



FREIGHT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE
Commissioner Stephen Shaw, Chair
Commissioner Sara Sooy, Vice Chair

Meeting Minutes
June 17, 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. and 11 voting members of the Freight Initiatives Committee were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 15 meeting was made by Somerset County and seconded by the City of Newark. It was pointed out that the attendance list on the minutes had a February date. Commissioner Shaw said that would be corrected. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

III. Update on NJTPA Freight Division Activities

Commissioner Shaw asked Jakub Rowinski, Central Staff, for an update on key freight activities. Mr. Rowinski said the 2050 Freight Industry Level Forecasts Update started a few months back and we have completed the methodological framework, which is a step-by-step process of how we're going to accomplish all of the deliverables and tasks for the entire study. Task 2, which is the data acquisition, is now underway and as is the disaggregation of the Freight Analysis Framework, which is a commodity flow database provided by the Federal Highway Administration. The study is on track for completion in June of next year. The second effort is the next iteration of the Freight Concept Development Program. For fiscal year 2025, Freight Concept Development Program studies are going to be the Southern Middlesex County North-South Truck Corridor Project in Cranbury and Monroe in Middlesex County and the East Hanover Avenue Bridge Catenary Rail Clearance Project in Morris Plains and Morris Township in Morris County. The Request for Proposals was issued on June 12. The proposals are due on August 7.

IV. Presentations: Truck Routing and Curbside Management

The Chair introduced the three speakers: Alison Conway, an Associate Professor of Civil Engineering at the City College of New York; Kristen Scudder, Freight Program Manager at the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC); and Kevin Force, Supervising Planner at the Hudson County Division of Planning.

Ms. Conway discussed the recent developments in e-commerce distribution in New York City, including the rapid growth of on-demand deliveries, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. This growth has led to a centralization of distribution facilities within the city to meet the demands for quick delivery times. This includes emergence of combined retail distribution models, where retail stores have become delivery points, as well as “dark stores,” which are retail stores that don’t provide a retail function but serve as small-scale distribution facilities fulfilling on-demand, even 15-minute deliveries, mainly via e-bike.

She noted that the City Council recently approved the first major rezoning in New York City since the early 1970s. The changes have the potential to enable some innovative distribution, Conway said, such as allowing for the development of micro distribution facilities in commercial districts zoned primarily for retail and flexible use of private parking garages, which have become underutilized in many cities with the shift to work from home.

Building design considerations for new distribution facilities include maintaining street-level activity, limiting curb cuts, and incorporating green roofs and solar panels. Regulatory updates, she said, are needed for cargo bikes and hand carts, such as defining commercial cargo bikes and setting size and weight restrictions.

Ms. Scudder addressed integrating freight into Complete Streets, which she said is not merely about efficiency but about enhancing the safety and quality of life for all road users. To address this, the DVRPC developed the Philadelphia Truck Network and Complete Streets Integration Guidebook. It begins by understanding where trucks travel within the city, through the creation of a truck network. The process includes screening major freight generators, detailed data evaluations, public education, and applying these designations to planning efforts.

Central to this integration, she said, is the use of design and control vehicles, which influence intersection and road designs. This approach ensures that while accommodating truck traffic, the safety of vulnerable road users is prioritized and recognizes that not all streets are ideal for a truck network designation.

A key product of this work is a matrix that overlays truck route typologies with Complete Street typologies, resulting in tailored design considerations. For instance, on primary truck routes, a buffered bike lane may be recommended instead of a bike share program. The guidebook also introduces new design elements to facilitate truck maneuvers, such as parking restrictions at intersections and asymmetrical median noses.

The guidebook’s implementation is already influencing Philadelphia planning, as seen in the industrial market and land use strategy study. The goal is to see these recommendations applied across the region and beyond, making streets safer and more efficient for freight and other road users alike.

Mr. Force said he managed Hudson County's Truck Routes Assessment, funded by the NJTPA Subregional Studies Program. This project aimed to enhance truck movements through infrastructure improvements and policy recommendations while mitigating negative impacts on traffic, safety, and communities. Hudson County, he said, features significant transportation links like the Lincoln and Holland tunnels and the Global Container Terminal.

Recognizing the post-pandemic rise in e-commerce and distribution needs, he said the county embarked on this comprehensive study to address the essential service of trucking and its challenges, such as congestion, emissions, noise, and pavement wear. As part of this, the study gathered data on truck routes and local delivery demands, using origin-destination data from INRIX, which provided real-time trucking data showing routes and areas with high truck activity.

