



North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, Inc.

FREIGHT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

Commissioner Stephen Shaw, Chair
Commissioner Sara Sooy, Vice Chair

Meeting Agenda

April 15, 2024

1:00 PM (East Coast Standard Time)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://njtpa-org.zoom.us/j/92848528347?pwd=czBha2F3c2M5VzMwdnM1aEVuMC9Xdz09>

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- I. Roll Call of Members
 - II. Approval of Minutes
 - III. Update on NJTPA Freight Division Activities – Anne Strauss-Wieder, Central Staff
 - IV. Annual Port Industry Update
 - Beth Rooney, Port Director, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
 - John Nardi, President, Shipping Association of New York and New Jersey
 - V. Two-Minute Reports on Freight Activities from Committee Members

VI. Next Meeting: Monday, June 17, 2024

VII. Adjournment



FREIGHT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

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Meeting Minutes February 20, 2024

I. Roll Call of Members

Freight Initiatives Committee (FIC) Chair Commissioner Stephen Shaw, Morris County, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Eleven voting members of the Freight Initiatives Committee were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 18 meeting was made by the City of Newark seconded by Hudson County and carried with nine affirmative votes. Morris and Somerset counties abstained.

III. Update on NJTPA Freight Division Activities

Anne Strauss-Wieder, Central Staff, discussed the trends and changes in activity at the port. Providing a timeline from 2019 to 2023, she illustrated the impact of the pandemic on vessel calls and the subsequent recovery. She noted that the numbers have descended since 2022 but are still greater than those of 2019.

Ms. Strauss-Wieder said the region had about 866 million square feet of industrial property at the end of 2023 and over 10 million under construction, but primarily smaller buildings. She also mentioned ongoing freight-related NJTPA efforts, such as updating freight forecasts using a federal data set called the Freight Analysis Framework (FAF), developing profiles for the 10 most important commodities or industry movements in the region and profiles for each NJTPA subregion. She said a workshop on behalf of the MAP Forum Multi-State Freight Working Group will be held in April to discuss using the FAF.

Jakub Rowinski, Central Staff, provided an update on the Freight Concept Development program, which advances regional and local trade initiatives identified through planning studies. Two projects were selected for the program's current round: the Southern Middlesex County North-South Truck Corridor Project and the Hanover Avenue Bridge Catenary Rail Clearance

Project in Morris Plains. Mr. Rowinski said these projects address truck traffic in residential areas and rail clearance issues, respectively. He noted that the Project Prioritization Committee approved the action that morning, and Board approval is expected in March. Work is expected to begin in Fiscal Year 2025.

IV. Presentations:

1. Bill Waxman, Cushman and Wakefield, discussed the state of New Jersey's industrial real estate. He said, despite facing headwinds in 2023, the industrial sector remains vibrant, driven largely by port activity. In 2023, negative absorption occurred due to a record 14.4 million square feet of new buildings coming onto the market, a result of increased construction in response to high demand in previous years. He said that the third-party logistics industry, especially food and beverage, continues to dominate space usage. Mr. Waxman noted that, contrary to expectations, rents are still growing despite an increase in vacancy rates. He highlighted a shift where companies are leaving older, more expensive locations in favor of more cost-effective and efficient spaces.

Mr. Waxman anticipates a slowing of new property construction in 2024 due to increased difficulty in gaining approval from towns and declining demand. He discussed the impact on leasing trends, with landlords facing pressure to offer more incentives to tenants. He said there is a significant trend in institutional companies buying up industrial properties. Mr. Waxman also offered comparisons with other major markets and an overview of the new construction pipeline in New Jersey.

2. Eric Bernstein, Esq., Eric M. Bernstein and Associates LLC, began by clarifying that his statements are personal and do not represent any official stance of his firm or associated organizations. His talk focused on warehouse development and emphasized the unexpected surge in demand for them. Mr. Bernstein said that, traditionally, developers were not interested in warehouses, but the landscape changed with the rise of online shopping, the proliferation of fulfillment centers and the sudden need for large concrete structures on various types of land. He said, despite attempts to aesthetically improve these structures, their fundamental characteristic remains their substantial size.

