a cover letter to the legislators of the 4 state legislative districts, two congressional districts, two senators, the lieutenant governor and governor as well as local transportation authorities. Staff admitted to having trouble finding address information for contacts at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority and asked the Council for any assistance they might be able to provide. Staff assured the Council that distribution would start as soon as possible.

- Monmouth County Grant Applications

Staff informed the Council that NJTPA invited Monmouth County to submit full applications for funds to support a Brookdale Community College Circulation shuttle, Belford Ferry Terminal shuttle, an Events Shuttle Service that would provide shuttles to municipalities and organizations for events being held throughout the county, and publicly available electric vehicle chargers located on Monmouth County Property.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Jenny Jeanette Mistretta, Freehold Township

In regards to discussion about NJ TRANSIT's Strategic and Capital Improvement Plans, Ms. Mistretta asked if there was any mention of reactivating passenger rail service on the rail line through Freehold Borough as she felt that it would create an economic boost for Freehold Borough and emphasized the importance of electrifying buses and rail lines. Mr. Vernick noted that while he did not recall seeing any mention of passenger rail projects within Freehold Borough or Monmouth County, the plans do discuss a number of potential future passenger rail projects, and that the plan did mention the long term goal of achieving a fully electric bus fleet. Ms. Mistretta was pleased to hear Mr. Vernick's report and encouraged the Transportation Council to consider the installation of electric vehicle chargers within Monmouth County to build on the work NJ TRANSIT is doing and encourage further use of electric vehicles.

Ms. Mistretta also expressed concern about the effects increased development due to Affordable Housing requirements will have on the transportation network and asked if the Council has any input on traffic concerns generated by new developments. Mr. Garaguso responded that the Transportation Council is an advisory Board to the Monmouth County Planning Board on transportation issues and does not take part in reviewing impacts from development. He explained that the Monmouth County Planning Board has a separate Development Review Board that reviews new developments. Staff added that County Planning Boards in New Jersey have the power to evaluate the impacts of new development on traffic along county maintained roadways and storm water drainage along or near county properties. The County has no jurisdiction to evaluate what is being built or for what use which is instead managed by the municipalities.

Ms. Mistretta thanked the Transportation Council for the information and the opportunity to raise her concerns. Mr. Garaguso responded on behalf of the Council that they were happy to have her and encouraged her to attend future meeting and raise any concerns or questions she may have.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Next public Monmouth County Transportation Council meeting will be – 7:00PM Tuesday, July 14, 2020. The meeting will either be held in person at the Monmouth County Division of Planning Conference Room at 1 East Main Street, 2nd Floor, Freehold, NJ 07728 or once again by Webex. Mr. Garaguso assured Council members and members of the public that Staff will be in contact through the agenda notification system and email as to the status of the meeting as it approaches.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Following a motion to adjourn the meeting made by Ms. Grbelja and seconded by Mr. Frost, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.