



## **PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Jason Sarnoski – Chair  
Commissioner Bette Jane Kowalski – Vice Chair

## **PROJECT PRIORITIZATION COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Charles Kenny – Chair  
Commissioner Zach Rich – Vice Chair

### **Joint Meeting Minutes April 21, 2025**

---

#### **I. Roll Call of Members**

Union County Commissioner Bette Jane Kowalski, Vice Chair of the Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC), called the meeting to order at 10:28 a.m. Denise Truvillion, Central Staff, called the roll. Thirteen members of the Project Prioritization Committee (PPC) and 12 members of the PEDC were present (Attachment 1).

#### **II. Approval of Minutes**

Union County moved the minutes of the February 18, 2025, Hudson County seconded, and the motion carried with one abstention from Middlesex County.

#### **III. Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) Update**

Andras Holzmann, RTAC Vice Chair, reported on the April 14 meeting. As part of the ongoing Get to Know a Subregion presentation series, Katherine Fullerton, Hunterdon County, spoke about the county's land use, demographic trends, infrastructure, and efforts to create new transportation connections, improve walking, biking, transit and human services. Also at the meeting, Donna Allison, Executive Director of RideWise, gave the TMA report focusing on programs that provide bicycles to children and adults throughout the state who lack access to other modes of transportation. Central Staff provided updates on several efforts, including a new solicitation for Local Mobility Initiatives, and reviewed the three action items on the PPC agenda. The next RTAC meeting will be held virtually on June 9.

#### **IV. Presentation: [Economic and Demographic Outlook](#)**

Will Irving, Associate Professor at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy and leader of the Rutgers Economic Advisory Service (R/ECON), presented an economic and

demographic outlook related to Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). He said economic forecasting is particularly challenging due to instability and policy unpredictability. He said R/ECON's latest forecast is based on Moody's December national forecast (prior to recent federal policy shifts), indicating a significant near-term slowdown in New Jersey's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth compared to national growth rates. Although a projected sharp slowdown initially seemed unlikely, current conditions suggest it may be accurate or even an underestimation.

Mr. Irving noted New Jersey's significant domestic outmigration over the past two decades, averaging a net loss of 50,000 people annually from 2010 to 2020. International migration has offset this loss, preventing population decline. R/ECON's long-term forecast anticipates slow population growth (around 0.1 percent annually), exacerbated by potential immigration restrictions. Revisions to Census Bureau data show higher international migration than initially estimated. The state's aging population is also a factor, potentially leading to higher healthcare costs and out-migration of retirees. While R/ECON is still working on its next report, Mr. Irving said based on Moody's mid-April national forecast, which accounts for recent tariff and immigration actions, there could be a significant worsening of the near-term outlook for New Jersey, with a decline in state GDP, employment losses, and a rise in unemployment next year to 5.4 percent.

However, Mr. Irving said the longer-term outlook remains unchanged, assuming some resolutions to current policy issues. The presentation can be found on NJTPA's website [here](#).

Commissioner Kowalski turned the meeting over to Middlesex County Commissioner Charles Kenny, PPC Chair.

## **V. Action Items**

### **Project Prioritization Committee**

Commissioner Kenny called upon John Witsch, Central Staff, to present the three action items.

1. Minor Amendment to the FY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program to Add Federal Funds to the Route 4, Hackensack River Bridge Project in Bergen County.

Mr. Witsch said this action will add \$35.4 million to the project, increasing the total funding to \$224.8 million. The additional funds are necessary to cover cost increases for accelerated bridge, construction, roadway, and lighting, and for purchasing environmental mitigation credits.

[A summary of the action item is included in the Joint Committee meeting agenda package on [page 16 here](#)]

Bergen County moved the item, Passaic County seconded, and it carried unanimously.

2. Minor Amendment to the FY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program to Align and Increase Federal Funds on the Route 206, Valley Road to Brown Avenue Project in Somerset County.

