

MAKING CONNECTIONS



APPENDICES

NOVEMBER 2011



Appendix A – Public Involvement

Public Involvement

Steering Committee Meetings

Somerset County Circulation Element Update

MEETING AGENDA

Date: Thursday January 27, 2010, 10 am

Location: Engineering Conference Room,
Somerset County Administration Building

Subject: Study Advisory Committee Kickoff Meeting

1. Welcome - Somerset County
2. Introductions - All
3. Study Overview – PB
 - Introduce project team
 - Study purpose and goals
 - Explain role and responsibilities of SAC members
 - Review proposed schedule, meetings, products/outcomes
4. Discussion of Key Themes, Issues – PB
 - Integrating land use and transportation
 - Multi-modal transportation system and traffic congestion
 - Freight and goods movement
 - Climate change and greenhouse gases
5. Group Discussion of Issues, Goals and Policies - PB, All
6. Introduce ProjectSolve - PB
7. Upcoming Meetings - PB
8. Next Steps - PB



Update to the 2003 Circulation Element



SAC Meeting #1 – January 27, 2010



Agenda

- Study Overview
 - Study Team
 - Purpose of Circulation Element
 - Steering Advisory Committee
 - Process
 - Schedule/Timeline
- Key Themes and Issues
- Group Discussion
- ProjectSolve Introduction
- What's Next

SAC Meeting #1 – January 27, 2010



Study Team

- Somerset County Planning Division
- Parsons Brinckerhoff – Princeton/Newark, NJ
- T&M Associates – Middletown, NJ
- Technical Specialists:
 - A. Strauss-Wieder, Inc. (Freight Planning)
 - Michael Baker Corporation (GHG Emissions)
 - M.A. Culbertson, LLC (Public Involvement)

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Purpose of Circulation Element

- Guide transportation decision making
- Collaborative effort
- Not just a list of projects
- Multi-modal in scope
- Integrated with land use plans
- Considers environmental constraints and impacts
- **Create a sustainable vision for Somerset County**

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Steering Advisory Committee

- Roles:
 - Guide development of the Plan
 - Provide local input
 - Plan must reflect local goals, needs, concerns
 - Take “Ownership” of the process
 - Build support and consensus
- Responsibilities:
 - Attend SAC meetings
 - Bring the public into the process
 - Identify Plan goals and policies
 - Review and comment on work products

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Process and Plan Tasks

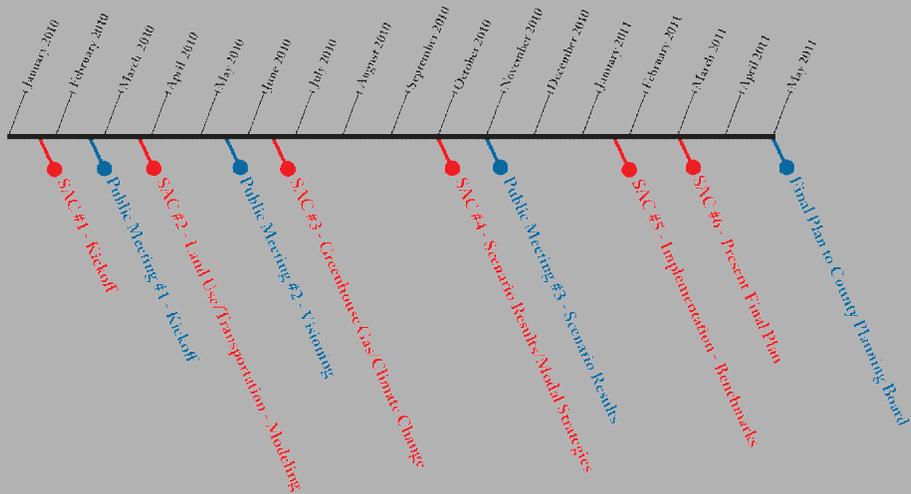
- Steering Advisory Committee
- Outreach: public meetings, focus groups, survey
- Data collection and analysis
 - Review of studies, initiatives, and policies
 - Vulnerable infrastructure
- Visioning and scenario modeling
 - Multi modal analysis including freight
 - Environmental constraints
 - Develop benchmarks and assess results
- Develop Circulation Element

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Schedule/Timeline



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Key Themes and Issues

- Smart growth principles
- Integrating land use and transportation
- System connectivity
- Freight and goods movement
- Environmental considerations

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Smart Growth Principles

- Street and system connectivity
- Mixed-use development - walkable and accessible
- Appropriate street widths and design speeds
- Compact centers with transit supportive density
- Shared parking, cross access, access control
- Promote development of livable communities
 - Placemaking
 - Context-sensitive design

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Integrating Land Use and Transportation

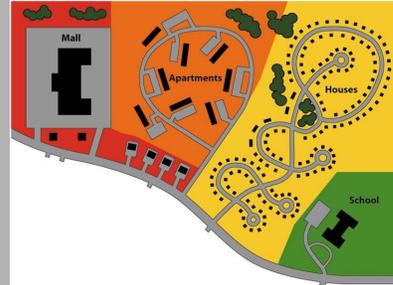
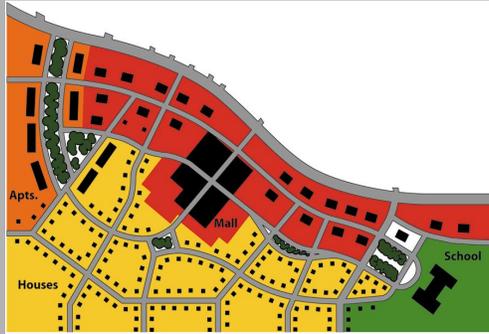
- Land use affects human activity and travel
- Transportation systems affect land accessibility
- Planning seeks to balance mobility and access
- Key variables
 - Rate of growth, location, built form, mixed use, density, accessibility
- Use scenario planning to understand and evaluate potential outcomes

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Connectivity



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Freight and Goods Movement

- Indicators of a healthy and growing economy
- Critical to local and regional economy
- Truck traffic and local impacts
- Develop a freight profile for Somerset County
 - Key issues, trends, and technologies
 - Potential strategies to mitigate local impact
 - Leverage recent and ongoing studies

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Environmental Considerations

- Environmental considerations include
 - Greenhouse Gases (GHG)
 - Climate change
- NJTPA GHG inventory
- GHG indicators from scenario modeling task
- Climate change impacts
- Identify vulnerable infrastructure

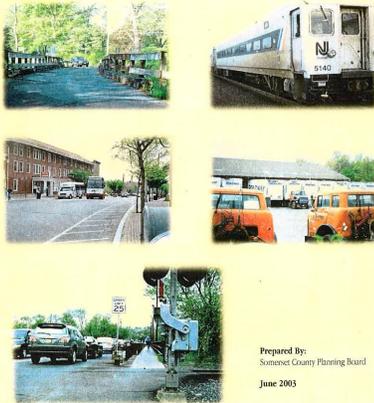
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Group Discussion

TRANSPORTATION CHOICES SOMERSET COUNTY CIRCULATION ELEMENT UPDATE



- 2003 Circulation Element
- Goals and policies
- Key issues and trends
- Concerns of SAC members, communities, business
- Suggestions for focus groups and participants

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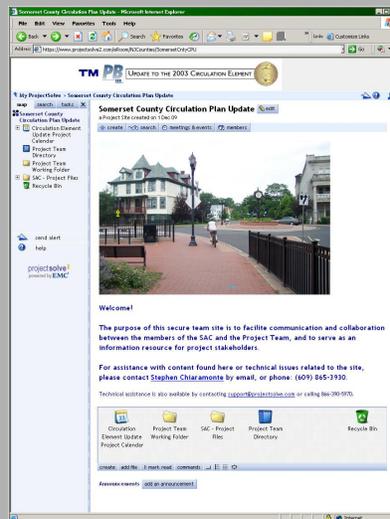
ProjectSolve Introduction

- Information and File Sharing Tool
- Secure - Password Protected
- Accessible From Anywhere With an Internet Connection
- Plug-In: Not Required, but Recommended

SAC Meeting #1 – January 27, 2010



ProjectSolve Introduction



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ProjectSolve Introduction

The left screenshot displays the 'SAC - Project Files' view. It features a navigation pane on the left with a tree structure including 'Circulation Element Update Project', 'Calendar', 'Project Team', 'Project Files', and 'Recycle Bin'. The main content area shows a table of files with columns for 'name', 'created', 'owner', and 'size'. Below the table is a 'Comments' section with 'add a comment' and 'take a note' buttons.

The right screenshot displays the 'Circulation Element Update Project Calendar' view. It shows a calendar for January 2010. A date picker is set to January 1, 2010. The calendar grid shows dates from 1 to 31. A specific date, January 27, is highlighted with a 'SAC Meeting #1' event icon. Below the calendar is a 'Comments' section with 'add a comment' and 'take a note' buttons.

SAC Meeting #1 – January 27, 2010



ProjectSolve Introduction

The screenshot shows the 'SAC Meeting #1' details page. The navigation pane on the left is expanded to show 'SAC Meeting #1' under 'Project Files'. The main content area displays the following information:

- Meeting Overview:** SAC Meeting #1 (SAC Meeting #1) - Somerset County, Somerset, NJ - Stephen Chioranante on 15 Jan 10
- Start Meeting:** 27 Jan 10 10:00am
- Location:** Somerset County Administration Building, 20 Stone Street, Somerville, NJ
- Country Complex Map:** <http://www.somerset-nj.gov/your-county-complex-map.html>
- Attachments:** SAC #1 Fact Sheet.pdf, SAC #1 Somerset County Circulation Element.pdf

At the bottom of the page, there is a 'Comments' section with 'add a comment' and 'take a note' buttons.

SAC Meeting #1 – January 27, 2010



What's Next

- Review of studies, initiatives, policies
- Initiate scenario planning and modeling tasks
- Develop plan for focus groups
- Public meeting #1 – February 25 at 7 pm
- SAC Meeting # 2 – March 2010
 - Discuss Land Use-Transportation Integration and Environmental Strategies
 - Findings from review of data collection and analysis
 - Scenario planning and modeling overview
- Public meeting #2 – May 2010





PB Meeting Minutes

Subject: Somerset County Circulation Element
Study Advisory Committee Meeting #1

Attendees: Peter Kremer, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Ken Wedeen, Somerset County
Joseph Burdulia, NJDOT (JB)
Yvonne Manfra, Somerset County
Megan Kelly, NJTPA
Jakub Rowinski, NJTPA
Stephen Chiaramonte, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Joseph Fishinger, Somerset County
Michael Kerwin, Somerset Cty Bus. Partnership
Robert Bzik, Somerset County
Bernie Navatto, Somerset County Planning Board
Walt Lane, Somerset County
David L. Lorimer, Somerset County
Anthony Durante, Somerset County
Peter Messina, Bernards Township
Peter Palmer, Freeholder
Barry Ableman, OSG
Jaclyn Flor, T&M
Lynn Weckworth, United Way

Date: January 27, 2010 – 10:00am
Location: Somerset County Administration Building

The meeting began with introductions around the table.

Peter Kremer, PB, then gave a PowerPoint presentation that explained the update to the 2003 Circulation Element, introduced the Project Team, explained the purpose of a circulation element, and the roles of the Steering Committee.

Robert Bzik, Director of Somerset County Planning, commented that the Circulation Element should closely reinforced smart growth and the land use plan. He also stated that the County has used the Circulation Element as a springboard for other studies.

Mr. Bzik then stated that the Steering Committee and Project Team should not be afraid to put some big ideas on the table; he furthered this by saying that this is not only a short-term plan, but a long-term plan and we should look at these items without blinders and use progressive thought to formulate new ideas and approaches.

Mr. Bzik then questioned Peter Kremer on how growth would be calculated. He explained that there has been a significant change in the rate of growth in State and Somerset County and questioned how the Project Team is going to be able to get accurate numbers, as currently NJTPA is working with the numbers and demographics.



Pete Kremer explained how the numbers could be adjusted, and Walter Lane, added his suggestions to verify the data as well, noting that NJTPA will provide updated numbers from their Greenhouse Gas Emissions analysis in the spring.

Pete Kremer then moved the discussion to freight, and explained that trucks self regulate and show up at night or in the middle of the day and this is when local impacts are noticed by residents.

Mr. Bzik explained that the County is a strong supporter of freight movements; however, municipalities do not always support freight policy.

Peter Palmer, Freeholder, then stated that Lawrenceville and Princeton are an example of towns that wanted to restrict trucks from certain routes and this is an example of where decision makers do not understand the effect to freight by making these decisions. He then explained that freight is necessary for Sustainability, and he said that he felt NJTPA will give greater weight to smart improvements. He then stated that the County should get a copy of the "Emerging Industries Report" to the Project Team.

Pete Kremer then asked if the Steering Committee could go around the room and provide each of their goals for the Circulation Element Update.

Mr. Bzik noted that the county was concerned with sustainability and maintaining system performance over time. Further, he noted that NJTPA is placing more weight on overall system performance when looking to allocate state and Federal funding.

Michael Kerwin, CEO, Somerset County Business Partnership, said that he wants to see a practical decision on what the next big thing that could be developed in Somerset and how we can support that in the Circulation Element. He also said that creation of jobs was important, and worker productivity measurements. Lastly, he stated that the West Trenton line should have a high priority.

Barry Abelman, OSG, pointed out that the West Trenton line may not have as high a priority as ARC lines. Then he stated that his goal is that the plan supports the NJDOT Highway Access Code.

Mr. Bzik stated that the plan should encourage towns to support mixed use/transit oriented development.

Peter Palmer, Freeholder, stated that the ARC will have a great impact on Raritan Valley Line. He also noted the impact of the Hillsborough/U.S. 206 bypass.

Joe Fishinger stated that safety is his primary concern, and that the Circulation Element should support ideas that reduce crashes. It should not just address capacity; it should fix safety problems.

Lynn Weckworth said that her concern was financial stability (jobs/housing/education) for families as transportation is a huge issue for low income residents, many of which lack access to an automobile.



Yvonne Manfra said that “gated communities are the death of transit.” She felt that the focus on dollars cannot just be on transportation services for senior populations; that the focus needs to be on the low income population and community programs. She said that transit is in multiple locations; however once you get to the transit stop there is no way to shuttle people to their destinations. We need to get people transportation options from transit stops.

Ken Wedeen noted that existing rail service is often used as a shuttle service in addition to use as a commuter train.

Megan Kelly echoed the previous comments. She said we must look at things on the regional level.

Jakub Rowinski, NJTPA, said that his focus is education and outreach for freight. He felt that there is an opportunity for overlap with land use environmental impacts, etc. with freight.

Peter Messina, Bernards Township, said that his concerns are Park-n-Ride lots and no transportation options. He felt that there should be transportation options from Park-n-Ride lots. Additionally, he stated that land use is an issue, but then stated that then there is home rule. So we have to figure out how to convince towns and residents to convert to the second visual option of a grid (he was referencing a slide in the Project Teams PowerPoint presentation); rather than the first solution with limited access, because homes are worth more on the first solution. So education is needed. People think my kid can't play if there's a grid because there will be more cars. Lastly, he stated that he'd like to see a work from home one day a week policy. He also requested an outreach brochure to be shared with local stakeholders showing how a road network can impact circulation.

David Lorimer, Assistant County Engineer, said that the Circulation Element needs to drive the overall capital program.

Walter Lane said that he'd like to see ways to maximize our existing infrastructure, including small ticket items that have a large positive impact.

Ken Wedeen, Somerset County Principal Planner, said he's like to see the Circulation Element make Somerville the transit hub and center County that it should be, and we need wayfinding signage so that people can find it.

Joe Burdulia, NJDOT stated that they are trying to help Somerville become a transit hub.

Bernie Navatto, Somerset County Planning Board Chairman, stated that it is not just Somerville, but Bound Brook, South Bound Brook, Raritan and other communities. He said that he lives and works in Somerville and avoids going out into that jungle outside due to the failing transportation levels of service. He said that we need to get innovative and not just accept it; we need to take regional traffic off our streets. He went on to say that we have a changing population and a lot of people are using bicycles and we have very little for bikes as a means of transportation, only bikes as recreation, and this needs to be addressed throughout the County. Bike connectivity is an issue. Overall connectivity of all modes is the critical element of the plan.



NJDOT then advised everyone that NJDOT just adopted a complete streets policy.

Dan Baer, PB, stated that his thoughts on the Circulation Element were that home rule is our biggest obstacle. He also stated that ARC will have a tremendous impact on freight and transit and mobility in the County.

Peter Kremer then thanked everyone for their comments, and moved the discussion to the first Public meeting, and let everyone know that it would be held on February 25th.

Robert Bzik then stated, that “Making Connections” is worthy of a focus group. We need to have the general public involved and the local municipalities, they need to be engaged. He suggested that perhaps we have an open mike for goals from the public. He then stated that in order to engage the public and get them out, you need to change the name and the first slide of the presentation. He said that we need to brand the meeting, such as “Making Connections”. People do not show up for a policy plan. People show up for controversy.

Peter Kremer said he would revise it and he felt that “Making Connections” was a great name to help brand the outcome of the study.

The meeting then closed with the County thanking everyone for coming.