The study, he said, included a robust public outreach effort involving multiple stakeholders, including government officials, private industry, and residents. Key issues identified included the importance of infrastructure and geometry for truck navigation, the need for parking access, and the interest in new technologies.

For curbside management and local deliveries, specific recommendations included designated curb loading zones, shared space, and demand management, tailored to different area types like commercial, mixed-use, residential, and industrial districts. Through work with the City of Jersey City, he said, the study developed a preferred truck route which avoids heavily residential areas.

In response to a question about e-bikes, Ms. Conway said while e-cargo bikes operate in New York, the industry is ahead of the regulation and the permitting and licensing need to be better defined. She noted that the definitions vary across European countries. She said they still represent a very small percentage of the vehicles on the road and while they can now use bike lanes, as their numbers increase, there may be pushback from other users.

In response to a question about public reaction to truck policies, Ms. Scudder said recommendations were issued as part of a guidebook so they could be easily available to be implemented. Truck route designations must involve the public to address their concerns. Mr. Force said that the county sought to create a dialogue between professionals, the private industry and the community. A lot of people, he said, were glad that the undertook the study and was seeking solutions that can work for everyone.

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

The Chair said that, in Morris County, construction of a run-around track on the Dover and Rockaway Railroad is expected in the next few weeks in Rockaway Township to improve the county's rail operations. The county also received a grant from NJDOT for the design of the Chester Branch Rail bridge over Berkshire Valley Road and the county will be signing that agreement at its next Commissioners meeting. That bridge was studied in the last round of the NJTPA's Freight Concept Development Program and will be designed to have sufficient clearance. The bridge has been struck by trucks numerous times. He thanked NJDOT and the NJTPA for their support.

Jay Shuffield, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, said a deal is being finalized between the New York City and the Port Authority to clarify jurisdiction of the Red Hook and Howland Hook facilities. Red Hook is now a New York City facility with no Port Authority involvement and Howland Hook is now fully a Port Authority facility.

Alan Kearns, NJ TRANSIT, announced that the State Rail Plan is being released for public review tomorrow.

Liza Betz, Union County, expressed appreciation for the presentations and noted that Union County completed its truck mobility study in 2021 when it was looking at both the need for Complete Streets and truck routes in the county. She said conflicts are an ongoing issue and require creative solutions.

There were no other reports by committee members.

VI Next meeting: August 19, 2024

The Chair said the next meeting will be held on Monday, August 19.

VII. Adjournment

At 2:26 p.m. a motion to adjourn was made by Union County, seconded by the Port Authority of NY-NJ and carried unanimously.

**Freight Initiatives Committee
ATTENDANCE
June 17, 2024**

VOTING MEMBERS	
Hon. Stephen Shaw (Chair)	Morris County
Hon. Charles Kenny	Middlesex County
Liza Betz	Union County
Tom Malavasi	Hudson County
Dolores Martinez-Wooden	City of Newark
Mark Jehnke	Ocean County
Walt Lane	Somerset County
Dorian Smith	Governor's Authorities Unit
Janice Marino Doyle	NJDOT
Alan Kearns	NJ TRANSIT
Jay Shuffield	PANYNJ
OTHERS	
Chris Helms	Bergen County
Dr. Jobi Odeneye	Essex County
Kevin Force	Hudson County
Alex Yu Hudson County	
Bob Hornby	Hunterdon County
Katherine Fullerton	Hunterdon County
John Hayes	Morris County
Kevin Stephens	Morris County
John Ernst	Ocean County
Lou Millan	NJ TRANSIT
Adam DiSarro	NJ TRANSIT
Various members of Central Staff	NJTPA
Leslie Fordjour	NYMTC
Jonathan Eagle	Somerset County
John Jahr	Bright View Engineering
Kristen Scudder	DVRPC
Alison Conway	City College of New York
Devyn Cordero	NJDOT
Nipa Maniar	NJDOT
George Bulow	
James Nunes	
Joseph Milanese	Dewberry
Miriam Swartz	PANYNJ
Jim K	
Margaret Kijinski	
John Gleeson	
Rickie Clark	FHWA-NJ
Victoria Schulz	

Stephen Chiaramonte	WSP
Ruchi Shrivastava	HDR
Bob Werkmeister	GPI