**PROJECT PRIORITIZATION COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Charles Kenny – Chair

Commissioner Susan Soloway – Vice Chair

**PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Jason Sarnoski – Chair

Commissioner Bette Jane Kowalski – Vice Chair

**Joint Meeting Minutes**

**February 20, 2024**

I. Roll Call of Members

Commissioner Charles Kenny, Middlesex County, called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. Ted Ritter, Central Staff, called the roll. Twelve members of the Project Prioritization Committee (PPC) and 11 members of the Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC) were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2024 meeting was made by Passaic County, seconded by Essex County and carried with 14 affirmative votes. Middlesex, Ocean, Somerset and Warren counties abstained.

III. Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) Update

RTAC Chair David Antonio, Essex County, reported on the activities at the December 11, 2024 RTAC meeting. He said the Committee heard a presentation on the new NJTPA database of traffic counts, covering pedestrians, cyclists, and micro-mobility riders at over 400 locations. This tool aims to provide comprehensive data for safety programs, road studies, and traffic signals. Mr. Antonio said, also at the meeting, Central Staff briefed the Committee on various information items such as the Vibrant Communities initiative, Local Safety Action Plans, performance measures targets, the Regional Capital Investment Strategy, and demographic forecasts.

Mr. Antonio said the RTAC was also briefed on the action items to be considered on today’s agenda.

IV. Action Items

Project Prioritization Committee

1. Minor Amendments to the FY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Add Two NJDOT Projects

a. Portway, Fish House Road/Pennsylvania Avenue, CR 659, Hudson County

b. Route 9, Throckmorton Lane/Ticetown Road to Poor Farm Road/Hartle Lane, Middlesex County

John Witsch, Central Staff, said these amendments are necessary due to delays in authorization and the need for additional federal funds for the two projects that were originally authorized in the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 TIP. The Portway, Fish House Road project requires an additional $6.7 million for utilities and construction in FFY 2024, and the Route 9 project needs $6 million for construction in the same fiscal year.

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Sussex County, seconded by Monmouth County and carried unanimously.

2. FY 2025 Freight Concept Development Program Studies

Jakub Rowinski, Central Staff, said the program aims to advance regional and local freight initiatives identified through planning studies. The NJTPA, in coordination with the RTAC, developed a project intake process to select projects for the program. He said two projects were selected for advancement: the Southern Middlesex County North-South Truck Corridor Project and the Hanover Avenue Bridge Catenary Rail Clearance Project in Morris Plains, Morris County. These projects address recommendations from previous freight movement studies and aim to improve truck traffic and rail clearance issues, respectively. Mr. Rowinsky said, pending board approval, work on these projects is expected to begin in early FY 2025.

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Sussex County, seconded by Passaic County and carried unanimously.

Planning and Economic Development Committee

3. Approval of the FY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program

Angellita Young, Central Staff, said the proposed FY 2025 UPWP was distributed to the Board and RTAC in December for review. She said feedback from various stakeholders led to slight budget adjustments. Notable changes include a decrease in the overall budget by one percent, adjustments to labor and non-labor expenses, and updates to contractual costs and administration fees. Ms. Young said the comments focused on expenditure allocation, climate change initiatives, and collaboration with federal land management agencies. Ms. Young said a revised draft of the budget and Chapters 1, 2, and 3 are available for review on the NJTPA [website](https://www.njtpa.org/upwp.aspx), while Chapter 4 (Other Regional Transportation Initiatives) is still under development. Board approval of the UPWP will be sought at their May 11 meeting.

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Morris County seconded by Union County and carried unanimously.

V. Information Items

1. Port Authority Bus Terminal Replacement Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Lois Goldman, Central Staff, said the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the bus terminal replacement project is open for public comment until March 18. The EIS was released on February 2, and virtual public meetings were set for February 21 and 22 on the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey website. Ms. Goldman said the project is a 10 to 12-year undertaking crucial for the region, due to its impact on daily commuters.

2. Regional Capital Investment Strategy (RCIS) Refinement and Strategy Effectiveness Project Update

Keith Miller, Central Staff, said the Regional Capital Investment Strategy (RCIS) update project is progressing. The consultant has completed the first two ut of four tasks, involving a review of the existing RCIS and a literature review on the effectiveness of various transportation improvement strategies. The focus is on revising the RCIS by refining categories, principles, guidelines, and target allocations to make it more comprehensive. The goal is to enhance the connection between investments and desired outcomes aligned with regional goals. The project will soon develop a website to communicate the RCIS to decision-makers and the public. Mr. Miller said the updates will be discussed in detail at a Technical Advisory Committee meeting on February 23.

3. Local Safety Action Plan Development

Ms. Goldman said Local Safety Grants have been awarded to four counties - Hudson, Essex, Monmouth, and Union - along with the Sports and Exhibition Authority, and they are working on developing Local Safety Action Plans. Also, there are 15 municipal grants in various counties. Ms. Goldman said the NJTPA is collaborating with eight counties who are creating Local Safety Action Plans: Bergen, Hunterdon, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Warren.