Distribution: Attendees, PLA 19515A 6.0, Central File 19515A 6.0

Somerset County Circulation Element Update

SAC Meeting #1

January 27, 2010 10am

<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Peter Kremer PB	kremer@pbworld.com	609-734-7039
Ken Wedener	wedener@co.somerset.nj.us	908-231-7024
JOSEPH BURDULIA	Joseph.Burdulia@dot.state.nj.us	609-850-8131
Yvonne Manfra	S.C Transportation	
Megan Kelly	NJTPA	
JAKUB ROWINSKI	JROWINSKI@NJTPA.ORG	973-639-8443
Stephen Chiramonte	chiramonte@pbworld.com	609-865-3930
Joseph Fishinger	fishinger@co.somerset.nj.us	908-231-7619
Michael Kerwin	mkerwin@schp.org	
Kennel Payne	kpayne@co.somerset.nj.us	
Bernie Nadette	brucepa@optimum.net	908-722-0056
Walt Lane	SC PB	
DAVID L. LORIMER	som.co.ENGINEERING	908-231-7024
Anthony Durante	durante@co.somerset.nj.us	
PETER MESSINA	PMESSINA@BERNARDS.ORG	908-204-3020
Barry Hennen	DSL	609 292 3228

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Somerset County's Circulation Plan Update

MEETING AGENDA

Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2010, 10 am

Location: Engineering Conference Room,
Somerset County Administration Building

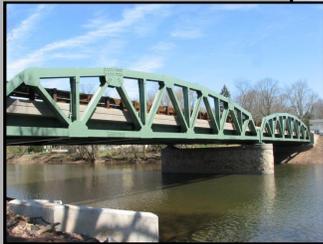
Subject: Study Advisory Committee Meeting #2

1. Welcome - Somerset County
2. Introductions - All
3. Recap of March 11 Public Meeting - PB
4. Summary of Crash Data Analysis - PB
5. Overview of Scenario Modeling - PB
 - o Background
 - o Proposed Scenarios
 - o Group Discussion
6. Survey Preliminary Findings - PB, Somerset County
7. Focus Groups - PB, Somerset County
8. Next Steps – PB



MAKING CONNECTIONS:

Somerset County's Circulation Plan Update



Steering Advisory Committee #2 – March 24, 2010



Agenda

- Recap of Public Meeting
- Crash Data Summary
- Overview of Scenario Modeling
- Survey – Preliminary Results
- Focus Groups
- Next Steps

Steering Advisory Committee #2 – March 24, 2010



March 11 Public Meeting

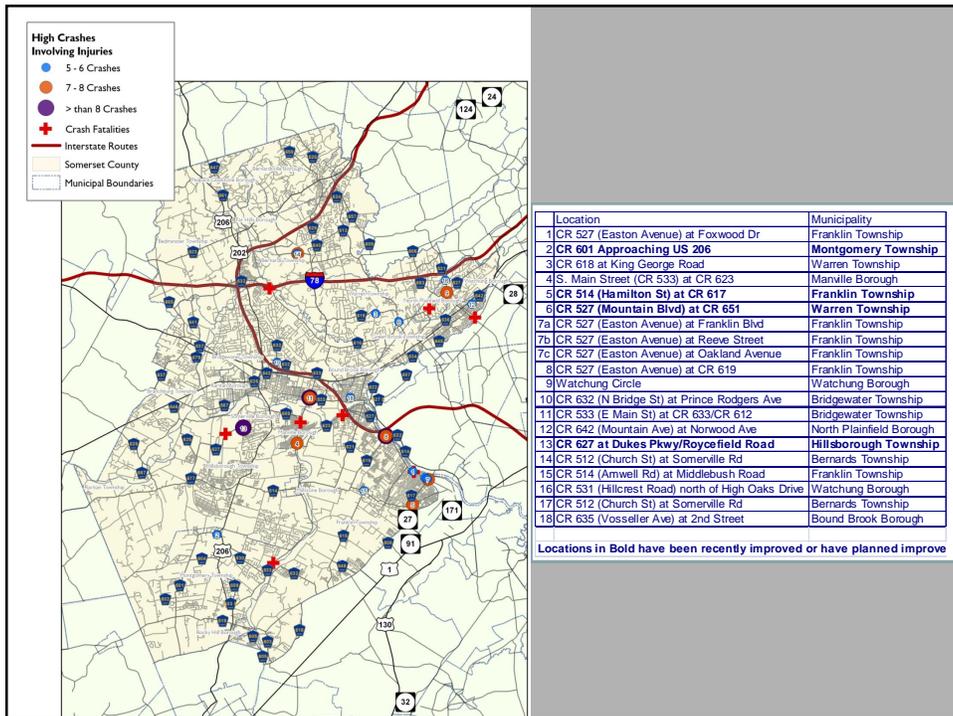
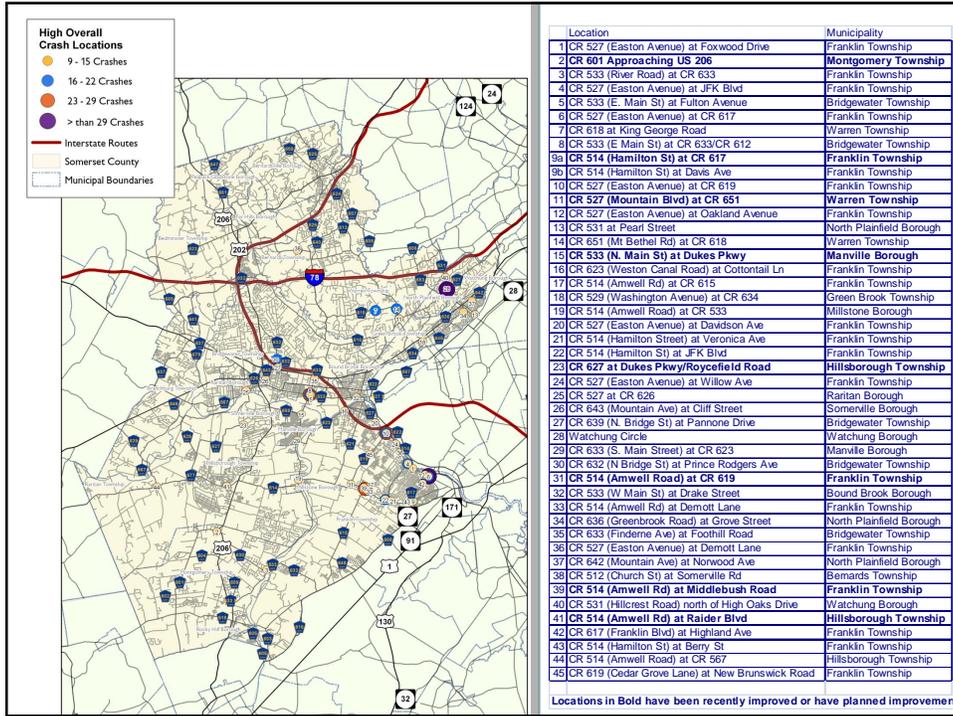
- Agency staff, municipal officials, concerned citizens
- Video and presentation on NJTPA - RTP 2035
 - Much common ground
 - Similar issues, tools, measures
- Discussion topics included
 - Local impacts of regional traffic
 - Funding and investment priorities
 - Plan needs to set priorities for action
 - Importance of local and county transit
 - Need to consider bicycle, pedestrian, and school access



Crash Analysis

- Review of 3 years of data (7/06 – 6/09):
 - Examines County roadway network
 - Only crashes where location was easily identifiable
 - 8,620 total crashes over 3 year period
- Comparison to:
 - Statewide average for county roadways
 - All crashes within Somerset County
- Includes a review of crash trends





Crash Analysis

- Injuries more frequent on County routes than on all roadways in Somerset County
- Most common crash types:
 - Same-Direction Rear
 - Right Angle
 - Fixed Object
 - Animal
- Nearly one-third of all crashes occur during dawn/dusk/night



Scenario Planning

- Evaluate alternative outcomes/scenarios
 - Scenarios reflect potential future outcomes and visions
 - Utilize transportation, demographic, land use elements
 - Facilitate compare and contrast using performance measures
 - How does each scenario meet Plan goals and policies?
- Tool: North Jersey Regional Travel Model (NJRTME)
 - Multi-modal with enhanced Transit component
 - Based on NJTPA Demographic Projections
 - Allows testing of projects, policies, environmental and land use issues



North Jersey Regional Travel Model

- Multi-modal with enhanced transit component
- Based on NJTPA demographic projections
- Covers Northern New Jersey and surrounding region
- Test projects, policies, environmental and land use issues
- Performance measures to evaluate scenarios



Five Alternative Scenarios

1. NJTPA Baseline Projections
2. Office of Smart Growth "Plan" Demographic Projections
3. Highway Focus
4. Transit Rich
5. Blend Scenario



1 - Baseline

- Based on NJPTA approved demographic projections
- Only proposed TIP and Plan projects
- Follows current trend-line of growth and development patterns for County and region
- What would happen if no new plan, policies, vision were introduced?
- Creates baseline for comparison of alternative visions and scenarios



2 – OSG “Plan” Projections

- Based on OSG “Plan” Demographic Projections
 - State Plan latest approved Cross Acceptance projections
 - Also used for Wastewater Mgt & Strategic Growth Plan
- No changes to proposed baseline projects
- Introduces land use and environmental focus
- Reflects local and priorities view of constraints on development
- Projections feed each of alternative future scenarios



3 - Highway Focus

- Primarily highway-based improvements
 - Identify and address congestion and travel demand
 - Opportunity for Steering Committee and focus group input
- Includes TDM/TSM elements
 - Low-cost operational improvements
 - Policies that shift travel demand (i.e. work at home)
 - Highway and transit ITS improvements
- Based on Plan Projections



4 - Transit Rich

- Draws from variety of potential local and regional transit improvements
 - Opportunity for Steering Committee and focus group input
- Includes TDM/TSM elements
- Based on Plan Projections
- Introduces centers-based development patterns that create transit-supportive densities



5 - Blend Scenario

- Brings together complementary elements
 - Highway
 - Freight and Goods Movement
 - Transit/Centers-based
 - TDM/TSM
 - Intermodal connections
- Based on Plan Projections



Performance Measures

- Candidates include
 - Vehicle Miles Traveled
 - Travel speeds
 - Trip length
 - Amount of “Congested” travel
 - Change in congestion over time
 - Model split: car, truck, bus, rail
 - Access to transit
 - Transfers between modes
 - Emissions and GHG benefits
 - Cost of plan
- Examine relative differences not absolute numbers



Focus Groups

- Identified four focus groups that combine key issues, concerns, needs
 - Local and Regional Transit
 - Freight and Goods Movement
 - Mobility, Safety and Connectivity
 - Economic Issues/Jobs/Families/Special Needs
- Input supports development of scenarios
- Looking for potential dates in April
- Need SAC members to nominate and participate



Survey - Preliminary Findings

- Team examined and revised Goals and Policies
- Participants review and rank Goals and Policies
- E-mail and web distribution
 - Available at www.ridewise.org
- Wide distribution but low participation
- Public input is critical to understanding local needs, issues, proprieties
- Need SAC members to distribute and promote



What's Next?

- Distribute and promote survey
 - Survey available at www.ridewise.org
- Nominate and participate in focus groups
- SAC # 3: Green House Gas Inventory and Analysis
 - Summer 2010
- SAC # 4 and Public Meeting #2
 - Review of Scenario Modeling results
 - Fall 2010



MAKING CONNECTIONS

Somerset County's Circulation Plan Update

MEETING AGENDA

Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2011, 10 am

Location: Engineering Conference Room,
Somerset County Administration Building

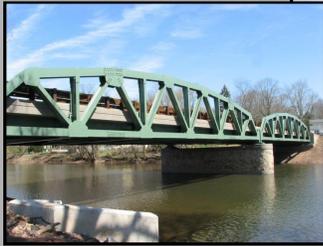
Subject: Study Advisory Committee Meeting #3

1. Welcome - Somerset County
2. Introductions - All
3. Summary of Focus Groups - PB
4. Overview of Scenario Modeling - PB
 - o Scenarios
 - o Results - Pros/Cons
 - o Group discussion and consensus on Blend Scenario
5. March 23 Public Meeting – PB/ Somerset County
6. Next Steps – PB



MAKING CONNECTIONS:

Somerset County's Circulation Plan Update



Steering Advisory Committee #3 – February 16, 2011



Agenda

- Recap of Focus Groups
- Summary of Goals and Policies
- Overview of Scenario Modeling
- Consensus Discussion on Blend Scenario
- Public Meeting
- Next Steps

Steering Advisory Committee #3 – February 16, 2011



Focus Groups

- Five sessions were held – April thru August
 - Freight and goods movement
 - Public transit
 - Mobility and safety
 - Economic issues
 - Critical infrastructure and climate change
- Variety of interests represented
 - Public sector
 - Private sector and business
 - Advocacy groups and stakeholders



Diverse Needs and Issues

- Improve bus and transit service, add station parking
- Add sidewalks, bicycle accommodations, greenways
- Expand critical roadways including U.S. 206
- Improve roadway network connectivity
- Trucks and freight are critical to local and regional economy
- Improve safety and livability of roads and communities
- Redevelop urban centers with transit supportive density
- Explore public/private partnerships
- Roadway safety is a priority
- Connect people with jobs through transportation



Goals and Policies

- Started with 2003 Circulation Element
- Updated based on:
 - Steering committee input
 - Comments from focus groups
 - Survey results
 - Comments from public meeting
 - Reflect current state of practice



Goals and Policies

- (In priority order based on survey results)
- Maintain and Modernize the County Transportation System
- Reduce Traffic Congestion
- Reduce Green House Gas Emissions Contributing to Climate Change
- Protect and Enhance the Natural and Built Environment
- Support Economic Activity in Town Centers and Business Corridors
- Improve Mobility and Connections between Travel Modes
- Integrate Transportation, Land Use, and Site Design
- Maintain a High Level of Safety and Security
- Monitor the Performance of the Transportation System



Scenario Planning

- Developed alternative scenarios
 - Reflect potential desired outcomes and visions
 - Based on infrastructure, demographic, land use elements
 - Facilitate compare and contrast using performance measures
- Tool: North Jersey Regional Travel Model (NJRTME)
 - Multi-modal with enhanced Transit component
 - Based on approved demographic projections
 - Testing of projects, policies, environmental and land use issues
- Many variations tested
 - How does each scenario meet Plan goals and policies?



Scenario Planning

1. Somerset County Baseline
2. Highway Rich
3. Transit Rich
4. Blend Scenario 1
5. Blend Scenario 2



Projects by Scenario

Project	Scenario				
	Baseline	Highway Rich	Transit Rich	Blend 1	Blend 2
Highway					
Brown Ave - relocation		X		X	X
West County Dr	X	X	X	X	X
Orchard Rd - Connection to River Rd	X	X	X	X	X
CR 518 - Intersection	X	X	X	X	X
NJ 22 Widening	X	X	X	X	X
Chimney Rock Rd Interchange	X	X	X	X	X
I-287 at Easton Ave Interchange	X	X	X	X	X
U.S. 206 - Bypass and 15 N Widening	X	X	X	X	X
Amwell Rd Signal Improvements	X	X	X	X	X
Easton Ave Jersey Barrier		X		X	X
Centennial Ave - new crossing over Raritan River		X		X	X
Weston Canal Rd Signal	X	X	X	X	X
South Bound Brook to Middlesex - new crossing over Raritan River		X		X	X
US 202 at 1st Ave - widening	X	X	X	X	X
Diamond Hill Rd Interchange	X	X	X	X	X
Diamond Hill Rd - widening		X			
Transit					
Lehigh Valley			X		
West Trenton		X	X	X	X
Hudson River Tunnel	X	X	X	X	X
Regional Service Enhancement			X	X	X
Travel Demand Management					
TDM Strategies (moderate)		X	X	X	X
Improved Network Coverage			X	X	X
Improved Bus Service			X	X	X
Improved Rail Service			X	X	X
Parking Fee Increase			X	X	X
Increase Percent Walk to Transit			X	X	X
Capacity and Highway Maintenance					
Five % Reduction in Capacity due to Funding Shortfall	All Roadways but County Routes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Socioeconomic Projections					
Municipal Demographics	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan

Steering Advisory Committee #3 – February 16, 2011

TM DP
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Somerset County Baseline

- Follows current trend-line of growth and development patterns for Somerset and region
- Only NJTPA TIP and Plan projects
- Adopts NJTPA assumption for roads
 - Capacity reduction due to funding shortfall
- *Baseline* for comparison
 - What would happen if no new plan, policies, vision were introduced?