Mr. Bernstein advised municipalities to consult their master plans, particularly focusing on zoning to see if and what type of industrial and warehouse development could be allowed in places where they do not belong, particularly near residential areas. He said there are 13 types of warehouses of different types, all with their pros and cons. He cautioned municipal leaders to do their due diligence when considering proposals for industrial and warehouse development. Questions to consider include type; location; hazardous materials; proximity to a major thoroughfares, age restricted communities, schools or places of worship; roadway width; and proximity to public transportation for workforce, among other things.

V. Two-Minute Reports on Freight Activities from Committee Members

Janice Marino Doyle, NJDOT, said the agency's next Freight Advisory Committee will be held March 26, and that Allison Dane Camden, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the US Department of Transportation for Multimodal Freight Infrastructure and Policy will be the guest speaker. She said the NJDOT Freight Management System is being updated, and their Truck Parking Stakeholder Engagement Plan is moving ahead.

VI. Other Item

Commissioner Shaw mentioned that NJTPA Chairman Commissioner John Kelly, Ocean County, has expressed a desire to allow NJTPA standing committees the option of meeting in person. Commissioner Shaw said he prefers to continue holding virtual meetings, especially because they often feature speakers from outside the area. He said during the joint Project Prioritization Committee and Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting held that morning, there was consensus to hold in-person meetings at least once or twice a year, weather permitting. The Commissioner opened the floor to the Freight Initiatives Committee members to discuss their preferences, suggesting a potential mix of virtual and in-person meetings and perhaps a field trip or two. Commissioner Bette Jane Kowalski, Union County, agreed that remote meetings are most convenient for most people, but she would not mind having one in-person meeting per year.

VII Next virtual meeting: April 15, 2024

VIII. Adjournment

At 2:24 p.m. a motion to adjourn was made by Middlesex County, seconded by Somerset County and carried unanimously.

**Freight Initiatives Committee
ATTENDANCE
February 20, 2024**

VOTING MEMBERS	
Hon. Stephen Shaw (Chair)	Morris County
Hon. Charles Kenny	Middlesex County
Hon. Bette Jane Kowalski	Union County
Tom Malavasi	Hudson County
Dolores Martinez-Wooden	City of Newark
Mark Jehnke	Ocean County
Walt Lane	Somerset County
Sam Korvach-Orr	Governor's Authorities Unit
Janice Marino Doyle	NJDOT
Alan Kearns	NJ TRANSIT
Stephan Pezdek	PANYNJ
OTHERS	
Chris Helms	Bergen County
Trevor Howard	City of Newark
Bill Waxman	Cushman and Wakefield
Jack Kanarek	Dewberry
Eric M. Bernstein, Esq.	Eric M. Bernstein and Associates
Dr. Jobi Odeneye	Essex County
Bob Werkmeister	GPI
Ashley Dominguez	Hudson County
Bob Hornby	Hunterdon County
Katherine Fullerton	Hunterdon County
Sunil Dhuri	ICF
Alison Felix	MAPC
Linda Weber	Middlesex County
Andrew Lappitt	Middlesex County
Mike Dannemiller	Middlesex County
John Hayes	Morris County
Kevin Stephens	Morris County
John Hayes	Morris County
Trevor Howard	Newark
Lou Millan	NJ TRANSIT
Adam DiSarro	NJ TRANSIT
RJ Palladino	NJ TRANSIT
Tavainya Smith	NJDOT
Various members of Central Staff	NJTPA
Leslie Fordjour	NYMTC
Todd Goldman	PANYNJ
Andras Holzmann	Passaic County
Adam Bradford	Passaic County

Paul Bingham	S&P Global
Jonathan Eagle	Somerset County
Tom Drabic	Sussex County
Liza Betz	Union County
Ryan Conklin	Warren County
Devyn Cordero	
Deborah Hoffman	
Liz Langmaid	
Chris Bauers	
Kevin M. Russell	
Jim Hess	
Kathy Lander	
Dan Farina	
Megan Chang	
Rick Crawford	
Michael Angell	
Travis Pollack	
Andre Ludasi	
M. VanHatt	
Zac Werkmeister	
Ruchi Shrivastava	