Keith Hamas, Central Staff, said coordination with RTAC members in the participating counties is underway to establish Local Implementation Committees comprised of not only county staff but also a diverse set of safety and community stakeholders. Their role is to guide the plan, development, and implementation. They will focus on data analysis, identifying priority areas, and achieving broad consensus on actions to reduce injuries and fatalities. Their work will encompass infrastructure, enforcement, environmental design, education, and equitable resource allocation. The Local Implementation Committees meetings will begin in March, with the aim of completing plans by June 30, 2025 and issuing first drafts by the end of 2024.

VI. Executive Director’s Update

NJTPA Executive Director David Behrend said the Gateway Development Commission GDC has awarded its first heavy construction contract for the Hudson River Ground Stabilization Project. He said this $284 million phase of work is a critical component of the overall Hudson Tunnel Project, and it involves injecting a mix of soil, concrete, and water to stabilize the riverbed in 1,200 feet of the river shallows on the Manhattan side to ensure that the tunnel boring machine can excavate the new tunnel while protecting the riverbed from disruption. Work on this phase is expected to begin this spring.

Mr. Behrend said that NJTPA staff, as well as counterparts at New York Metropolitan Transportation Council in New York City recently coordinated with the GDC and the Federal Transit Administration to make technical corrections to their Long Range Transportation Plans to ensure that they accurately reflect funding and schedule details for the project.

VII. Written Information Items

The Committees received five written information items in their agenda packages:

1. Vibrant Communities Initiative – Blythe Eaman, Central Staff
2. Climate Pollution Reduction Grants – Priority Climate Action Plan Update - Zenon Tech-Czarny, Central Staff
3. Hudson County Local Safety Program Update – Aimee Jefferson, Central Staff
4. Local Concept Development Program Update – Sarbjit Kahlon, Central Staff
5. NJ TransAction Update – Ted Ritter, Central Staff

There were no comments or questions on the written agenda items.

VIII. Other Item

Commissioner Kenny and Commissioner Sarnoski, chairs of the Project Prioritization and Planning and Economic Development committees asked for feedback from committee members on the format of future meetings. The possibility of having one or two in-person meetings annually had been discussed. The options include an annual in-person meeting in June or two meetings in April and October. Committee members expressed openness to in-person meetings, with considerations for specific months. The consensus is to meet at least once, possibly twice a year in-person. The plan is to coordinate and schedule these meetings based on members' availability, and the flexibility to switch to virtual meetings was acknowledged, especially during weather concerns.

IX. Next Virtual Meeting: April 15, 10:30 a.m.

X. Adjournment

At 11:15 a.m., a motion to adjourn was made by Morris County, seconded by Hunterdon County and carried unanimously.

**JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING**

**ATTENDANCE**

**February 20, 2024**

**Project Prioritization Committee**

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| VOTING MEMBERS | |
| Hon. Charles Kenny (Chair) | Middlesex County |
| Hon. Susan Soloway (Vice Chair) | Hunterdon County |
| Hon. John Bartlett | Passaic County |
| Hon. Jason Sarnoski | Warren County |
| Joseph Baladi | Bergen County |
| Tom Malavasi | Hudson County |
| Shilpa Bhojappa | Monmouth County |
| Mark Jehnke | Ocean County |
| Tom Drabic | Sussex County |
| Sam Kovach-Orr | Governor’s Authorities Unit |
| Sudir Joshi | NJDOT |
| Megan Massey | NJ TRANSIT |

**Planning and Economic Development Committee**

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| VOTING MEMBERS | |
| Hon. Stephen Shaw | Morris County |
| Hon. Sara Sooy | Somerset County |
| Hon. Bette Jane Kowalski | Union County |
| Hon. Jason Sarnoski | Warren County |
| Dolores Martinez-Wooden | City of Newark |
| Mark Jehnke | Ocean County |
| David Antonio | Essex County |
| Elias Guseman | Jersey City |
| Sam Kovach-Orr | Governor’s Authorities Unit |
| Sudhir Joshi | NJDOT |
| Megan Massey | NJ TRANSIT |

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| Also, in Attendance | | |
| Frank Bell | | Hunterdon County |
| Katherine Fullerton | | Hunterdon County |
| Andrew Lappitt | | Middlesex County |
| Linda Weber | | Middlesex County |
| Mike Dannemiller | | Middlesex County |
| John Hayes | | Morris County |
| Kevin Stephens | | Morris County |
| Trevor Howard | | City of Newark |
| Farzana Ahmed | | NJDOT |
| Tavainya Smith | | NJDOT |
| Various members of Central Staff | | NJTPA |
| Adam Bradford | | Passaic County |
| Adam Bradford | Passaic County | |
| Andras Holzmann | | Passaic County |
| Walter Lane | | Somerset County |
| Liza Betz | | Union County |
| Ryan Conklin | | Warren County |
| L Lo. Sontag | |  |
| Ward Kradjel | |  |