Steering Advisory Committee #3 – February 16, 2011

TM DP
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Highway Rich

- Primarily highway-based improvements
 - Capacity, intersections, interchanges
 - Traffic operations
 - Raritan River crossings
 - Adds total of 6 projects vs. Baseline
 - Regional rail expansion - West Trenton only
- Includes TDM/TSM elements
 - Low-cost operational improvements
 - Policies that shift travel demand (i.e. work at home)
 - Highway and transit ITS improvements



Transit Rich

- Prioritizes transit-based improvements
 - Regional rail expansion - West Trenton and Lehigh Valley
 - Local and regional rail and bus enhancements
 - Same highway projects as Baseline
- Includes TDM/TSM elements
 - TDM/TSM the same for each alternative scenario



Blend Scenario 1

- Prioritizes transit-based improvements
 - Regional rail expansion - West Trenton only
 - Local and regional rail and bus enhancements
 - Subset of projects from Highway Rich
 - New Raritan crossing at *South Bound Brook* only
- Includes TDM/TSM elements
 - TDM/TSM the same for each alternative scenario



Blend Scenario 2

- Prioritizes transit-based improvements
 - Regional rail expansion - West Trenton only
 - Local and regional rail and bus enhancements
 - Subset of projects from Highway Rich
 - New Raritan crossing at *Centennial Avenue* only
- Includes TDM/TSM elements
 - TDM/TSM the same for each alternative scenario



Performance Measures

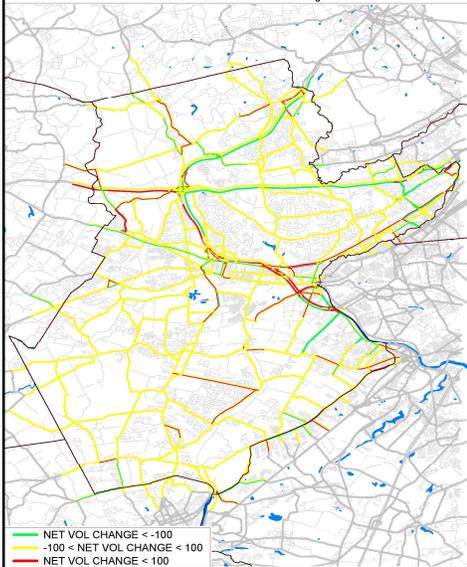
Comparison of Performance Measures between Existing Conditions and Various Future Scenarios

	2009 Existing	2030 Somerset Plan Baseline	2030 Highway Rich	2030 Transit Rich	2030 Blend 1 (S.Bound Brook)	2030 Blend 2 (Centennial)
Total Person Trips (all modes, thousands)	1,087.4	1,283.0	1,252.4	1,252.4	1,252.4	1,252.4
Transit Person Trips (thousands)	17.8	27.0	27.3	28.5	28.2	28.8
Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT, millions)	10,338	11,698	11,630	11,601	11,620	11,626
Vehicle Hours of Travel (VHT, millions)	0.317	0.408	0.386	0.385	0.385	0.386
Average Speed (mph)	32.59	28.67	30.11	30.13	30.17	30.14
% VMT at Congested Conditions	18.1%	22.5%	20.6%	20.5%	20.6%	20.9%

Steering Advisory Committee #3 – February 16, 2011

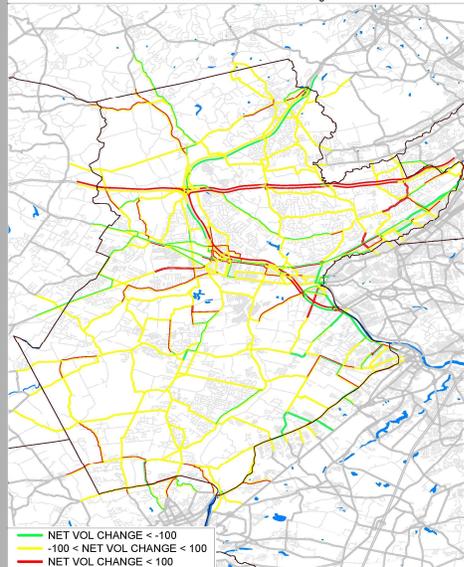


2030 - Blend Option 1 vs Option 2 (Option 1 - Option 2)
AM Net Peak Period Volume Change



Licensed to Parsons Brinckerhoff

2030 - Blend Option 1 vs Option 2 (Option 1 - Option 2)
PM Net Peak Period Volume Change



Licensed to Parsons Brinckerhoff

Scenario Summary

- All scenarios result in degraded mobility from current conditions
 - Conditions can be mitigated but not resolved
- Demographic shifts support transit, mitigates congestion
- Baseline - Travel under congested conditions increases by 25%
- Highway Rich – Mitigates congestion compared to Baseline
- Transit Rich – Further mitigates congestion
 - Attracts auto trips to transit through new and improved service
- Blend 1 and 2 – Best overall in terms of performance measures
- Blend 1 – Benefits urban core towns by shifting travel to interstates which are better able to accommodate additional trips
- Blend 1 – Slight advantage in travel at congested conditions



Scenario Comparisons

- Facilitated discussion blend 1 vs. 2



What's Next?

- **Public Meeting #2**
 - March 23 – 7 pm, Freeholders Meeting Room
- **Making Connections Plan**
 - Draft Plan ready by Spring 2011
- **Somerset County Planning Board**
 - Adopt Plan early Summer 2011



Scenario Conclusions

- All scenarios result in degraded mobility from current conditions
 - Conditions can be mitigated but not resolved
- Demographic shifts support transit, mitigates congestion
- Baseline - Travel under congested conditions increases by 25%
- Highway Rich – Mitigates congestion compared to Baseline
- Transit Rich – Further mitigates congestion
 - Attracts auto trips to transit through new and improved service
- Blend 1 and 2 – Best overall in terms of performance measures
- Blend 1 – Benefits urban core towns by shifting travel to interstates which are better able to accommodate additional trips
- Blend 1 – Slight advantage in travel at congested conditions

Summary Performance Measures

Comparison of Performance Measures between Existing Conditions and Various Future Scenarios

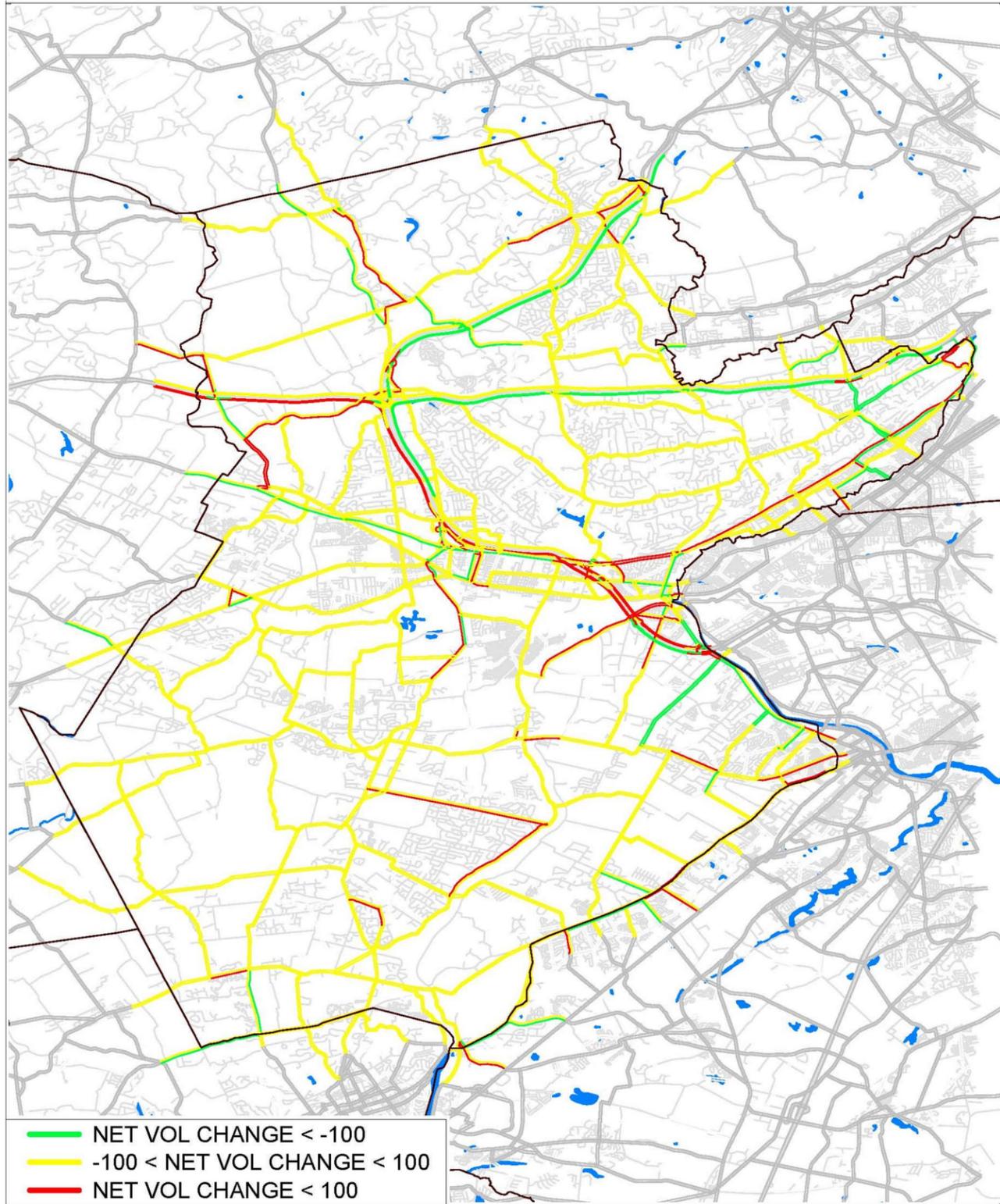
	2009 Existing	2030 Somerset NJTPA Baseline	2030 Somerset Plan Baseline	2030 Highway Rich	2030 Transit Rich	2030 Blend 1 (S.Bound Brook)	2030 Blend 2 (Centennial)
Total Person Trips (all modes, thousands)	1,087.4	1,283.1	1,283.0	1,252.4	1,252.4	1,252.4	1,252.4
Transit Person Trips (thousands)	17.8	26.5	27.0	27.3	28.5	28.2	28.8
Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT, millions)	10.338	11.720	11.698	11.630	11.601	11.620	11.626
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Average Speed (mph)	32.59	28.52	28.67	30.11	30.13	30.17	30.14
% VMT at Congested Conditions	18.1%	23.7%	22.5%	20.6%	20.5%	20.6%	20.9%

Source: North Jersey Regional Transportation Model Enhanced (NJRTME)

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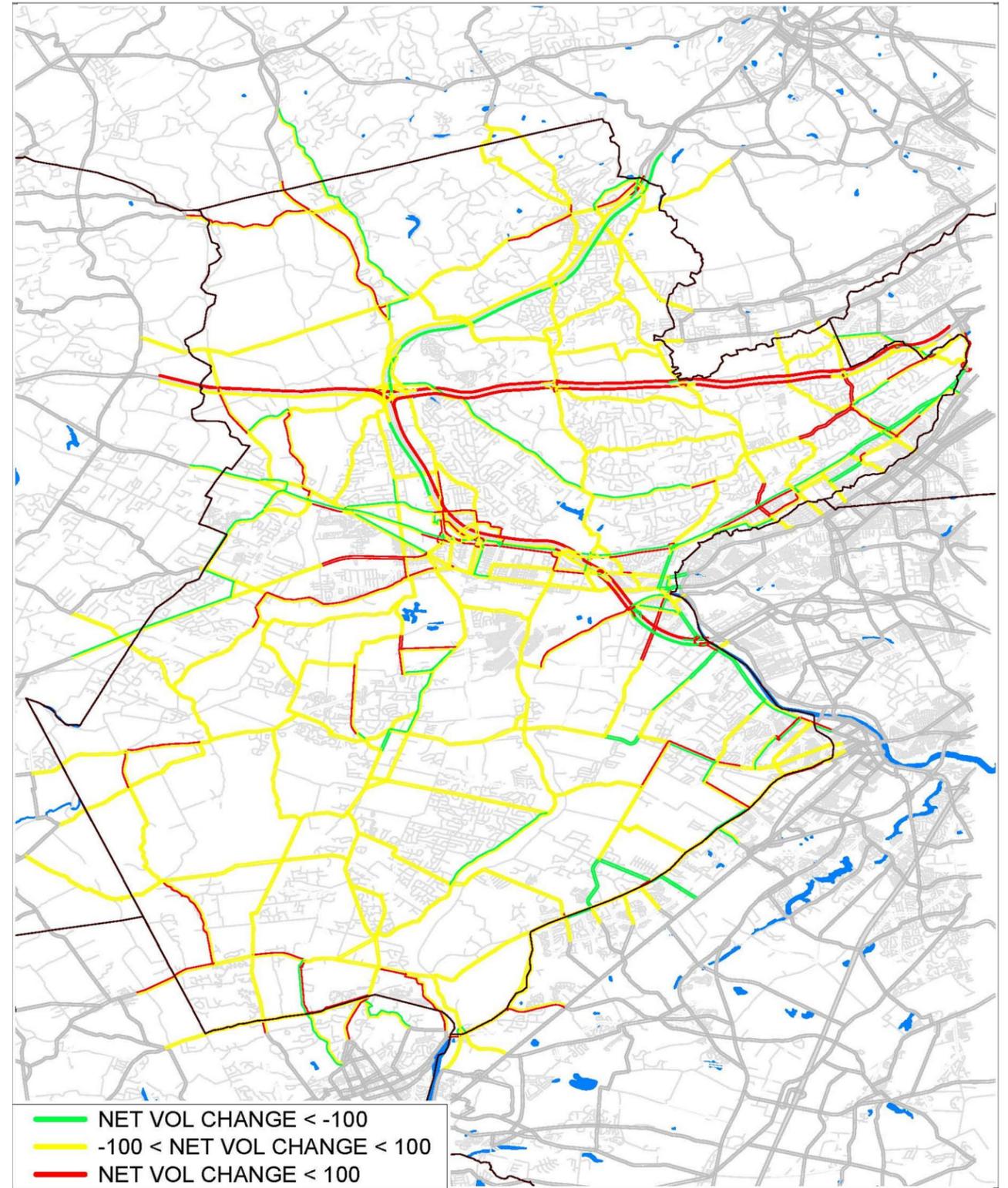
2030 Blend 1 vs Blend 2 (AM)



Source: North Jersey Regional Transportation Model Enhanced (NJRTME)

Fold Here

2030 Blend 1 vs Blend 2 (PM)



Source: North Jersey Regional Transportation Model Enhanced (NJRTME)



**MAKING CONNECTIONS:
SOMERSET COUNTY CIRCULATION PLAN UPDATE
STEERING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 3
MEETING REPORT**

DATE: Wednesday, February 16, 2011
TIME: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
LOCATION: County Administration Building,
2nd Floor, Engineering Conference Room
20 Grove Street, Somerville, NJ

ATTENDEES:

Name	Representing	Phone	Email
Donna Allison	Ride Wise	908-704-1011	donna@ridewisk.org
Berry Aslema	OPA	609-252-3228	bebleman@dca.state.nj.us
Carlos Bastida	PB Americas, Inc.	609-512-3625	bastida@pbworld.com
Joseph Burdulia	NJDOT	609-850-8131	joseph.burdulia@dot.state.nj.us
Robert Bzik	Somerset County	908-231-7021	bzik@co.somerset.nj.us
Martine Culbertson	M.A. Culbertson, LLC	856-795-8485	maculbertson@verizon.net
Joseph Fishinger	Somerset County	908-231-7619	fishinger@co.somerset.nj.us
Peter Kremer	PB Americas, Inc.	609-512-3539	kremer@pbworld.com
Walt Lane	Somerset County	908-231-7021	lane@co.somerset.nj.us
Bernie Navatto	SCPB	908-722-0056	bvncpa@optimum.net
Peter Palmer	Somerset County	908-231-7030	palmer@co.somerset.nj.us
Josh Snyder (by phone)	NJTPA	973-639-8420	
Lynn Weckworth	United Way	908-253-6505	lynn.weekworth@unitedwaynj.org
Rich Wisneski	NJ Transit	973-491-7808	rwisneski@njtransit.com

PURPOSE OF MEETING

To present a recap of the focus groups, review the goals and policies of the Making Connections: Circulation Plan Update, provide an overview of the scenario modeling and data results, discuss the blend scenario and determine next steps for the public meeting and draft Plan. (See attached Agenda and Power Point Presentation *provided as handouts at meeting*).

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Walt Lane, Somerset County Transportation Planner, opened the meeting welcoming everyone to the Steering Advisory Committee Meeting No. 3. After introductions by

participants, Walt asked Pete Kremer, PB Project Manager, to present the findings of the Circulation Plan to date.

1. Pete Kremer noted that the project is on schedule. The focus groups were conducted and the scenario modeling effort is complete. The draft Plan will be made available in about 2 months for review and comment. The final Plan will be presented to the Planning Board in May or June. The project will be completed by June 30, 2011.
2. A recap of the five focus group meetings was presented via Power Point presentation. The information is summarized in the attached handout of the Power Point presentation slides and the following points were noted:
 - a. The model requires 20 hours to run, given the amount of data to analyze and Carlos Bastida, PB Planner, assisted in the analysis and operation of the model.
 - c. Research indicates that about one third of all Americans do not drive, so the county system of transportation needs to consider all people and modes of mobility in the planning process. There are diverse needs and interests to consider in creating the Somerset County Making Connections: Circulation Plan Update (see List in handout).
 - d. Route 206 carries a heavy local and regional vehicular burden for the County, however there needs to be a balance among critical roadway improvements that support network connectivity for both local and regional needs.
 - e. Concerning safety, the crash data mapping for the project was consistent with the County data; the priority areas were similar.
3. The goals and policies of the Plan were reviewed. (See lists in handout). These goals and policies are the criteria from which any alternative scenarios developed from the model can then be compared to see which alternative improvement scenarios best meets the goals and policies of the Making Connections Plan.
4. Alternative scenarios were developed based upon the information entered into the computer model.
 - a. The tool used is the standard North Jersey Regional Travel Model (NJRTME) so the data is consistent with the approved demographics and reflects the applicable infrastructure and land use information for Somerset County, the various municipalities, and the surrounding NJTPA region.
 - b. Five alternative scenarios were examined to see how each of them best meets the Plan goals and policies:
 1. Somerset County Baseline - maintain present capacity
 2. Highway Rich - provide mainly roadway capacity improvements
 3. Transit Rich - provide mainly transit related capacity improvements
 4. Blend Scenario 1 - provide a combination of roadway, transit, and travel demand management improvements with a new crossing of the Raritan River in the area north of I-287
 5. Blend Scenario 2 - provide a combination of roadway, transit, and travel demand management improvements with a new crossing of the Raritan River in the area south of I-287

5. Pete distributed an 11 x 17 folded Handout, which contained a Summary of Performance Measures, Scenario Conclusions, and mapping of Blend 1 vs. Blend 2 Scenarios traffic data for comparison and discussion of the scenarios.
 - a. Walt provided an overview of each of the roadway and transit projects listed for the planning scenario.
 - b. An explanation of performance measures was presented by Pete using the handout. The figures reveal that impact on congestion with the various scenarios. The following comments were noted during the discussion of scenarios:
 - c. The Lehigh Valley transit project should be renamed as the Flemington Transit Study for clarity, since the term Lehigh Valley infers a PA project, which could be misunderstood. It should also be moved to the 4th position on the list since the other Transit projects listed have greater benefit and interest relative the Somerset County audience.
 - d. The timeline and funding status of the various projects listed varies greatly. Some of these projects are further along in development than others; some are already committed and appear on the NJTPA TIP and others require further study and have no current TIP status or funding commitment over the 20-30 year timeframe.
 - e. Adding Transit projects to the model is significantly more complex than adding highway improvements due to the number of factors (headways, station access, capacity, routing, stations, parking capacity, etc) taken into consideration.
 - f. The Hudson River rail tunnel project has an impact on many other prospective transit improvements. However, despite the current hold or suspension of that project, by the 2030 or 2035 timeframe it is anticipated that some improvement will be completed to address the need for expanded rail capacity between NJ and NY. Amtrak, for example, has begun to examine an alternative rail tunnel concept.
 - g. Each future scenario includes some form of TDM (Travel Demand Management - flexible work schedules, tele-commuting, etc.) and TSM (Travel Systems Management - ITS, demand responsive traffic signal equipment, etc.), to complete proposed capacity improvements and help better manage and accommodate traffic demand.

