



John P. Kelly, Chair
Charles Kenny, First Vice Chair
David W. Behrend, Executive Director

FREIGHT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

Commissioner Stephen Shaw, Chair
Commissioner Sara Sooy, Vice Chair

Meeting Minutes August 19, 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 10 voting members of the Freight Initiatives Committee were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 17 meeting was made by the City of Newark and seconded by Somerset County. Ocean County abstained from the vote. 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 first item is the 2050 Freight Industry Level Forecasts Update Study. This work began approximately eight months ago, and the effort will support NJTPA's next Long Range Transportation Plan and other efforts. This forecast update is being led by Cambridge Systematics. Among the items that have been completed are the methodological framework, data collection and a disaggregation of the Freight Analysis Framework to serve as the baseline commodity flow information. He said an e-commerce analysis completed during the previous forecasts study several years ago is being enhanced with some newly available and improved data. The effort is on track to be completed in June 2025. Regarding the FY 2025 Freight Concept Development Program Studies, Mr. Rowinski said NJTPA is going to conduct concept development studies for the Southern Middlesex County, North-South Truck Corridor Project in Cranbury and Monroe, Middlesex County; and the East Hanover Avenue Bridge Catenary Rail Clearance Project in Morris Plains and Morris Township, Morris County. The NJTPA will also do a preliminary screening for Plate F rail clearance in Perth Amboy, along the North Jersey Coast Line. He said the RFP was issued on June 12, proposals were due on August 7 and consultant selection is underway.

IV. Presentations: Marine Highway Initiatives

The chair introduced speakers for presentations on marine highway initiatives: Kyle McGraw, Manager, Port Infrastructure Planning, Port Department, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; Kerry Goleski, Freight Mobility Program Lead – Sustainability Initiatives, New York City Department of Transportation; Chris Canary, Assistant Vice President of Ports, Waterfront, and Transportation at the New York City Economic Development Corporation; and Chris Lutick, Director of State Government Affairs at UPS.

Mr. McGraw told the committee that the Cross Harbor Carfloat at Greenville Yard in Jersey City uses two barges to float 18 railcars at a time to the 65th Street Terminal in Brooklyn. In 2023, 5,000 railcars were moved, with each trip carrying the equivalent of 72 truckloads.

The operation, he said, is the last of the once extensive freight barge services in the region. Up until the 1950s when goods movement by truck became dominant, cargo was transferred from several major railroads terminating on New Jersey’s very active and working waterfront to floats bound for Manhattan and Brooklyn. Hundreds of these transited the harbor and then the river daily, he said.

With the help of federal grants, in recent years the Port Authority has invested \$100 million to upgrade and modernize the Greenville facility. It includes a hydraulic bridge to raise tracks to accommodate tides. Still, weather – particularly wind and fog – can hamper operations, McGraw said. At the 65th Street terminal arriving railcars are transferred to a street track and then are picked up by the New York and Atlantic Railroad for transport to New York City and Long Island destinations.

The second presentation focused on New York City’s Blue Highways program for expanding waterborne freight distribution. It is part of a larger “Harbor of the Future” initiative of the Mayor’s office, which includes economic development along the waterfront to create technology and other jobs. The intent of the Blue Highways is to reactivate the waterways for freight transportation, similar to how New York Harbor was used in the 19th and 20th centuries, Mr. Canary said. But he added that the initiative has a “21st century twist,” seeking to use zero emission vehicles for much of the movement.

A key component of the program, said Ms. Goleski, is building infrastructure to allow goods to be conveyed to waterfront locations and then moved upland to public or private facilities where they can be transferred to non-polluting vehicles for final delivery. That last leg can include electric cargo bikes and electric vans. While cargo bikes have much less capacity than vans or trucks, they can travel faster on congested city streets. A city “microhub” program is providing locations where goods can be transferred to cargo bikes for local distribution.

To support the marine aspect of the program, the federal Maritime Administration has provided a grant to upgrade waterfront landings at six locations, which can be accessed by barges and ferries. Yet, the program faces a “chicken and egg” problem: the city wants to find the best

places and ways to invest while many businesses are hesitant to commit without the investments in place. The city's solution is to actively engage with industry while setting up pilot operations using some existing waterfront landings. One effort is the delivery of beer from Red Hook suppliers to Governor's Island via ferry and cargo bikes. The city also issued a Request for Expressions of Interest to solicit ideas for other pilots for the program.

The third presentation focused on the efforts of UPS to explore transporting its packages from Bayonne to Brooklyn via barge. Mr. Lutick said the goal is getting goods from Newark airport into Manhattan while avoiding some major congestion on roads.

He said the concept could use roll-on-roll-off barges or high-speed ferries to travel between the UPS facility in Bayonne to Red Hook in Brooklyn. The complication is that UPS packages are often time sensitive and bad weather could limit deliveries up to 75 days a year. Also, the travel time to Red Hook could be 45 minutes to an hour.

Even with the potential complications, he said UPS has been doing a lot of due diligence over the past five years to launch a viable maritime alternative to truck transport in the New York-New Jersey region, similar to what has been accomplished in Virginia. The company's initial goal is to move 24 trailers one round trip a day.