Mr. Witsch said this request is to add \$33.5 million of National Highway Performance Program funds for Construction in FY 2026, increasing the total to \$120.5 million, and to align anticipated needs by reprogramming these funds as follows: \$3 million in FY 2027, \$50 million in FY 2028, \$46 million in FY 2029 and \$21.5 million in FY 2030. These changes are necessary based on a revised construction schedule and estimates accounting for changes due to inflation, cost increases and potential changes during the final design to structural and roadway items. [A summary of the action item is included in the Joint Committee meeting agenda package on [page 22 here](#)]

Somerset County Commissioner Sara Sooy raised concerns about the revised project schedule and said the county is fully committed to advancing this critical infrastructure project. She said the delay stemming from coordination with Norfolk Southern on the railroad bridge has made this project complex, and it is imperative to avoid further disruption. Commissioner Sooy asked the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) to accelerate the schedule as residents and the business community have waited long enough for long-promised improvements along Route 206. She said the current design should move the project closer to a final resolution and urged all partners to remain focused on timely and coordinated project delivery.

Sussex County moved the item, Hunterdon County seconded, and it carried unanimously.

### 3. Minor Amendment to the FY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program to Add Funds to the Landing Road Bridge Project in Morris County – John Witsch, Central Staff

Mr. Witsch said the request is to add \$18 million for construction in FY 2025, increasing the total to \$40 million. This action is necessary to cover construction cost increases, additional night-time work and flagmen to accommodate NJ TRANSIT rail operations and the incorporation of several significant structural design features and the Lake Hopatcong wall restoration. [A summary of the action item is included in the Joint Committee meeting agenda package on [page 68 here](#)]

Hudson County moved the item, Warren County seconded, and it carried unanimously.

## VI. Information Items

Commissioner Kenny introduced Central Staff members to present the five information items:

### **NJTPA Supported Local Safety Action Plans**

Keith Hamas, Central Staff, gave an update on the development of Local Safety Action Plans. He said that NJTPA has been supporting plan development in Bergen, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Ocean, Somerset, Sussex, and Warren counties. Local Implementation Committees (LICs) have been providing feedback on goals, strategies and locations, and meetings were held to review recommendations. Draft plans are expected later this spring, with a final round of public outreach scheduled for the second half of May. Previous outreach efforts include pop-up and virtual events, surveys and a web map for identifying priority locations. Upon completion, counties can seek funding for implementation through the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program. Applications are due June 26. The LICs will continue to meet and promote and monitor

plan implementation, which is a requirement of the SS4A program. The NJTPA will assist with early implementation.

### **Regional Performance Measures Dashboard**

Keith Miller, Central Staff, said the Regional Performance Measure Dashboard, fact sheets and scorecard have been updated and are available at [njtpa.org/regionalperformance](http://njtpa.org/regionalperformance). These tools monitor goals in the LRTP and communicate regional performance to enhance public awareness. Mr. Miller said the scorecard provides a one-page overview of all regional performance measures, showing previous and latest year values and the direction of change. The fact sheets offer printable summaries of the dashboard information. The interactive dashboard, accessible via this [link](#), presents performance measure groups.

### **Connecting Communities Update**

Lois Goldman, Central Staff, said work continues on the LRTP update. The NJTPA will share the draft *Connecting Communities* plan with partner agencies and subregions prior to the July public comment period, which will include a public meeting, and will also cover the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Air Quality Conformity Determination. The plan will go before the PEDC in August and then to the Board for adoption in September.

Ted Ritter, Central Staff, provided an overview of public outreach efforts, which have included Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings and virtual Let's Talk Transportation Forums focused on active transportation, transit access, and vibrant downtowns which garnered approximately 100 participants who provided valuable input. Recordings and presentations are available on the *Connecting Communities* [website](#). More than 2,100 people participated in the online survey and targeted outreach is underway to engage children, teens, young adults and other traditionally underrepresented populations. Pop-up events are being held in every subregion this spring..

### **Routes 80 & 15 Interchange Financial Plan Update**

Vanessa Koenigkramer, Central Staff, said the latest financial plan for the Route 80 and 15 interchange project reflects a total cost of \$209.8 million, a \$1.2 million increase over the prior plan, due to the remaining final design work for the Route 15 northbound bridge. This increase includes coordination with Picatinny Arsenal and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for right-of-way, stormwater drainage design and permit revisions. No TIP revision is required for the 2024 adopted amount, and the projects are exempt from air quality conformity.

Federally funded projects between \$100 and \$500 million must provide updated financial plans annually. This project will provide new ramp connections between Route 80 eastbound and Route 15 southbound and between Route 15 northbound and Route 80 westbound in Wharton Borough and Rockaway Township. To date, \$14.2 million has been expended on the project. It has a total cost of \$209.8 million, with a \$1.2 million increase due to the remaining final design work for the Route 15 northbound bridge.