6. Robert Bzik, Somerset County Planning Director, commented that the purpose of the Circulation Plan Update and the "what if" scenarios, is to examine the framework and direction the County needs to go in, as a type of "investment plan" so when funds are made available or continue to be limited, it is clear what projects either in roadway or transit provide the best benefits for the County as defined by the goals and policies for mobility, safety, access and economic sustainability.

7. Pete continued to explain details of the scenario alternatives and performance measurement comparisons:
 - a. The TDM applications for the model were conservative dealing with work-related trips where other trips such as mid-day users would increase the Transit measures by 2-3% so the West Trenton has more potential if the other trips were added into the model.
 - b. The Flemington Transit Study includes bus improvements and is an ongoing study
 - c. Beyond the Baseline, Highway Rich and Transit Rich scenarios, two other Blend scenarios are list on the matrix, as Blend 1 and Blend 2.
 - d. It was noted that a third new river crossing was considered at Brooks Boulevard and CR533 connection. This came from the Freight focus group, however the the connection

did not offer enough significant improvements to keep it on the list in comparison to the others.

e. The scenario results indicate that currently (2009 existing conditions scenario) 18% of the highway system operates at level of service F, and that this degrades to 22.5% (a 25% increase) with average travel speeds decreasing by about 4 mph by 2030.

f. The data indicate that under the Baseline 2030 scenario, performance of the highway system is projected to degrade significantly despite the proposed improvements in roadway and transit capacity. Discussion concluded that a goal of the plan should be to "mitigate" congestion, i.e. to relieve or lessen the degradation in performance, rather than to state that the proposed projects will fix or solve the region's traffic problems.

g. A comment was made that the performance measures do indicate that a new bridge crossing over the Raritan is worthwhile and should be a priority in the plan.

h. The new river crossing of Blend 1 or Blend 2 improves access to other roadways, transit and the northeast corridor.

i. A comment was made that the mitigation benefits of the blend scenarios may address other problems such as ease of access for village centers and supporting economic development and job growth.

8. Pete presented two maps depicting the performance of Blend 1 vs. Blend 2 in AM and PM peak periods:

a. Blend Scenario 2 puts more traffic on the local network while Blend Scenario 1 has less impact on the local network and pushes traffic to the regional highway network. For this type of analysis (i.e. a regional plan and scenario testing), the focus is more on what the benefits are, rather than the underlying causes, and to move potentially beneficial concepts forward for further study.

b. However, the performance measures are better for the Blend scenario than the Baseline, Highway Rich, or Transit Rich scenarios.

9. A comment was made regarding what role technology would have to mitigate congestion in the future and that this should be considered or addressed in the plan.

a. For example, traffic signals with "smart controllers" that can adapt in real-time to current traffic conditions and better process traffic at individual intersections or along corridors.

b. Other ITS systems may also help to mitigate traffic congestion.

c. Future conditions are under debate on the demand side. As commuters begin to work more from home, there may be a loss of customers utilizing the transportation infrastructure; there may be a change in the balance of the system

d. The Plan will add documentation to address these comments.

10. A comment and question was raised as to climate change projects and what are the strategies, which the NJTPA is considering to mitigate or reduce VMT and green house gas emissions? Pete Kremer will speak with Jeff at NJTPA to obtain the current status and will coordinate with Walt Lane on the information to incorporate as applicable to the Plan for Somerset County.

11. A group discussion on the differences between Scenario Blend 1 and Blend 2 confirmed that more investigation would be required, such as a scoping study, to

determine which Blend or river crossing is more advantageous to actually implement. The following comments were noted on newsprint:

Scenario 1 / Scenario 2 Discussion Comments

- More analysis is needed to understand the resulting traffic flows
- Scenario Blend 1 – may offer safety, redundancy, and more flexibility
- New river crossing to north may provide better network connectivity to other roadway and transit options (access opportunity to areas with less density)
- Determine level of environmental mitigation impacts with either scenario
- Scenario Blend 1 - may have impacts in an area already prone to flooding
- Residential displacement consideration and particularly to affordable housing
- Need to examine population groups favored/disfavored by a new river crossing - environmental justice
- Any project that moves forward will have to meet multiple goals
- Transit supportive density is a consideration to balance with fixed infrastructure
- Program, plan and develop projects - Making Connections: Circulation Plan Update is the framework
- An overarching goal is improving mobility to improve the economy/ jobs/quality of life

The group discussion resulted in the following group consensus:

- a. The purpose of the Plan is not to provide specific details or numbers but rather to put forth a program of improvements and policies that meet the plan goals and policies.
- b. Further study would be required to assess viable alternatives for a new river crossing.
- c. It was also noted that further study is necessary and that it is not appropriate for the Plan to indicate a specific location for a new river crossing.

12. A question was raised as to whether the widening of the I-287 Raritan river bridge crossing was examined as an alternative to an additional crossing? Since this was not included in the analysis and the question may be raised at again the project team will review the existing data for an appropriate response to this question.

13. A comment was raised regarding constrained areas due to environmental or other limitations, which are indicated in red and remain red. A note should be added in the Plan and at public meeting to explain that such areas have major existing constraints today and remain unchanged in the future condition, not due to any increase or decrease in value over time.

14. The idea of public private partnerships and the degree to which these scenarios address some of the goals and policies of the Plan that contribute to job growth and economic sustainability was questioned.

- a. Expand information in the Plan on balance between growth, improvements and economic development. Provide impact to economic activity (business) in the area; provide text on roadway and transit improvements with regard to job growth considerations.
- b. Develop a matrix to indicate the degree to which the goals apply to each scenario with color dots such as green, orange or red dots.

15. In summary, the group was asked for any comments regarding the upcoming **Public Meeting now to be held on Wednesday, March 30th** in place of March 23rd due to scheduling conflicts. It will be at **7:00 p.m. in the Freeholders Meeting Room**.

a. The public meeting will be conducted as an informal briefing to share information on the Plan (goals, focus groups, model, scenarios and results) and obtain any comments from the general public. The format will include sign-in sheets, information handout, and display boards with a brief presentation with Q&A depending on the number of attendees. A blank comment form can be provided, if individuals wish to submit comments or questions in writing. The following comments were noted in preparation of the public meeting:

Public Meeting

- Indicate river crossing, not specific location (N of I-287 / S of I-287) as one Scenario Blend
- Indicate specific Transit applications meant by Regional Service Enhancements
- Identify continual constraint areas (red), show/indicate why, differentiate (environmental, example: Easton Avenue)
- Samples of TOD, TDM specifics, where it's working within County or State
- Why not just widen I-287 bridge and interstate
- Note use of NJTPA model applied to be consistent w/ data from municipalities
- Create matrix with Goals/Policies vs. Scenarios (dots - *green, orange, red*)

16. In closing, Pete noted that the Committee will meet one more time after the Public Meeting and the draft Plan document is prepared for review and comment. Walt thanked everyone for the valuable input at today's meeting. He is the key contact for any questions or additional comments on the Plan. Meeting minutes will be distributed to attendees and Steering Advisory Committee. Meeting adjourned at noon.

ACTION ITEMS (*Modifications or Additions for the Plan*)

1. Rename Lehigh Valley Line to Flemington Line and move to 4th position on list.
2. Baseline 5% reduction in service - provide clear explanation.
 - provide explanation, understanding of potential to lose capacity
 - if removed from model – would indicate even lower performance
 - improvements can't fix or eliminate, but "mitigate" congestion

3. Revise List to show one Scenario Blend - with river crossing study included.
4. County Plan needs to integrate with Municipal Plans - provide positive applications.
 - note use of NJTPA model and data sources to support/balance local and regional
 - TPA land use numbers adjusted only to reflect changes/current conditions
 - focus infrastructure and transit, develop areas where most effective for mobility and advantage to Plan goals
5. The role of technology as effective use to mitigate congestion and aid traffic flow - to include in Plan.
6. Obtain information on strategies NJTPA is applying to mitigate/reduce VMT and greenhouse gas emissions.
7. Develop Scenarios-Goals Matrix to show any added value beyond performance measures such as impact to network connectivity, economic activity, multi-modal and provide text on examples of business private/public partnership opportunities.
 - work with towns for priority projects to spur jobs, economic development
 - provide samples (success stories) as applications, vision, incentives

Prepared By:

Martine Culbertson, M.A. Culbertson, LLC

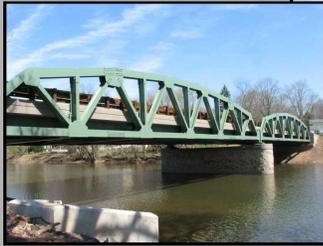
REVIEW AND COMMENTS OF MINUTES:

We believe the foregoing to be an accurate summary of discussions and related decisions. We would appreciate notification of exceptions or corrections to the minutes within one week of receipt. Without notification, these minutes will be considered to be record of fact.

cc: Attendees and Steering Advisory Committee
PB Team
Somerset County (Walt Lane, Joe Fishinger, Robert Bzik)
File: SCUCE SACMtg3Rpt-2.18.11.doc Meeting Minutes

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Somerset County's Circulation Plan Update



Study Advisory Committee #4 – June 9, 2011



Overview

- Community-based planning process
 - Comprehensive outreach and coordination
 - Goals and policies and Vision statement
- Existing transportation system conditions
 - Summary of conditions, issues, concerns, needs
- Scenario planning process
- Implementation plan
- Comments and discussion
- Committee review and adoption

Study Advisory Committee – June 9, 2011



Outreach and Coordination

- Community-based planning process
- Comprehensive outreach effort
 - Steering Committee – guide study and review findings
 - Focus Groups – seven meetings, broad spectrum of interests
 - Planning Board Chairmen – represent local government
 - On-line Survey – prioritize goals and policies
 - Public Meetings – inform public and gather comments
 - Somerset County Planning Board – review and adopt Plan

Study Advisory Committee – June 9, 2011



Goals and Policies

- Maintain and Modernize the County Transportation System
- Reduce Traffic Congestion
- Reduce Green House Gas Emissions Contributing to Climate Change
- Protect and Enhance the Natural and Built Environment
- Support Economic Activity in Town Centers and Business Corridors
- Improve Mobility and Connections between Travel Modes
- Integrate Transportation, Land Use, and Site Design
- Maintain a High Level of Safety and Security
- Monitor the Performance of the Transportation System

Study Advisory Committee – June 9, 2011



Vision Statement

- *The Making Connections Plan:*
 - **Creates** a robust multi-modal transportation network
 - **Maintains and improves** the existing highway system
 - **Expands** the regional transit system
 - **Enhances** traffic safety for all travelers and all modes
 - **Promotes** sustainability



Existing Conditions Assessment

- Multi-modal network
 - Improve bus and transit service, add station parking
 - Add sidewalks, bicycle accommodations, greenways
 - Trucks and freight industry are critical to local and regional economy
 - Improve roadway network connectivity
- Maintain and improve
 - Explore public/private partnerships to fund needed improvements and expansion
 - Expand critical roadways including U.S. Route 206
- Safety
 - Improve safety and livability of roads and communities
 - Roadway safety is a priority
- Sustainability
 - Redevelop urban centers with transit supportive density
 - Connect people with opportunities through transportation



Scenario Planning

- Multimodal scenario planning process
 - Evaluate infrastructure, TDM, and policy initiatives
 - Same model, demographics, assumptions, performance measures as NJTPA Plan 2035
- Developed and tested scenario alternatives
 - Somerset County Baseline
 - Highway Rich
 - Transit Rich
 - Blend Scenario



Scenario Summary

- All scenarios result in degraded mobility from current conditions
 - Travel under congested conditions projected to increase by 25%
 - Increasing congestion impacts County and local street systems
 - Demographic shifts support transit, help mitigate congestion
- Conditions can be mitigated in Build scenarios but not resolved
 - Highway Rich – Mitigates congestion compared to Baseline
 - Transit Rich – Further mitigates congestion
 - Attracts auto trips to transit through new and improved services
 - Blend – Best overall in terms of performance measures
 - Benefits core towns by shifting travel to interstates which are better able to accommodate additional trips
 - Mitigates congestion impacts to County and local street systems



Implementation Plan

- Highway capacity
- Transit capacity
- Traffic safety
- Integrated land use and transportation planning
- Emerging planning and design concepts
- Public outreach and education
- Bicycle and pedestrian
- Freight and goods movement
- GHG Adaptation & Hazard Mitigation
- Aviation



Implementation Plan

- Highways
 - Brown Avenue extension
 - Easton Avenue median barrier
 - Raritan River crossing scope development
 - Support High Priority NJDOT Projects
- Transit
 - West Trenton restoration
 - Supporting policies, services, pricing
- Traffic Safety
 - Continue to address high crash locations



Implementation Plan

- **Integrated land use and transportation planning**
 - Somerville redevelopment
 - Hillsborough Town Center
 - Transit villages
- **Emerging planning and design concepts**
 - Explore siting of electric vehicle charging stations
 - Expand ITS implementation, including traffic control and VMS
 - Explore innovative stormwater alternatives
- **Public Outreach and Education**
 - Continue and expand public outreach efforts

Study Advisory Committee – June 9, 2011



Implementation Plan

- **Bicycle and pedestrian**
 - Expand network of bicycle compatible roadways
 - Address sidewalk gaps
 - Improve bike and ped access at transit stations and stops
 - Consider Complete Streets design principles for road improvement projects
- **Freight and goods movement**
 - Eliminate the grade crossing on Main Street in Bound Brook
 - ITS improvements, including traffic control and VMS
 - Improve rail bridge serving Dameo transload facility to 256k
 - Explore freight village opportunities

Study Advisory Committee – June 9, 2011



Implementation Plan

- GHG and hazard mitigation
 - Prioritize GHG mitigation actions
 - Fuel efficient fleet vehicles
 - Low carbon fuels
 - Alternative fuel vehicles
 - Implement Somerset County Hazard Mitigation Plan actions
 - Implement local improvement to transportation infrastructure, and public facilities and buildings
 - Prioritize maintenance of identified emergency evacuation route
- Aviation
 - Monitor implementation of FAA Airspace redesign initiative



Summary

- Making Connections Plan
 - Update of the Somerset County Circulation Element
- A community-based planning process
 - Comprehensive outreach and stakeholder coordination
- Scenario planning process
 - Compare and contrast investment alternatives
- Implementation matrix
 - Multimodal infrastructure and policy initiatives
- *Making Connections:*
 - *"Safely connecting people with opportunity through transportation"*



Discussion

- Comments and questions
- Plan adoption



PBWD-00010

Memorandum

TO: Peter F. Kremer, A.I.C.P., P.P.
FROM: Jaclyn J. Flor, P.E., P.P., C.M.E.
DATE: June 15, 2011
RE: Somerset County Circulation Element
Study Advisory Committee Meeting #4– June 9, 2011

On June 9, 2011 from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m., at the Engineering Conference Room, in the Somerset County Administration being, the fourth Steering Advisory Meeting of the Somerset County Circulation Element was held by the County and the consultant team.

The following is a summary of the meeting:

1. The meeting started with Peter Kremer, PB, giving a presentation. He started by outlining the timeline.
2. Mr. Kremer gave an overview of the community-based planning process, the extensive outreach that took place to create the plan, and how the input from this outreach effort resulted in the Goals, Policies, and a Vision Statement.
3. He explained that the plan summarized the existing transportation system, existing conditions, and concerns and needs; this baseline was used in the scenario planning process.
4. He explained that the scenario planning process helped to identify key projects and these projects were included in an implementation matrix. The matrix categorizes projects as high, medium, and low in order to prioritize projects.
5. He explained that the next step is for the plan to go to the Planning Board in order to be released for public comment. After the public comment period, it is the intent that the plan will be adopted by the Planning Board.
6. Mr. Kremer then explained each of the overview topics. He explained that the community based planning process included a steering committee that guided the study and reviewed findings of the focus groups and stakeholders, and identified the seven (7) focus group meetings and explained that they covered a broad spectrum of interests, on-line surveys were conducted to help prioritize goals

and policies, public meetings were held to inform the public and gather comments, and the Somerset County Planning Board will also review and comment on the plan.

7. Mr. Kremer expanded upon focus groups and discussed their comments. He discussed expanding bus service to include north/south routes, transit needs being underserved in central and southern parts of the county, current ownership of transit parking lots and their fees, redevelopment to support transit through higher densities, incentives for partnerships with large businesses in the county, traffic calming, transit villages, network connectivity, consolidating driveways and parking on major arterials, safety audits, expanding Greenway corridors, providing access to employment for economically disadvantaged and disabled individuals, and transportation needs of youth, seniors, and others with no access to automobiles.
8. Mr. Kremer explained the goals and policies for the County. He commented on maintaining and modernizing the transportation system, reducing traffic congestion, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions that are contributing to climate change.
9. Mr. Kremer went on to explain how having a multimodal transportation system could help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
10. He pointed out that in one trip you may use multiple parts of the system such as a combination of driving, biking, walking, and/or transit. This example highlighted the importance of improving mobility connections between travel modes.
11. Mr. Kremer continued to outline the goals and policies and spoke about protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment. He discussed supporting economic activity in town centers and business corridors, the importance of improving mobility and connection between travel modes such as biking, riding a train, and driving, integrating transportation, land use, and site design, maintaining a high level of safety and security, and monitoring the performance of the transportation system.
12. Mr. Kremer spoke about the need for a robust multi-modal transportation network.
13. Mr. Kremer also discussed maintaining and improving the existing highway system, expanding the regional transit system, enhancing traffic safety for all travelers, and promoting overall sustainability.
14. Mr. Kremer went through an assessment of the existing conditions.
15. He discussed improvements to the multi-modal network, such as additional station parking for bus and transit service, sidewalk improvements, bicycle accommodations, and greenway connections, roadway network connectivity, and accommodations for trucks and freight.
16. Mr. Kremer went on to explain that funding would be an issue. He discussed exploring partnerships to fund improvements and expansions as well as forming partnerships with other counties and municipalities in order to expand critical roadways such as U.S. Route 206.
17. Mr. Kremer discussed sustainability and redeveloping transit based urban centers that connect people with opportunities through transportation. He gave the example of the West Trenton line.