As the Blue Highways program develops other waterfront locations for barge access, he said the UPS effort could serve as a model to other companies to create or use similar waterborne services for supplying New York City. Greater environmental benefits, he said, will be realized when electric barges and tugs, now under development, can be put into service.

In response to a question about whether the Blue Highways toolkit includes information about New York grants, Ms. Goleski said that the toolkit focuses on applying for federal grants and the program can offer letters of support for projects seeking federal grants that fit with the Blue Highways program. In response to a question about upland infrastructure and asset management, she said the former were facilities such as "microhubs" where goods can be transferred between vehicles and the latter referred to inventorying and assessing the city's piers and other infrastructure that could be part of freight distribution. Mr. Canary said some assets have other potential uses such as parkland.

In response to a question about public push-back to uses of waterfront facilities for freight, Ms. Goleski said this is addressed through community engagement when an industry proposes a pilot or new route and by assessing environmental and other impacts of proposals. In response to a question about restrictions on materials handled by the car float, Mr. McGraw said other than hazardous materials, there is no real restrictions, though some preparation is needed for large materials. Growth in cargo may come from construction materials, containerized waste, and materials for large infrastructure projects.

In response to other questions, Ms. Goleski said there were no standards yet for wayfinding though it is being explored and that there isn't dedicated funding for road treatments under Blue Highways, but improvements could be integrated into road projects near the waterfront. In response to a question about other companies using the future UPS barge service in Bayonne,

Mr. Lutick said there are currently no plans for this but that it may be considered once the service is established. In response to a question about the development of electric barges and tugs, Mr. McGraw said there is one in use in San Diego and that companies in the New York area are exploring the technology. Ms. Goleski confirmed this and said she expected them to be available in the next few years. A commenter said that Caterpillar is working on alternative fuel engines for inland waterways.

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

The Chair gave an update on Morris County's project to build a run-around track about 960 feet along the Dover and Rockaway Railroad in Rockaway Township to improve railroad operations. The project is being funded with a grant from NJDOT's Rail Freight Assistance Program. There are five freight customers along that rail line. He said both turnouts have been installed and the county expects to complete the project in mid-September.

Walt Lane, Somerset County, said they are holding their public hearing tomorrow night on the circulation element of the county master plan, which was completed as part of the NJTPA's Subregional Studies Program. There are recommendations in the circulation element to support goods movement and freight initiatives.

There were no other reports by committee members.

VI. Next meeting: Monday October 21, 2024

The Chair said the next meeting will be held on Monday, October 21, 2024 and reminded members that this is an in-person meeting at the NJTPA in Newark.

VII. Adjournment

At 2:18 p.m. a motion to adjourn was made by Ocean County, seconded by the City of Newark and carried unanimously.

Freight Initiatives Committee

ATTENDANCE August 19, 2024

VOTING MEMBERS	
Hon. Stephen Shaw (Chair)	Morris County
Tom Malavasi	Hudson County
Dolores Martinez-Wooden	City of Newark
Hon. John Kelly	Ocean County
Walt Lane	Somerset County
Bette Jane Kowalski	Union County
Megan Fackler	NJDOT
Alan Kearns	NJ TRANSIT
Jay Shuffield	PANYNJ
Charles Burton	Citizens Rep
OTHERS	
Bob Hornby	Hunterdon County
Katherine Fullerton	Hunterdon County
John Ernst	Ocean County
Mark Jehnke	Ocean County
Tom Drabic	Sussex County
Liza Betz	Union County
Ryan Conklin	Warren County
Ken Wedeen	Somerset County
Various members of Central Staff	NJTPA
Rickie Clark	FHWA
Joseph Milanese	Dewberry
Adam DiSarro	NJ TRANSIT
Lou Millan	NJ TRANSIT
Yevgeniy Galinski	NYMTC
Leslie Fordjour	NYMTC
Genevieve Clifton	NJDOT
Devyn Cordero	NJDOT
Nipa Maniar	NJDOT
Kerry Golelski	NYCDOT
Chris Canary	NYCEDC
Kyle McGraw	PANYNJ
Miriam Swartz	PANYNJ
Blair Wegescheide	PANYNJ
Lou Luglio	HNTB
Elizabeth Ward	NJ Highlands Council
Katie Kirk	Cambridge Systemics
Ruchi Shrivastava	HDR
Tiffany-Ann Taylor	RPA

Bob Werkmeister	GPI
Xi Zou	STV
Chris Lutick	UPS
Axel Carrion	UPS
Anne Strauss-Weider	
Alan Meyers	WSP
Ashley Delgado	
Anthony	
Daniel Gastaldo	
George Bulow	
Hilary McCarron	PANYNJ
Jim Badgley	
James	
Jim Hess	
ML Clanton	
Michael Fesen	Norfolk Southern
Matt Van Hatten	HDR
Michael Angell	
Neel Badlani	
Rosemary Nivar	
Ryan White	Jacobs
Samantha I	
Scott Parker	Jacobs
Sofia Kyle	