### **Route 287, Route 202 to Ramapo River Financial Plan**

Ms. Koenigkramer said an initial financial plan has been prepared for the Route 287 rehabilitation project, which is estimated to cost \$107.2 million. This project will rehabilitate an

11.3-mile section of Route 287 in Morris, Passaic and Bergen counties and includes work on traffic signals, shoulders, guide rail, bridge parapets and crash cushions. This project is in the final design phase and has expended \$2.3 million. Construction is scheduled to begin in spring 2027 and conclude in fall 2030. No TIP revision is necessary for the 2024 adopted amount, and the project is exempt from air quality conformity.

## **VII. Written Information Items**

Commissioner Kenny read the titles of two written items. There were no questions.

1. Local Concept Development Solicitation FY 2026 – Sarbjit Kahlon, Central Staff
2. Congestion Management Process Needs Identification – Eugene McGuinness, Central Staff

## **VIII. Executive Director’s Update**

Executive Director David Behrend said the Federal Highway Administration approved the FY 2026 Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP) for all three of the state’s metropolitan planning organizations on April 11, ensuring funding for Central Staff, subregional pass-through programs and the Transportation Management Associations. This will allow continuation of planning work that improves transportation and quality of life in the region. Mr. Behrend thanked staff for their efforts in developing the work program.

Mr. Behrend said attention will now focus on upcoming reauthorization, as the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) expires in September 2026. Bipartisan discussions within the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee regarding federal transportation investments are encouraging and suggest a more traditional authorization process compared to the broader funding provided in IIJA. The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) and the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) are advocating for the region’s interests. Mr. Behrend serves on NARC’s Executive Directors Council and AMPO’s Policy Committee and said he would provide updates on reauthorization and federal policy developments when available.

Mr. Behrend thanked NJTPA staff who worked at the booth and participated in panel discussions at the [NJ TransAction Conference](#). He also thanked Commissioners Kenny and Kowalski for serving as moderators on NJTPA-led panels. He said the conference was well attended with more than 1,200 participants. He encouraged members to get involved in the conference next year.

## **IX. Other Items**

There were no other items to discuss.

## **X. Next Meeting**

June 16, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. (Virtual)

## **XI. Adjournment**

At 11:35 a.m., Morris County made a motion to adjourn, Union County seconded, and it carried unanimously.

**JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING  
ATTENDANCE  
April 21, 2025**

<b>Project Prioritization Committee Members</b>	
Peter Botsolas	Bergen County
Hon. Zachary Rich (Vice Chair)	Hunterdon County
Tom Malavasi	Hudson County
Hon. Charles Kenny (Chair)	Middlesex County
Joseph Ettore	Monmouth County
Hon. John Kelly	Ocean County
Hon. John Bartlett	Passaic County
Hon. Jack DeGroot	Sussex County
Dorian Smith	Governor's Authorities Unit
Andrew Clark	NJDOT
Michael Swan	NJ TRANSIT
David Dech	Warren County
Charles Burton	Citizens Representative
<b>Planning and Economic Development Committee Members</b>	
David Dech	Warren County
Hon. Bette Jane Kowalski (Vice Chair)	Union County
Hon. Stephen Shaw	Morris County
Hon. John Kelly	Ocean County
Trevor Howard	City of Newark
Elias Guseman	Jersey City
Dorian Smith	Governor's Authorities Unit
Andrew Clark	NJDOT
Michael Swan	NJ TRANSIT
Jay Shuffield	PANYNJ
Hon. Sara Sooy	Somerset County
Charles Burton	Citizens Representative
<b>Other Attendees</b>	
Tanner Thul	Hudson County
Frank Bell	Hunterdon County
Katherine Fullerton	Hunterdon County
Bob Hornby	Hunterdon County
Michael Manzella	Jersey City
Mike Dannemiller	Middlesex County
Kevin Stephens	Morris County
Amy Polachak	NJDOT
Various members of Central Staff	NJTPA
Mark Jehnke	Ocean County
Andras Holzmann	Passaic County

Hon. Paul Drake	Somerset County
Matt Loper	Somerset County
Ken Wedeen	Somerset County
Hon. Michele Delisfort	Union County
Ricardo Matias	Union County
Kamal Saleh	Union County
Ryan Conklin	Warren County
Nikita Benson	
Syd Chan	
Samantha De Andrea	
Will Irving	Rutgers University
Jack Kanarek	Dewberry
Bob Werkmeister	