18. Mr. Kremer then discussed the multimodal scenario planning process. He explained that we used the NJTPA Plan 2035 demographics, assumptions, and performance measures.
19. He then explained how we tested scenario alternatives. The Baseline Scenario analyzed the effect of no new projects being introduced outside of the pipeline projects. The Highway Rich Scenario analyzed significant improvements to highways, the Transit Rich Scenario focused on significant improvements to transit, and the Blend Scenario included a mix of the three scenarios.
20. All Scenarios resulted in degraded mobility from current conditions.
21. Mr. Kremer then went on to describe how the degraded conditions could be mitigated in the Build scenarios. In the Highway Rich Scenario and Transit Rich Scenario, congestion was mitigated although not resolved compared to the Baseline Scenario. In the transit rich scenario, congestion is further mitigated by attracting auto trips to transit through new and improved services, however, the transit rich scenario is constrained due to funding and topography. The Blend scenario was the best in overall performance measures.
22. A question was asked regarding the ARC tunnel and the model, and Mr. Kremer explained that the ARC tunnel is in the model and it would be extremely difficult to modify the model to remove it.
23. Mr. Kremer cited project examples from the implementation plan such as Brown Avenue, Orchard Road, the Easton Avenue Jersey barrier which is a safety project, and the Raritan River crossing which is in scope development and cannot be called a project at this time. He cited transit projects such as the West Trenton restoration and transit-supporting policies, services, and pricing.
24. Mr. Kremer then spoke about integrated land use and transportation and gave the examples of the West Trenton restoration, Somerville redevelopment, and Hillsborough Town Center.
25. Mr. Kremer discussed exploring the siting of electric vehicle charging stations, expanding ITS implementation, including traffic control and VMS, and exploring innovative storm water alternatives; and emphasized the importance of expanding public outreach efforts.
26. Mr. Kremer then touched on bicycle and pedestrian need. He discussed expanding the network of bicycle compatible roadways, filling in sidewalk gaps, improving bike and pedestrian access at transit stations and bus stops, and integrating complete street design principles into road development projects.
27. Mr. Kremer explained that priority for the filling in of sidewalk gaps would start with schools, shopping areas, and urban areas.
28. Mr. Kremer then spoke about the movement of freight and goods. He cited an example project which would eliminate the grade crossing on Main Street in Bound Brook. He also spoke about ITS, improving the rail bridge serving Dameo transload facility to 256k, and freight village opportunities.
29. Mr. Kremer discussed Green House Gas emission projects and policies in the Plan, and explained that actions included the use fuel efficient fleet vehicles, using alternative fuel vehicles, accommodating electric vehicles.

30. Mr. Lane then talked about aviation in the implementation plan. He said that the implementation of the FAA Airspace redesign initiative has to be monitored. Over the entire region, the redesign initiative will reduce noise and increase air travel.
31. Mr. Kremer then summarized the main points of the presentation and opened the meeting up for discussion.
32. Donna Allison discussed RideWise and a County partnership that would integrate website ride parameters into the existing freecycle system.
33. Mr. Bzik asked Mr. Lane if there was any information on rezoning and moving the train station and transit village in North Branch to somewhere in the west part of the county because it is underutilized. Mr. Lane explained that it was not currently in the Plan.
34. Mr. Ableman asked how the census data and demographics were handled. Mr. Kremer explained that NJTPA projections were used and that numbers were placed in the appropriate TAZ zones for the scenarios.
35. Mr. Navatto asked if the model accounts for incidents. He explained that there is always an accident on Route 78 and Route 287 which moves traffic to local systems. Mr. Kremer explained that it is factored into the model since the model assumes some fluctuation in levels. It does not focus in on worst case scenario, but rather an average scenario.
36. Mr. Burdulia suggested looking into municipalities in NJ that are exploring bike share programs. Mr. Kremer mentioned that Princeton had one but the bikes were stolen so the program is currently not running, but he would look into other areas.
37. Mr. Burdulia asked about the status of the Flemington Transit Study. The county explained that they support participation in the Flemington Transit Study and that the Route 202 transit study should not be limited to just rail.
38. Mr. Bzik discussed bus corridors. He talked about high frequency bus nodes and an overlay zone.
39. At that point there were no further comments from the meeting participants, and Mr. Lane explained this is not the last opportunity to make comments. He encouraged everyone to submit comments.
40. Mr. Bzik ended the meeting by thanking everyone.

Public Involvement

Focus Groups

Freight Focus Group Discussions

The team, in collaboration with Somerset County staff, held three discussions regarding freight and industrial development in the area. The topics discussed included:

- What are the key challenges facing industrial properties and operations today?
- Specific to locating and operating within Somerset County:
 - What are the best attributes of the location?
 - What are the challenges?
- Other thoughts about what works and doesn't work – mobility, safety, municipal land use, environmental considerations, business environment, maintenance of the system, service levels.
- What would make Somerset County a more attractive business location?
- What should be the priority improvements?
- Based on the priority improvements, if we had to choose among projects, what would you suggest as the criteria?

May 5 Discussion

A focus group meeting was held with several participants on May 5, 2010 at the County's Administration Building.

Somerset County is the first location outside of the Conrail Shared Assets Area. As such, the County is a very attractive location. However, other considerations in site selection include the size of the available properties, the cost of doing business, utilities, readiness of the site, and truck access. The minimum acreage sought is five acres. Locations for warehousing and distribution are the most often requested.

Current customers include GAF and Dameo. Other rail users in the County include a lumber yard in Somerville and the quarry in Bridgewater (used by NJ Transit for ballast material). Dameo has a dedicated rail siding for operations. Customer types include Home Depot, Lowes, paper products, plastics, and produce. The quick rise in demand for ethanol was a surprise to the railroads. Manville is a CSX owned yard that is managed by Conrail and used by NS for local movements. The Manville site is a legacy of the region's industrial heritage.

Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) is considering reuse of existing properties, including the Veterans Administration (VA) property in Hillsborough. Truck access is the key issue affecting the viability of the VA location.

NS is testing a zero emissions locomotive and has 20 biodiesel locomotives.

June 3 Conference Call

On June 3, the team and Somerset County held a conference call with CB Richard Ellis (CBRE), a leading national industrial brokerage firm. Mindy Lissner, who handles industrial property throughout the County, represented CBRE. The key points that emerged from the discussion included:

Somerset County industrial property focuses on regional distribution centers and high tech, flex space. High tech flex space, which is used for research and development, is usually 30-to-90,000 square feet with about 20 percent of the space finished out for office (typical warehouses have 5 percent finished out for office space). Somerset County is not a location for "big box" distribution centers that serve a multi-state area.

Main areas of industrial activity include Campus Drive in Franklin Township, Branchburg/Route 202 and the Bridgewater/Route 22 area. Severe traffic and congestion on I-287 during rush hours is affecting the viability of sites along this corridor. I-287 is the County's main link to the New Jersey Turnpike. Traffic can be an issue on Routes 22 and 202.

Somerset County has the image of a higher quality office and industrial product, with quality labor and newer buildings. In contrast, Piscataway is a much older market and not as high quality as Somerset County. Metro Park is more desirable as an office location because of the transit and Amtrak accessibility. Currently, high vacancy rates exist for industrial and office properties. Industrial properties are asking \$4-to-5 per square foot. Class A office space, which used to rent in the high \$20s is now leasing in the mid-teens.

In terms of potential customers, demand has been affected by the fall out of telecommunication, pharmaceutical and financial institutions. The telecommunication companies used large blocks of space that is not easy to repurpose for other users. All of these businesses vacated industrial property, which is still available. Heavy industry, which includes the metal manufacturers in the County, is shrinking; moving out of the State or overseas. Industrial users in the County include Pim Candies (which used to supply gummy bears to Blockbuster stores), Reliance Vitamins, Press Pierce, Mary Kay Cosmetics fulfillment, Baker and Taylor and UPS.

Most clients focus on truck access requirements. Some industrial clients have rail freight requirements. These clients generally handle paper, plastics and food products.

Lack of public transportation options can affect the competitiveness of office and industrial sites. More frequent bus routes from areas such as New Brunswick would be helpful.

Somerset County is good in terms of hotels and restaurant properties.

Some towns have been more difficult than others in terms of zoning and permitting processes. This can affect the competitiveness of sites within the County. Planning and permitting approvals are often mentioned as causing delay and adding cost to the use of available sites. New Jersey is very good in terms of attracting distribution activities. This is a function of the concentration of population, labor and consumer markets.

The Lehigh Valley area of Pennsylvania is in competition with the Interchange 8A area; not Somerset County.

Somerset County has been highly successful in attracting data centers. The companies that have located such facilities within the County include Digital Realty, Bank of New York, Goldman Sachs, and JP Morgan. This is related to the availability of power and fiber optics. During the last five years, the data center market has definitely grown as have mid-sized assembly and research and development users.

June 7 Trucking Discussion

On June 7, staff from the County, North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority and the Consultant Team met with key trucking firms. The discussion was held at the New Jersey Motor Truck Association's office, which assisted in reaching out to its membership to participate in this

discussion. The participants in this discussion are attached. Representatives of the various trucking interests spoke first, followed by comments from Walter Lane of Somerset County, and Gail Toth of the NJ Motor Truck Association.

Dameo

Dameo was founded in 1933 as a contract carrier for the building industry. Most of those companies are gone. However, Dameo had a niche market in bringing rail cars. The company has built on this capability and now handles 1,500 rail cars per year through their facility. Dameo noted that one rail car can hold as much as four truck loads. Dameo also imports bags of plastics and distributes the material via the New Jersey Turnpike to locations as far as Maryland and Virginia. Dameo can store 200 rail cars at its yard.

Dameo has survived by moving into plastics and becoming a one-stop warehousing and packaging facility for plastics. The plastics industry has changed. Forty percent of the business was for plastic bags for the New York City garment industry. However, this business has left the City and eliminated the need for plastic garment bags. About 25 percent of the plastics are used as raw materials for moldings, garbage cans, etc. A lot of the plastics market has shifted out of the area to the South and West.

Dameo is one of five distribution points for a major plastics distributor based in Houston, TX.. The company noted that negotiations with the railroads have generally been good, but that the railroads generally do not like to share track or customers.

Routes used by Dameo trucks include Interstate 287/Tappan Zee Bridge/Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, Interstate 78 to head east and Route 206 early in the morning. The company noted that it has many customers in Long Island, and the toll over the Verrazano-Narrows and Goethals is over \$100.

Conway

Conway is the fourth largest less-than-truckload (LTL) carrier in the US and Mexico. The company has 25,000 workers. The company serves Somerset County via their terminals in South Plainfield and Trenton. Conway has the largest truck terminal in New Jersey. Conway runs double trailers at night.

The cost of living in Somerset County can be problem and many of their drivers come from the Poconos.

Customers are still shipping at 4-to-5 PM, which means that trucks are still on I-287 during rush hour because of customer requirements.

Halls Fast Freight

Hall's Fast Freight has a 150,000 sf facility in Bridgewater. Trucks from their facilities in South Plainfield and Piscataway also pass through or serve clients in Somerset County. Hall's is an asset based company with a mid-cap customer base. They specialize in food products and serve the end users (e.g., restaurants). They serve 68 White Castle locations.

Congestion on Interstate 287 requires that trucks leave early. For example, Hall's sends trucks out at 5 AM to reach Paterson, NJ. The congestion is so bad on this route that a 77 acre parcel on Western Canal Road was sold off because of the access issues. I-287 is the main route for Hall's to access the New England market place. The company has 75 trucks.

Hall's noted that the base of food companies in New Jersey appears to be eroding, with the firms moving to PA, CT, and MD. Hall's also noted that the vast majority of the products moving into New York involve food.

Companies appear to be leaving NJ because of cost and ease of doing business. Hall's noted that in South Plainfield, they have been trying for four years to get a "No Further Action" letter from NJDEP for a 18 acre parcel. As of now, they have spent \$150,000 to obtain this document. The site was contaminated by coal ash from locomotives that used to use the rail line.

Restaurants customers now want daily delivery of fresh products. Trucks leave Hall's facility between midnight and 2 AM. The trucks generally arrive back at the facility's yard by noon.

Hall's trucks uses I-287, I-78 and Route 22.

General Discussion

Walter Lane of Somerset County discussed the long-term plans for highway and interchange improvement. Participants were delighted to hear more about the \$50 million full interchange improvement being made by the County to the Chimney Rock turnaround on Route 22.

Dameo indicated that Route 206 is their biggest concern, and many noted that the proposal to construct roundabout at various U.S. 206 intersection in Princeton would be a significant problem for their operations.

Companies are seeking to keep existing truck terminals in use even if they are not in the best location today. The reason is that this use is "grandfathered in." New truck terminals have not been approved in New Jersey according to the participants. However, participants noted that no mega-sized truck terminals were needed in the State.

The participants noted that truck parking remains a serious concern, particularly from a security standpoint in the State.

The New Jersey Motor Truck Association noted that they offer to bring instructional trucks into communities to help educate the public and local officials about the vehicles. They consider such outreach to be a positive opportunity to meet with the community.

Rail freight service was considered inconsistent by the participants. The railroads have lost cars and are sometimes delayed in their deliveries. The participants noted that their customers dictate the freight requirements. "They don't want to hear it if the train has left."

Conway noted that they introduced a rail freight option with a 20 percent reduction in cost over an all-truck option. However, their customers did not want it. Their customers preferred the premium service which means sticking with trucks.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Email</i>
Bill Jayne	Hall's Fast Freight	wjayne@halls.corp
Dave Dawson	NJTPA	ddawson@njtpa.org
Walter Lane	Somerset County	lane@co.somerset.nj.us
Peter Kremer	Parsons Brinkerhoff	kremer@pbworld.com
Rocque Dameo	Dameo Trucking	Rocque.SD@dameo.com
Gail Toth	New Jersey Motor Truck Assn	gtoth@njtma.org
Jason Dameo	Dameo Trucking	Jason@dameo.com
Don Reed	Con-way Freight	Reed.don@con-way.com
Tom Brennan	Hall's	tbrennan@hallscorp.com
Ned Runser	Hall's	nrunser@hallscorp.com
Anne Strauss-Wieder	A. Strauss-Wieder, Inc.	asw@as-w.com

Making Connections:
Freight Focus Group Meeting

Wednesday, May 05, 2010

Sign in Sheet

(Please Print)

Name	Organization	Phone #
Joseph Fishinger	Somerset County Engineering	908-231-7024
ANDREW LUDASI	NJ DOT	609 530 4599
Richard C. Wisneski	NJ TRANSIT	973 491 7808
ANNE STRAUSS-WIEDER	A STRAUSS-WIEDER, INC	908 654 5144
Peter Kremer	PB	609-734-7039
Ken Wedeen	SCPD	(908) 231-7021
Walt Lane	SCPD	908 231 7021
Peter Palmer	SC Field	908 231 7030
Tom Washburn	NS CORP	215-448-4216
Chris Dawson	NJ TPA	973-639-8432
TED MATTHEWS	NJ TPA	973-639-8404

Making Connections Plan: Transit Focus Group

Making Connections: Updating the Somerset County Circulation Plan

To continue to plan for the future, Somerset County is updating its 2003 Circulation Plan. The plan guides the County's investments in all aspects of transportation, including roadway improvements, mass transit, and freight movement. The new plan will also look to minimize the impacts our transportation choices have on the environment and address how to best allow our transportation system to handle growth in the future.

Input from those who live, work and do business is critical to guide development of the circulation plan and help identify and prioritize future improvements.

A series of focus group sessions have been scheduled to gather input and foster discussion of key issues, needs, and concerns. Focus group topics are anticipated to include: Transit; Mobility and Safety; Economic Issues/Jobs/Families/Special Needs; and Freight and Goods Movement.

Transit in the Region

This focus group session will begin with a brief overview of the study and goals of the plan, and the importance of transit to health of the local and regional economy. The study team will lead a facilitated discussion. Listed below is a series of questions and discussion topics. Please review and come prepared to discuss these issues and others that may be of specific interest to your community, organization, or business.

Core Questions

Whether you live or do business here - what parts of the Somerset County transportation system work well and what areas need improvement?

What types of problems should transportation improvement projects within the County focus on (ie safety, regional mobility, multi-modal)?

What type of project should be the County's first priority?

Focus Group Specific Questions

What are the most underserved locations within the county for public transit?

How can the reactivation of passenger service on the West Trenton be leveraged?

How do you feel the completion of ARC project impact local communities?

How can transit centers be better promoted?

Aside from the existing transit centers, what areas could position themselves to have transit supportive density?

Are there locations where park and ride demand is not being met?

Do you know of any unofficial park and ride locations?

How (and where?) can transit connections be improved?

Wrap Up

Other thoughts about what works and doesn't work – mobility, safety, municipal land use, environmental considerations, business environment, maintenance, and system performance.

What would make Somerset County a more attractive business location?

Contact Info

Walter Lane, Somerset County Planning Board: 908-231-7021 or lane@co.somerset.nj.us

**MAKING CONNECTIONS:
SOMERSET COUNTY'S CIRCULATION PLAN UPDATE
TRANSIT FOCUS GROUP
MEETING REPORT**

DATE: Thursday, May 13, 2010
TIME: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
LOCATION: County Administration Building,
2nd Floor, Engineering Conference Room
20 Grove Street, Somerville, NJ
ATTENDEES: See attached Sign-In Sheet.

PURPOSE OF MEETING

This Focus Group is an opportunity to obtain input from those who live, work and do business in Somerset County so to guide the development of the circulation plan and help identify and prioritize future transportation improvements. See the attached Transit Focus Group Information Handout.

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Martine Culbertson opened the meeting as the Focus Group Facilitator, and after introductions, she reviewed Information Sheet.
2. Walter Lane, Supervising Transportation Planner, welcomed everyone on behalf of Somerset County. He noted the importance of this update to the 2003 Circulation Element Plan to provide for changing transportation needs and to prepare strategically for growth. Walt encouraged participants to share their thoughts, interests and concerns during this focus group session and he is the key contact if anyone wishes to provide additional information or has questions (908-231-7021 lane@co.somerset.nj.us).
3. Pete Kremer, Transportation Planner from PB Americas, provided an overview of the key project goals. He noted that this plan is intended to be different from the prior plan in that transportation objectives and solutions alone may not solve the transportation issues unless consideration is given to the land use policy to maintain and encourage proper growth and economic vitality in the County. Both must be analyzed and integrated for realistic objectives and solutions which can be implemented.

4. Martine then asked participants some core questions, which were asked in each of the focus groups prior to asking specific questions intended for the transit focus group. The comments were noted transcribed on the following Report Attachment.

5. In summary, Martine thanked everyone for their time and effort. She reminded participants that Walter Lane is the key contact for questions or to provide additional information.

6. In closing, Walter thanked participants for their valuable input and encouraged people to stay in touch via the Somerset County web site. Follow-up meetings or a public meeting will be held to present the results of the Circulation Plan Update. Meeting minutes from focus groups will be available on the Somerset County Planning Division web site under Making Connections. Meeting adjourned at noon.

7. A summary of comments is attached.

Transit Focus Group Session – Summary of Comments and Key Words

Participants felt the overall transit service is generally good where provided but that many gaps in service areas and service times limit its effectiveness. Overall NJ Transit is not seen as a large player in providing public transit to Somerset County. NJ Transit Bus service is available in southern portion of the county and is linked to Mercer County not Somerset; some additional bus service link Somerville to the east. The two existing rails lines serve the New York and Newark markets and are primarily east-west oriented with little or no north-south service. The Raritan Valley Line is considered to provide a better service with more trains and more favorable service times than the Peapack Gladstone Line which serves a group of northern suburban towns. These traditional rail systems are not adaptable to the way commuting patterns have changed and offer little to suburb-to-suburb commuters. Service is also oriented to the higher density population centers rather than the outlying suburban and rural portions of the county. Parking at train stations is considered problematic, as ownership and operation of parking lots and garages is not uniform and fees vary. Local interests sometimes outweigh regional benefits that transit may provide.

Somerset County's DASH and SCOOT services are limited and serve niche markets rather than providing significant mobility and mitigating commuting-related congestion.

Participants felt that transit, in general, must provide more convenience, better coverage of the overall area, and more off-peak service to get drivers out of their cars and onto the trains and buses. However, the outlying areas of the County have less population and low densities making transit difficult to support.

Discussion indicated that the Transit-Rich scenario should examine potential opportunities to expand Somerville as a transit hub.

Although Somerville is the county seat and a center of public employment, most private employment in Somerset County – including office, industrial, and retail – lies in the outlying suburban areas and along major arterials which lack generally transit service – U.S. 202 and 206, and NJ 22, 28 and 27. Most major employment sites are also located away from the existing rails lines.

Low skilled labor jobs do draw from the small urban centers such as Somerville, but these jobs also lie in areas poorly served by transit. Transit-dependent and mobility limited populations are under- or un-served by main transit services

Various employers and job sites provide dedicated shuttle and jitney service, but these are often limited to company employees and little information is available on these services. Employers may be unwilling to share such information.

Construction is underway to convert Somerville station to high level platforms.

The major proposed transit improvement for Somerset is the restoration of the West Trenton Line. This service would follow the existing alignment and connects to the Raritan Valley Line east of Somerville. Development and supportive densities are planned in Hillsborough. Station stops would be Montgomery, Hillsborough and there is a potential station in Manville.

Another long-term potential improvement is implementing passenger service on the Lehigh Valley. Studies of potential ridership are underway. Significant capital cost would be required to implement this extension.

Community college service was a recent victim of NJ Transit budget issues.

Lack of adequate bus shelters and sidewalk connections were mentioned as possible contributors to low bus ridership. Bike lockers and racks are provided at train stations; usage information is anecdotal.

Participants indicated the following as priorities:

- Bus connections to Middlesex County destinations and employment
- Potential for Easton Avenue transit to mitigate congestion and accessibility
- Dedicated bus lanes on major roadway corridors
- Buses along congested U.S. 206 corridor
- Redevelopment opportunities in Somerville should be linked to transit with appropriate densities and multi-modal access to stations and platforms.
- Raritan Valley Line does not run late enough in the evening, particularly for non-traditional commuters and health care/hospital workers; similar comments for Somerville-New Brunswick bus service
- Consider more mid-day service for retail and personal business/errands
- Park and Ride at 202 is at capacity
- West Trenton – one seat ride can have beneficial impact, timed with connections
- Transit Centers should provide helpful amenities – ticket service – signage – kiosks – lockers

The Access to the Region's Core (ARC) project is anticipated to have significant impacts and potential benefits to Somerset County

- ARC will add capacity especially with one seat ride
- Land use and redevelopment impact of ARC not clear
- May also have reverse commuting impact

Key Words: at each focus group session, participants were asked to offer several key words or concepts that best state their needs, interest, and concerns relative to the focus group topic.

- "Last Mile" Connections – Busing
- Invest in connecting the existing dots (multimodal nodes)
- Education / Awareness of transit services and connections
- Implement – identify quick fixes or pilot projects, so it is not "just another Plan with great ideas on the shelf"
- Business Chamber – involve organizations, not only individuals – economic designation, tax impacts/incentives
- Private / public sponsorship and partnerships
- Partnerships
- Information sharing – w/ agencies
- Implementation
- Education / outreach
- Funding – sources to implement
- Realistic and achievable
- Deliver – develop pilot program to deliver results and provide long-term direction/incentive

Making Connections Plan: Mobility and Safety Focus Group

Making Connections: Updating the Somerset County Circulation Plan

To continue to plan for the future, Somerset County is updating its 2003 Circulation Plan. The plan guides the County's investments in all aspects of transportation, including roadway improvements, mass transit, and freight movement. The new plan will also look to minimize the impacts our transportation choices have on the environment and address how to best allow our transportation system to handle growth in the future.

Input from those who live, work and do business is critical to guide development of the circulation plan and help identify and prioritize future improvements.

A series of focus group sessions have been scheduled to gather input and foster discussion of key issues, needs, and concerns. Focus group topics are anticipated to include: Transit; Mobility and Safety; Economic Issues/Jobs/Families/Special Needs; and Freight and Goods Movement.

Mobility and Safety

This session will begin with a brief overview of the study and goals of the plan, and the importance of mobility and safety. The study team will lead a facilitated discussion. Listed below is a series of questions and discussion topics. Please review and come prepared to discuss these issues and others that may be of specific interest to your community, organization, or business.

Core Questions

Whether you live or do business here - what parts of the Somerset County transportation system work well and what areas need improvement?

What types of problems should transportation improvement projects within the County focus on (ie safety, regional mobility, multi-modal)?

What type of project should be the County's first priority?

Focus Group Specific Questions

What locations on the county route network do you think are candidates for traffic calming? Why?

Where are there challenging pedestrian environments; Where have pedestrians been provided optimal accommodations?

What locations have the most pedestrian activity? Bicycle activity?

How likely are you to find a bicycle rack/bicycle parking at major destinations? Transit stops?

Do any municipalities have large numbers of children walking to school? Bicycling to school?

How (and where?) can transit connections be improved?

Should Somerset consider a complete street policy?

Wrap Up

Other thoughts about what works and doesn't work – mobility, safety, municipal land use, environmental considerations, business environment, maintenance, and system performance.

What would make Somerset County a more attractive business location?

Contact Info

Walter Lane, Somerset County Planning Board: 908-231-7021 or lane@co.somerset.nj.us

**MAKING CONNECTIONS:
SOMERSET COUNTY'S CIRCULATION PLAN UPDATE
MOBILITY AND SAFETY FOCUS GROUP
MEETING REPORT**

DATE: Thursday, May 13, 2010
TIME: 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
LOCATION: County Administration Building,
2nd Floor, Engineering Conference Room
20 Grove Street, Somerville, NJ
ATTENDEES: See attached Sign-In Sheet.

PURPOSE OF MEETING

This Focus Group is an opportunity to obtain input from those who live, work and do business in Somerset County so to guide the development of the circulation plan and help identify and prioritize future transportation improvements. See attached Mobility and Safety Focus Group Information Handout.

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Martine Culbertson opened the meeting as the Focus Group Facilitator, and after introductions, she reviewed Information Sheet.
2. Walter Lane, Supervising Transportation Planner, welcomed everyone on behalf of Somerset County. He noted the importance of this update to the 2003 Circulation Element Plan to provide for changing transportation needs and to prepare strategically for growth. Walt encouraged participants to share their thoughts, interests and concerns during this focus group session and he is the key contact if anyone wishes to provide additional information or has questions (908-231-7021 lane@co.somerset.nj.us).
3. Pete Kremer, Transportation Planner from PB Americas, provided an overview of the key project goals. He noted that this plan is intended to be different from the prior plan in that transportation objectives and solutions alone may not solve the transportation issues unless consideration is given to the land use policy to maintain and encourage proper growth and economic vitality in the County. Both must be analyzed and integrated for realistic objectives and solutions, which can be implemented.

4. Martine then asked participants some core questions, which were asked in each of the focus groups prior to asking specific questions intended for the mobility and safety focus group. The comments were noted and transcribed on the following Report Attachment.

5. In summary, Martine thanked everyone for their time and effort. She reminded participants that Walter Lane is the key contact for questions or to provide additional information.

6. In closing, Walter thanked participants for their valuable input and encouraged people to stay in touch via the Somerset County web site. Follow-up meetings or a public meeting will be held to present the results of the Circulation Plan Update. Meeting minutes from focus groups will be available on the Somerset County Planning Division web site under Making Connections. Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

7. A summary of comments is attached.

Mobility and Safety Focus Group Session – Summary of Comments and Key Words

Somerset County has limited highway capacity. Interstate highway access is available only in the northern portion of Somerset to I-78 and I-287. Mobility in central New Jersey and Somerset County in particular is greatly hampered by the fact that I-95 is discontinuous through this portion of the state. As a result the story of travel in Somerset County is that most roadways must carry traffic loads and serve travel purposes well beyond their physical design, capacity, and intended function.

These heavily traveled and congested routes attract a wide variety of local, regional, and interstate travel. Heavy trucks are also drawn to Somerset County's roadway serving local business, warehousing and industry, and the through-movements of good due to the connectivity that U.S. 206 provides between I-95 and 295 to the south and I-78, 80, and 287 to the north.

U.S. Route 206 is Somerset's primary north-south arterial route and virtually the only north-south roadway that traverses the entire county. Additional, although more limited, north-south capacity is provided by NJ Route 27, along the eastern edge of the county and situated adjacent to Mercer and Middlesex Counties. Other state and U.S. highways include U.S. 202 and NJ 22 and 28.

As a result, Somerset's county routes are left to bear a significant traffic load and serve multiple, and often conflicting, purposes including both local access and regional mobility;. Many of these county roadways are a legacy of the region's rural and agricultural origins when roads followed property lines with little adherence to modern design standards. These roadways feature numerous shortcomings including narrow travel lanes, limited or inadequate turning lanes at intersections, geometric and curvature deficiencies, historical and environmental constraints, encumbrances on preserved lands, impacts to adjacent development, and associated right-of-way costs and community concerns that limit opportunities for roadway expansion.

Somerset County staff noted that most proposed and planned improvement are focused on safety, given both the many constraints present and the frequently-encountered public opposition to roadway expansion.

Focus group participants identified various roadways as having various mobility deficiencies:

- Amwell Road/CR 514 is a county route serves as a regional roadway
- U.S. 206 – right lane additions and drops create confusion and prompt aggressive driving; some intersections lack turning lanes and protected left turns; forced to carry both regional and local traffic – mobility vs. access conflict.
- NJ 27 requires creativity to implement improvements given various constraints

Alternate travel modes: in general, accommodations for bikes and pedestrians are limited. Transit suffers from large gaps in service in the southern and central portions of Somerset County. Participants noted much anecdotal evidence of bike use along narrow and busy county roads, particularly on weekends. River Road/ CR 533 attracts cyclists for both commuting and recreational purposes. One participant suggested bicycle lanes along U.S. 22 in the shoulder, others were skeptical about demand, overall safety, numerous curb cuts, heavy trucks, etc. Pedestrian countdown timer signalheads are implemented by Somerset County on retrofits and new installations, but no countywide program to replace existing pedestrian indications with countdown timers is in place.

The D&R Canal towpath serves as a de-facto bike lane between Bound Brook and New Brunswick. Improved linkages, signage, and other amenities were all suggested to improve accessibility between the towpath and the local and regional street systems. The towpath surface in this area needs

maintenance to improve usefulness for commuting and walking. The East Coast Greenway utilizes this portion of the D&R Canal.

A suggestion was made to review the Somerset County greenway study for further details on county efforts to use greenway system, mountain ridges, river corridors, and the Raritan River Greenway to supplement bicycle and pedestrian mobility given on-street limitations.

Sidewalks: Improvements to sidewalks are considered by Somerset County to be a municipal responsibility. Some participants suggested investment in sidewalks to reduce demand for school busing service. Given the county's limited areas of appropriate density, sidewalk needs are typically limited or localized. Many existing gaps in sidewalk connectivity would provide access to land with little or no direct pedestrian demand. Planning efforts should identify where it is possible to walk to school and work among the overall county infrastructure and network. Participants felt it is important to balance cost of school busing through other means including building sidewalks, and implementing "walking school bus" programs where children meet up with other children to walk together to school under adult supervision, etc.

The concepts of complete streets, traffic calming, and network connectivity are supported by Somerset County, with the following caveat - none of these should push or divert traffic from higher classification roadways to lower classification roadways, particularly onto local and/or residential streets. Due to a variety of constraints, opportunities for improved network connectivity in Somerset County are limited. Community opposition is a frequent challenge to many proposals to implement network connectivity.

Traffic calming is considered more applicable to the pockets of densely-developed areas in the county. Traffic calming should be area- and use-appropriate; speed humps are not permitted on County roads per state policy. The modern roundabout can be a tough sell to the public given the legacy to the Somerville Circle. Posted speeds should be appropriate to for the street system hierarchy.

Cross access easements, shared parking, and consolidated driveways for commercial and retail development and redevelopment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Education and outreach are important elements when considering any of these applications, particularly given the public opposition and skepticism that is frequently encountered.

Complete streets are considered desirable in Somerset County but often prove difficult to implement since the need is frequently greatest in established areas where cost and right-of-way limitations constrain the ability to make improvements.

Proposed and planned projects include:

- U.S. 206 bypass project in Hillsborough which addresses some local and regional system connectivity, supports Hillsborough Township's long term land use goals including a transit village and TDR programs.
- Extending Brown Ave by the Days inn in Hillsborough would provide new access (Brown Ave between 206 and Roycefield Rd) also provides access to N-S rail properties

Key Words: at each focus group session, participants were asked to offer several key words or concepts that best state their needs, interest, and concerns relative to the focus group topic.

- Safe corridors/Safety Impact Teams
- Work cooperatively - county, state, local
- Opportunity for business and economic development

- Safer, more attractive development and roads
- Provide more alternatives – transit, energy independence
- Less congestion, mass transit
- Examine Central Jersey Forum model to east/west connectivity
- Land use collaboration
- Accessibility - BRT feeder routes
- Accommodate all users – all abilities
- Integration of land use and transportation – create livable communities
- Businesses locates here due to quality of life – planning should protect and enhance
- The local Economy require all travel modes – trucking, freight as well as cars
- Connectivity to off road routes and alternate sources of transportation
- Connect all local Greenways – multi-connections, multi-modal
- Develop new off road – rails to trails corridors
- Work with Duke Estate to examine concepts, proposed improvements
- Mobility and Community Forum –collaborate with NJDOT and other agencies

Making Connections Plan: Economic Issues Focus Group

Making Connections: Updating the Somerset County Circulation Plan

To continue to plan for the future, Somerset County is updating its 2003 Circulation Plan. The plan guides the County's investments in all aspects of transportation, including roadway improvements, mass transit, and freight movement. The new plan will also look to minimize the impacts our transportation choices have on the environment and address how to best allow our transportation system to handle growth in the future.

Input from those who live, work and do business is critical to guide development of the circulation plan and help identify and prioritize future improvements.

A series of focus group sessions have been scheduled to gather input and foster discussion of key issues, needs, and concerns. Focus group topics are anticipated to include: Transit; Mobility and Safety; Economic Issues/Jobs/Families/Special Needs; and Freight and Goods Movement.

Economic Issues/Jobs/Families/Special Needs

This session will begin with a brief overview of the study and goals of the plan, and how economic issues impact transportation needs. The study team will lead a facilitated discussion. Listed below is a series of questions and discussion topics. Please review and come prepared to discuss these issues and others that may be of specific interest to your community, organization, or business.

Core Questions

Whether you live or do business here - what parts of the Somerset County transportation system work well and what areas need improvement?

What types of problems should transportation improvement projects within the County focus on (ie safety, regional mobility, multi-modal)?

What type of project should be the County's first priority?

Focus Group Specific Questions

What are the unique economic issues facing Somerset County?

What enclaves of environmental justice communities exist in Somerset County? Are these groups reached through traditional means or is dedicated outreach required?

What types of bilingual materials would be most valuable in providing transportation information to groups where a language barrier exists?

Is the transportation system adequate for those with mobility limitations?

What segments of the community have the most trouble finding adequate transportation? Seniors? Teenagers? Those without access to an automobile?

Does the transportation system connect the available work force able with employment opportunities? Or is this a need to be addressed?

Wrap Up

Other thoughts about what works and doesn't work – mobility, safety, municipal land use, environmental considerations, business environment, maintenance, and system performance.

What would make Somerset County a more attractive business location?

Contact Info

Walter Lane, Somerset County Planning Board: 908-231-7021 or lane@co.somerset.nj.us

**MAKING CONNECTIONS:
SOMERSET COUNTY'S CIRCULATION PLAN UPDATE
ECONOMIC ISSUES FOCUS GROUP
MEETING REPORT**

DATE: Friday, May 14, 2010
TIME: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
LOCATION: County Administration Building,
2nd Floor, Engineering Conference Room
20 Grove Street, Somerville, NJ
ATTENDEES: See attached Sign-In Sheet.

PURPOSE OF MEETING

This Focus Group is an opportunity to obtain input from those who live, work and do business in Somerset County so to guide the development of the circulation plan and help identify and prioritize future transportation improvements. See attached Economic Issues Focus Group Information Handout.

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Martine Culbertson opened the meeting as the Focus Group Facilitator, and after introductions, she reviewed Information Sheet.
2. Walter Lane, Supervising Transportation Planner, welcomed everyone on behalf of Somerset County. He noted the importance of this update to the 2003 Circulation Element Plan to provide for changing transportation needs and to prepare strategically for growth. Walt encouraged participants to share their thoughts, interests and concerns during this focus group session and he is the key contact if anyone wishes to provide additional information or has questions (908-231-7021 lane@co.somerset.nj.us).
3. Pete Kremer, Transportation Planner from PB Americas, provided an overview of the key project goals. He noted that this plan is intended to be different from the prior plan in that transportation objectives and solutions alone may not solve the transportation issues unless consideration is given to the land use policy to maintain and encourage proper growth and economic vitality in the County. Both must be analyzed and integrated for realistic objectives and solutions, which can be implemented.

4. Martine then asked participants some core questions, which were asked in each of the focus groups prior to asking specific questions intended for the economic focus group. The comments were noted and transcribed on the following Report Attachment.

5. In summary, Martine thanked everyone for their time and effort. She reminded participants that Walter Lane is the key contact for questions or to provide additional information.

6. In closing, Walter thanked participants for their valuable input and encouraged people to stay in touch via the Somerset County web site. Follow-up meetings or a public meeting will be held to present the results of the Circulation Plan Update. Meeting minutes from focus groups will be available on the Somerset County Planning Division web site under Making Connections. Meeting adjourned at noon.

7. A summary of comments is attached.

Economic Issues Focus Group Session – Summary of Comments and Key Words

This focus group brought together a diverse group of social service providers, advocates and members of the business community. The discussion touched on many of the key issues raised in the preceding focus groups: mobility, safety, transit, traffic congestion, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, land use, and access to jobs - with particular attention paid to the impact to working families and residents with mobility limitations.

The term “mobility limited” refers to a large and varied group whose access to transportation services and infrastructure is limited for any number of reasons. This may include those who do not own or have access a personal vehicle, those with physical disabilities, those too young to drive, seniors who may be physically unable to drive, or those who live in areas where transit service is limited or unavailable. These residents cannot access the basic services, needs, and activities that contribute to good health and quality of life – work, school, social services, job training, shopping, health care, social and family gatherings, recreation, and others. Independence comes from mobility and access, when these are limited - for whatever reason - quality of life suffers.

Discussion Topics, Comments, and Recommendations

Focus group participants noted that transit service in Somerset County is provided in limited areas and corridors. NJ Transit bus service is provided in the southern portion of the county but only links Montgomery with Princeton and Lawrence in Mercer County, not to the north. Large parts of Somerset are unserved by NJ Transit including southern Franklin Township, where densities are often too low to support transit; this condition inhibits non-motorized access to social services in Somerville. NJ Transit rail is limited to two systems - the Raritan Valley Line links the urban areas through the central portion of the county and the Peapack Gladstone extends through several suburban and rural communities to the north. Each line is oriented east-west and follows the traditional model of suburb-to-central city, Newark and New York being the primary destinations. One participant felt that the suburb-city orientation was a significant weakness of the county’s rail service and that the existing alignments provide little benefit to the predominant suburb-to-suburb commute which has become the norm for many Somerset residents and workers.

Examples of unmet needs and lack of coordination among services include:

- Public transportation not provided to the county college
- Service to Elizabeth Avenue industrial corridor
- Limited weekend and off-peak service which is a problem for problem for retail jobs and shoppers
- Youth training is available but not able to get to jobs
 - Employable but no transportation
- Cost of transportation too high for those who need it most
- Senior housing with little or no public transportation and non-motorized options

Land use decisions, roadway design, and parking lot design were each mentioned as factors contributing to congestion and hampering access for individuals with mobility limitations. Examples included separation of housing and jobs, zoning for strip commercial and retail establishments often requiring many curb cuts, roadway and parking lot design that hamper trip chaining, siting of public facilities and services in areas with limited or no transit service.

The county's core of urbanized area i.e. Raritan, Somerville, Bound Brook were noted as both isolated from, and isolating for, many residents because they are not connected to surrounding retail and employment opportunities except by car. As the county seat, Somerville provides government and social services, and is home to many residents, but limited private employment is located in town or accessible to mobility-limited residents.

Participants cited various potential mitigations and improvement projects targeted to those with mobility limitations:

- More connectivity for bikes and walkers, particular for communities with limited vehicle ownership
- Fill-in missing links in sidewalks
- Create mixed use, high density, development patterns
- Incentives to encourage private business to enhance access – shuttles, vehicle options, pedestrian and bicycle amenities
- Accommodate drop-off / pick-up areas at key locations (service & municipal sites – post office, court, hospitals, schools and retail)
- Locate senior services and commercial need such as banks and pharmacy near senior housing - identify markets to create effective mobility options to support need
- Create options to walk and bike to malls and shopping – locate shops at convenient areas attract businesses and consumers
- Seek jobs-housing balance as well as appropriate housing for the type, and income range, of available employment
- Coordinate local and county actions, planning, projects with SDRP and other state agencies and actions
- Plan land use as it shapes demand and travel patterns; use carrot-and-stick approach with flexibility in zoning and standards. Do zoning and standards achieve better design, and enhance mobility and access or just place regulatory and cost burdens on developers without even achieving these goals?
- Balance mobility and community issues vs. site development as a commodity/ investment/ financial risk
- Consider mobility impact of community design, i.e. gated community access, is problematic for transit
- Consider target audience when siting regional facilities, social services, health care, safety network
- Limit parking requirements or provide better site circulation layouts where new sidewalks are created – improve mobility for customers and value for property owners and businesses through better site design and accessibility

Some discussion focused on a new approach to multilingual communities was discussed. The point was that we need to look beyond the typical English/Spanish model due to diversity of communities and even within Spanish-speaking groups, when preparing signing, awareness, wayfinding, and education materials. The use of universal symbols / signing should be considered instead of just relying on printed word or text-based materials

The ARC project and its impact to the region generated some discussion. ARC is seen as having the potential to: to transform communities by providing a single seat ride to NYC; encourage reverse commuting; contribute to redevelopment activity. Does ARC without west Trenton increase driving to park in Somerville and get on the train? Does West Trenton serve as a relief valve to mitigate that increased demand? Participants indicated that Somerset needs a full accounting of ARC impacts and benefits that these should be reflected in the plan.

Key Words: at each focus group session, participants were asked to offer several key words or concepts that best state their needs, interest, and concerns relative to the focus group topic.

- Shared planning, decision making, incentives, flexibility, collaboration
- Reflect unique demographics: age, ethnicity, special needs, mobility limitations, cultures
- See county as an assemblage of individual small towns and plan accordingly
- Flexibility
- Needs-based plan for all residents, employers, employees
- Support population with disabilities, options for independence
- Re-shape - needs, behaviors, change
- Achievable and realistic plan
- Connect people to job sites/employment locations
- Incentives to change building/development types and patterns
- Shared planning and decision making – collaboration
- Options
- Balance competing interests thru Making Connections plan, including
- Balance priorities among
 - transportation
 - environment / DEP
 - land use
- Create mobility through design
- Mechanism for dialogue
 - on-going communication
 - collaboration
 - make personal and individual connections
- Social media – link and communicate needs, concerns, and problems to professional staff
- Determine goal of the plan –match and enhance connections between residence and employment and the reverse
- Matrix – develop evaluation method for determining transportation investment priorities with the plan vision

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Overview

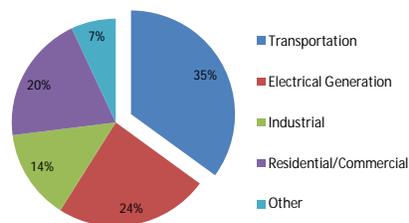
New Jersey Global Warming Response Act

- Adopted July 6, 2007, (GWRA) (P.L. 2007, c.112)
 - Reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels by 2020
 - Approximately a 20 percent reduction below estimated 2020 business-as-usual emissions
 - Further reduction to 80 percent below 2006 levels by 2050

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Overview

- 35% of statewide GHG emissions are transportation related
- The New Jersey Climate Change action plan limits growth in VMT to less than 1% per year
- Transportation infrastructure is uniquely vulnerable to the general climatic and weather impacts that will likely accompany the rise in ambient temperatures



Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Overview

- Impacts of climate change in Somerset County are not fully understood
 - Increase in the number of extreme heat events
 - Severe precipitation events
 - Paradoxically, drought conditions
- Historical weather patterns will no longer be a good indicator of future conditions
- Agencies should begin to integrate a level of uncertainty into the planning process

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change

GHG Mitigation

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Mitigation

"4-Leg Stool"



- Fuels: Renewable and low carbon fuels
- Vehicle Technology: More fuel efficient vehicle fleet
- Reduce Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT)
- Vehicle and Systems Operations: "Eco-driving," Roadway Network efficiency, Minimizing traffic flow interruptions

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Mitigation

- Population in the state expected to double by 2050, making per capita GHG goal 90% below current levels
- In NJ the transportation sector is not expected to meet the goal (80% reduction by 2050) internally
- Reductions in other sectors will need to offset transportation's shortfall
- Transportation Sector will be under more pressure

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Mitigation

Direct Infrastructure Impacts of Mitigation

- Lifecycle costs (longer life and less maintenance)
- Energy Efficiency (facilities and products)
- Building practices
- Selecting low emission pavements
- Using locally sourced materials
- Lower energy input products (recycled and lightweight materials)

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change

Adaptation to Climate Change

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Adaptation

Climate Change Adaptation in the Transportation Sector

- The Transportation Sector is in a unique position
 - Significant contributor to GHG
 - Potential for direct impacts on infrastructure and facilities
- Impacts are often thought of in terms of sea-level rise, but in Somerset County...
- Extreme weather is likely to occur with greater frequency
 - Precipitation
 - Heat events

Baker

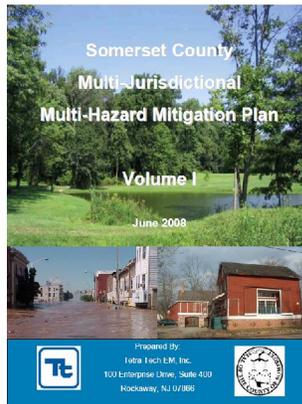
Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Adaptation

Considerations For Transportation Planning

- Elevates some considerations:
 - Planning/building to address increased likelihood of extreme weather events
 - Increased routine maintenance of infrastructure
 - Retaining and expanding quick response capabilities for emergencies/catastrophic events
- Flooding will predominate the discussion in Somerset County

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Adaptation



Hazard Mitigation Plan

- Represents the best available and more recent compendium of vulnerable infrastructure
- Sizable effort
- Represents best practice
- Discusses climate change in passing
- FHWA does not have methods for redefining flood plains in consideration of climate change

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Adaptation

Hazard Mitigation Plan

- Updating list of vulnerable infrastructure is premature at this time
- Rule of thumb: 100 and 500 year storms will occur
- Draught interspersed with intense precipitation events
- Maintenance will be more frequent
- Scrutinize investments accordingly
 - Insurance is forcing the issue
- Plan to respond

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Adaptation

Design Considerations

- There will be a need to re-evaluate design criteria for facilities
 - Piers/bridge decks
 - Culverts
 - Scour
 - Drainage/Loss of meshes and protective vegetation
 - Flood capacity

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Adaptation

Design Considerations Continued

- Soil Moisture Levels
- Foundations/Sub-pavements
- Temperature resistance
 - Failing pavements
 - Railways buckling

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Adaptation

Emergency Management/ Evacuation

- Emergency management and evacuation takes on increased importance
- A number of police stations, schools, fire departments, etc. located in hazard-prone areas
 - Relocation and Abandonment

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Adaptation

Emergency Management/ Evacuation Continued

- Heightened importance for redesign and ongoing maintenance of major evacuation routes:
 - Interstate 287 and State Highways 27, and U.S. Highway 206 (major north/south routes)
 - Interstate 78, U.S. Highways 22 and 202, and State Highway 28 (major east/west routes)
 - County Routes 523, 525, 527, 531 and 533 (alternate north/south routes)
 - County Routes 512, 514, 518, 523, 525, 531, 533, 567 and 601 (alternate east/west routes)

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Adaptation

Interim Proactive Steps to Address Climate Change

- In areas where flooding is likely, improving the rainfall capture and storage capacity of a catchment (e.g. by enhancing or mimicking the water storage capacity of the soil)
- Increasing conveyance capacity to disperse floodwaters
- Develop policies to maintain existing levels of service which incorporate climate change factors at the time of repairs or upgrades

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Adaptation

Interim Proactive Steps Continued

- Establishing physical protection measures, e.g. building stop-banks
- Managing the effects of flooding by removing at-risk land use such as infrastructure and the built environment in floodplains
- Managing the expectations of communities in flood-prone areas to expect and cope with flood events

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Study Efforts

Efforts in the Region

- The NJTPA is currently engaged in a multi-year climate change initiatives program that includes:
 - A greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions forecast
 - Support for sub-regional climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts
 - A region-wide inventory and analysis of vulnerable infrastructure to future climate change impacts
 - Adaptation research (includes temperature, sea level, storm surge intensity and precipitation changes)

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Study Efforts

NJTPA Efforts Continued

- Integration of climate change and energy concerns throughout NJTPA activities
- Infrastructure impacts: structures, pavement and serviceability
- Mitigation demand management impacts: trip reduction, mode shift and financing
- Coordination of NJTPA climate change efforts with local, regional and statewide efforts

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change: Study Efforts

Other Efforts in the Region

- The NJTPA/NJDOT/NJDEP is co-sponsoring a grant to investigating climate change adaptation issue at more detailed level

Baker

Somerset County Circulation Element Climate Change

Questions?

Baker

Summary of Comments: Critical Infrastructure Assessment Focus Group Session, August 18, 2010

This focus group session brought together county officials drawn from transportation planning, engineering, design, and emergency preparedness disciplines. The discussion focused on climate change and green house gas (GHG) issues, the impacts of major weather events, flooding, infrastructure considerations, and local transportation and evacuation planning. The study team reviewed the Somerset County Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (2008) in advance of the focus group session. Staff from PB and Michael Baker attended for the project team.

The meeting began with a brief presentation on climate change, including applicable legislation, GHG goals, mitigation, infrastructure issues, and potential local and regional actions. It was noted infrastructure can be directly impacted by climate change and that 35% of statewide GHG emissions are transportation-related. This places the transportation sector in a unique position of both cause and effect with the potential to mitigate impacts to infrastructure and facilities through strategic action.

Discussion Topics, Comments, and Recommendations

The focus group discussions centered primarily on the issue of flooding within the county with particular attention on the boroughs of Manville and Bound Brook. Hurricane Floyd (September 1999) was discussed on several occasions, both in terms of the actual impacts of the flooding associated with the event, and the issues surrounding evacuations in flood-prone areas. The perception was that during Hurricane Floyd officials may have waited too long to provide adequate notice to evacuate key areas, based on the resulting difficulties with implementing an effective evacuation and the after effects of the storm on the hardest hit municipalities. The duration and after-effects of Floyd also tested the limits of local preparedness and response. Since the Hurricane Floyd experience, local officials have changed the way evacuations are handled, and improved technology and communications systems have come into use. An important lesson was the need to prepare for *onset, intensity, and duration* of a storm.

Bound Brook and Manville Boroughs were cited as being the two key Somerset County areas most prone to flooding and its after effects. Both municipalities have mitigation plans in place, and most of the implementation is handled at a local level, not at the county level. The Army Corps of Engineers are working in Bound Brook and are in the process of installing a flood control system, including levees, pumps, and structural improvements, that are anticipated to be complete by the end of 2011 as part of the GreenBrook Flood Control Project. However, several focus group members noted that there is no practical way to completely “solve” the flooding problems within Bound Brook, but that with sufficient warning and the mitigation of existing issues through infrastructure improvements, they can be better prepared for major storms and flooding events in the future.

County officials noted that bridges are also a significant issue when discussing flooding. Somerset County has a group dedicated to hydrological impacts on its bridge structures. County bridges are generally built to protect against a 10-15 year storm, but environmental considerations and historic preservation issues often hamper flood protection. Several group members noted that NJDEP, Green Acres, and historic preservation issues can hamper the ability to make the necessary repairs or improvements. Based on their experiences, the regulatory framework sometimes limits what can be done, and it was suggested that more flexibility among design and regulatory issues could prove beneficial. As with other public works projects within the county, cost is also at the forefront of how improvement decisions are made. Somerset County also maintains scour mitigation plan that is triggered by major rain events.

County engineers also discussed the issue of signal damage from flooding. While it would be beneficial to locate signal controls high enough to avoid water damage, it is often not feasible to do so, as the added cost would exceed simply replacing damaged equipment. Most signal controls have battery backups, but these are intended to support short term outages/brownouts, as opposed to longer term situations resulting from a major event.

Finally, it was noted that the current Hazard Mitigation Plan is being updated, with a focus on improved local communication and coordination and increased spotlight on emergency operations.

Somerset County Circulation Element 18 Aug 2010
Critical Infrastructure Focus Group

Name	Representing	Email
Stephen Chiaromonte	PB	chiaromonte@pbworld.com
John KendzulaK	Somerset County	KendzulaK@co.somerset.nj.us
John Barree	Somerset County	barree barree@co.somerset.nj.us
Carl Andreassen	Somerset County	andreassen@co.somerset.nj.us
Matt Loper	Somerset County	loper@co.somerset.nj.us
ADAM SLUTSKY	" "	SLUTSKYE@CO.SOMERSET.NJ.US
Joseph Fishinger	" "	fishinger@co.somerset.nj.us
DOUG VORNLOCKER	SOMERSET COUNTY	Vornlocker@co.somerset.nj.us
Patrick Smith	Somerset County	psmith@co.somerset.nj.us
ROBERT DABADIE	BAKER	R.DABADIE@MBAKERCOPT, OSM

Public Involvement

Public Meetings

MAKING CONNECTIONS:

Somerset County's Circulation Plan Update

Come to the Circulation Plan Update Public Meeting!

To continue to plan for the future, Somerset County is updating its 2003 Circulation Plan. The plan guides the County's investments in all aspects of transportation, including roadway improvements, mass transit, and freight movement. The new plan will also look to minimize the impacts our transportation choices have on the environment and address how to best allow our transportation system to handle growth in the future.

This will be the first of three public meetings. At this meeting we will introduce the project and ask the public how they want to see people and goods move in Somerset County both now and in the future.

Please contact Walter Lane at the Somerset County Planning Board for more information at 908-231-7021 or lane@co.somerset.nj.us

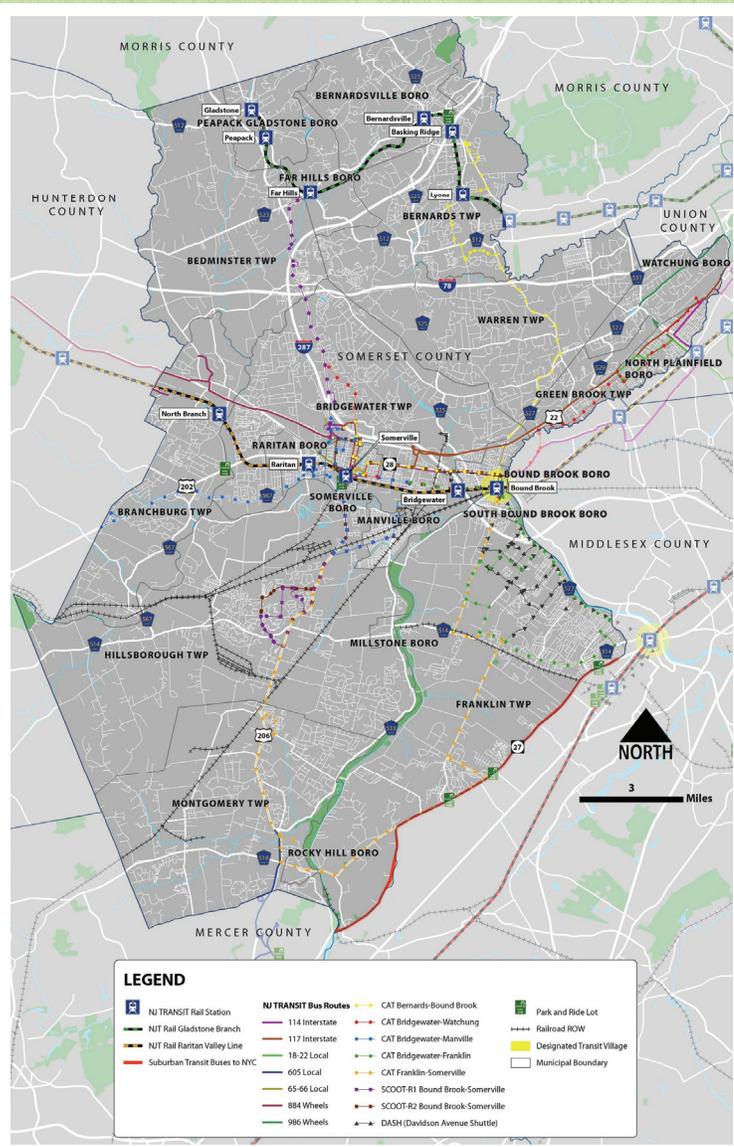
What: Public Meeting

Date: Thursday, March 11, 2010

Time: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

Location: County Administration Building
3rd Floor, Freeholders Meeting Room
20 Grove Street
Somerville, NJ 08876

Free parking is available at the Bernie Field parking deck located behind the administration building off High Street.



Funding for this study provided by a grant from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority.

MAKING CONNECTIONS: Somerset County's Circulation Plan Update

Meeting Agenda

Date: Thursday, March 11, 2010, 7 pm

Location: Freeholders Meeting Room,
Somerset County Administration Building

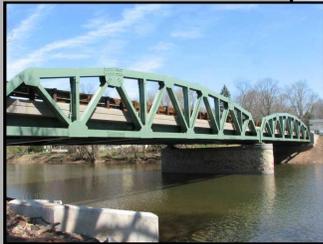
Subject: Public Meeting

1. Welcome - Somerset County
2. Introductions - All
3. Plan 2035: The Regional Transportation Plan for Northern New Jersey - NJTPA
4. Study Overview - PB
 - Study purpose and goals
 - Review of schedule, meetings, products/outcomes
5. Discussion of Key Themes and Issues - PB
6. Group Discussion - PB, All
 - Key themes and issues
 - Review of plan goals and policies
 - Making Connections Survey
 - Focus Group meetings
7. Next Steps - PB



MAKING CONNECTIONS:

Somerset County's Circulation Plan Update



Public Meeting #1 – March 11, 2010



Agenda

- Study Overview
 - Purpose of Circulation Plan
 - Study Team
 - Process
 - Schedule/Timeline
- Key Themes and Issues
- Group Discussion
- What's Next?

Public Meeting #1 – March 11, 2010



Purpose of Circulation Plan

- Guide transportation related decision making
 - Inform the County's capital improvement program
- Collaborative effort – public input is critical
 - Define local vision and how to achieve it
- Not just a list of projects
 - Multi-modal in scope
 - Integrated with land use plans
 - Considers environmental constraints and impacts
 - Uses performance measures and benchmarks to track progress
- **Create a sustainable vision for Somerset County**

Public Meeting #1 – March 11, 2010

TM



Study Team

- Somerset County Planning Division
- Parsons Brinckerhoff
- T&M Associates
- Technical Specialists:
 - A. Strauss-Wieder, Inc. (Freight Planning)
 - Michael Baker Corporation (GHG Emissions)
 - M.A. Culbertson, LLC (Public Involvement)

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Study Process and Tasks

- Steering Advisory Committee
- Comprehensive outreach process
 - Public meetings, focus groups, survey
- Data collection and analysis
 - Review and update 2003 Circulation Plan goals
 - Review existing and current studies, plans, initiatives, and policies
- Visioning and scenario modeling
 - Multi modal analysis including freight
 - Environmental constraints and vulnerable infrastructure
 - Develop benchmarks and assess results
- **Prepare Circulation Element document**

Public Meeting #1 – March 11, 2010



Schedule/Timeline

- Steering Advisory Committee Meetings
 - Held every few months as work products are completed
- Public Meetings
 - Public Meeting #2 Fall 2010
 - Public Meeting #3 Spring 2011
- Final Plan Presented to County Planning Board
 - late Spring 2011

Public Meeting #1 – March 11, 2010



Key Themes and Issues

- Integrating land use and transportation
- Smart growth principles
- System connectivity
- Freight and goods movement
- Environmental considerations



Integrate Land Use and Transportation

- Land use affects human activity and travel
- Transportation systems affect land accessibility
- Planning seeks to balance mobility and access
- Plan process will use traffic models and scenario planning to understand and evaluate potential outcomes



Smart Growth Principles

- Street and system connectivity
- Appropriate street widths and design speeds
- Shared parking, cross access, access control
 - Park once, access to many destinations
- Mixed-use development
 - Walkable and accessible
- Compact centers with transit supportive density
- **Promote development of livable communities**
 - **Placemaking and Context-Sensitive Design**

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Smart Growth Principles



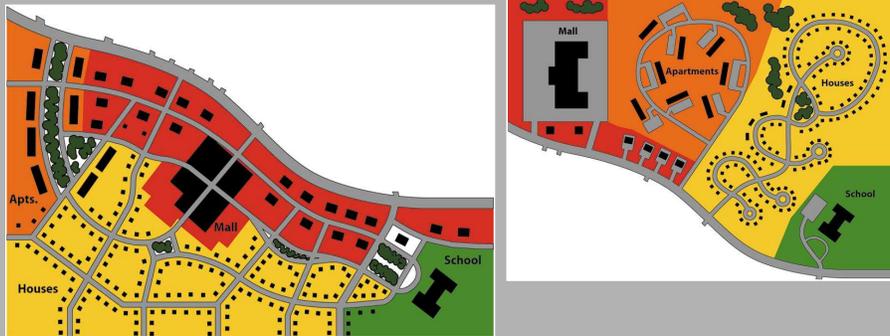
- Livable Communities
- Placemaking
- Context-Sensitive Design

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Mobility, Access, and Connectivity

- Develop an interconnected street network
- Also applies to bicycle, pedestrian & transit modes
- Provides for mobility in balance with land use access



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Freight and Goods Movement

- Indicators of a healthy and growing economy
- Critical to local and regional business
- Truck traffic and local impacts
- Develop a freight profile for Somerset County
 - Key issues, trends, and technologies
 - Potential strategies to mitigate local impact
 - Leverage recent and ongoing studies
 - focus group on freight issues

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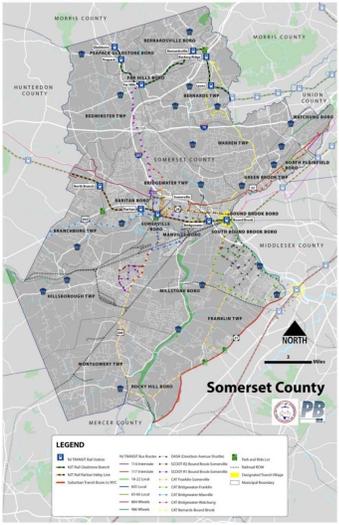


Environmental Considerations

- Environmental considerations include
 - Greenhouse Gases (GHG)
 - Climate change
 - Impacts to wetlands and other sensitive environmental features
- NJTPA GHG inventory
- GHG indicators from scenario modeling task
- Climate change impacts
- Identify vulnerable infrastructure



Group Discussion



- 2003 Circulation Element
- Goals and policies
- Key issues and trends
- Concerns of public, advocate groups, local officials, business
- Suggestions for focus groups and participants



What's Next?

- Initiate scenario planning and modeling tasks
- Distribute and tabulate survey
 - Survey available at www.ridewise.org
- Conduct focus groups
- Public meeting #2 – Fall 2010



Questions and Comments

- Survey available at:
 - www.ridewise.org
- For further information, please contact:
Walter Lane, AICP/PP
Supervising Transportation Planner
Somerset County Planning Division
(908) 231-7021
lane@co.somerset.nj.us





PB Meeting Minutes

Subject: Somerset County Circulation Element
Public Meeting #1

Attendees: Peter Kremer, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Ken Wedeen, Somerset County
Lois Goldman, NJTPA
Jeff Perlman, NJTPA
Stephen Chiaramonte, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Michael Kerwin, Somerset Cty Bus. Partnership
Robert Bzik, Somerset County
Walter Lane, Somerset County
Jaclyn Flor, T&M
Brian Gallagher, Borough of Somerville
Jim Crane, Ridewise

Date: March 11, 2010 – 7:00pm
Location: Somerset County Administration Building

The meeting began with Freeholder Scaglione welcoming attendees and giving a brief overview of the project. He mentioned the issues that the County is facing and explained that the County has undertaken an update to the 2003 Circulation Element to address these issues. He said the update will be action oriented, multi-modal, address goods and movement, and deal with environmental concerns facing the County. He also introduced Robert Bzik, Director of Somerset County Planning, and Walter Lane, Somerset County Supervising Transportation Planner, as leading the project. Mr. Bzik turned the meeting over to NJTPA..

Lois Goldman, NJTPA showed a short film and presented several slides relative to the NJTPA 2035 Regional Transportation Plan for New Jersey.

Peter Kremer, PB, then gave a PowerPoint presentation that explained the update to the 2003 Circulation Element, introduced the Project Team, explained the purpose of a circulation element, outlined the process, and gave a timeline for the project. He explained that the update to the 2003 Circulation Element will guide transportation related decision making, and inform the County's capital improvement program. He went on to explain the importance of public input, and that this plan will be a collaborative effort between the municipalities, the County, and key stakeholders.

Mr. Kremer explained how the project will start with a vision, and will develop into a plan that is multi-modal, integrated with land use plans, considers environmental constraints and impacts, uses performance measures and benchmarks to track progress, and ultimately creates a sustainable vision for Somerset County

Mr. Kremer then introduced the team members and County staff present at the meeting, and explained that the project also consisted of a Steering Advisory Committee made up of various



representatives from agencies and municipalities. He explained that as the project advanced there would be a continual outreach component consisting of public meetings, focus groups, and a web-based survey.

He then outlined the process which includes data collection and analysis, review and update 2003 Circulation Plan goals, review existing and current studies and policies, visioning, scenario modeling, multi modal analysis, freight movement, environmental constraints and vulnerable infrastructure. He pointed out that the Plan will have measures of achievement by developing benchmarks to assess results.

Regarding the timeline, Mr. Kremer stated that the target dates for the second and third public meetings are in the Fall of 2010 and the Spring of 2011, respectively. He said that it is anticipated that the Final Plan will be presented to the County Planning Board in the Spring of 2011.

Mr. Kremer then explained the key themes of the Plan. He started with giving examples of integrating land use and transportation, and explained how each example affected travel. He explained that in New Jersey we need to change the way we approach the planning and design of transportation systems so that there is a balance between mobility and access. He also spoke about NJDOT recent adoption of a complete streets doctrine.

Next he explained smart growth principals and showed a picture of Somerville. He then showed a depiction of two street networks. The first depiction had a grid system that provided multi-modal access for all users, where users had multiple options to get from point A to point B. The second depiction was of a highway similar to many County routes, which had one point of access onto the highway for each use. The depiction showed a mall, a school, and a cul-de-sac. Mr. Kremer explained that this second scenario results in increased traffic congestion, does not provide a safe means to walk or bike to school or the mall, and limits mobility options.

Mr. Kremer then emphasized the importance of freight movement, and explained that the Plan would develop a freight profile for Somerset County and develop potential strategies to mitigate local impact. Mr. Kremer pointed out that when you see a lot of freight movement, it is a strong indicator of a healthy economy.

He then touched on environmental considerations and stated that the plan would review the NJTPA Green House gas (GHG) inventory, and identify the effect of GHG and climate change on vulnerable infrastructure.

Mr. Kremer said that he believed that as time moves on towns will grow smarter. He stated that he believed that we will also see a shift where vehicle miles traveled (VMT) will decrease and transit use will increase.

Mr. Kremer then opened the floor to suggestions for focus groups and comments or concerns from the public.



Mayor Brian Gallagher, Mayor of Somerville, commented that there needs to be a shift to invest in local infrastructure if we plan to try to move closer to smart growth. He explained that Federal, State and County funding has keyed in on major roads, however we need to shift this focus towards smaller roads and centers for the grid system identified early to be sustainable.

Michael Kerwin, Somerset County Business Partnership, said that building on what the Mayor just said, that economic development is affected by the focus on major roads instead of existing local infrastructure. The existing road network constrains development.

A member of the audience then stated that the roads need to play other roles than just for cars, therefore, asked what role will this Plan will have in developing complete streets.

Robert Bzik, Director of Somerset County Planning, responded by saying to the extent that the County will build the framework for the street network it will.

A member of the public recommended that we incorporate mobility and community form into the Plan. Mr. Kremer noted that he was part of the PB team that led the effort to design the mobility and community form for NJDOT.

Jim Crane, Ridewise, asked how GHG modeling will look at land uses and corridors.

Robert Bzik, Director of Somerset County Planning, responded by saying that we are going to look at vulnerable infrastructure and strategies to protect it. We will also look at strategies to reduce VMT.

NJTPA explained that they can model the green house gases out to 2035. He said that NJTPA can take VMT, post-process it and get the resulting GHG.

A member of the audience then commented that he believed that the main reason we are seeing a reduction in VMT is that people are out of work. He said it was his opinion that in 2017, when the economy recovers, VMT will go back up. He said that 2017 is what we should be planning for. He also stated that he would like to see special attention paid to designated centers in this document.

Another member of the public asked if it was true hat there would no longer be buses to Raritan Community College.

Robert Bzik, Director of Somerset County Planning, responded that it was true. Mr. Bzik then stated that schools in the County have requested that we focus on pedestrian infrastructure since buses cost a lot for the schools.

Mr. Kremer concluded the meeting by asking everyone to please visit www.ridewise.org and take part in the project survey. He identified the next steps in the process and turned the meeting over to the County for final remarks.



Robert Bzik, Director of Somerset County Planning, thanked everyone for coming and asked Freeholder Scaglione if he'd like to make any concluding comments.

Freeholder Scaglione said that we need to think outside the box. We need to not focus on just one intersection, but we need to look at the little problems that affect the community as a whole. He then concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for coming.

Distribution: Attendees, PLA 19515A 6.0, Central File 19515A 6.0

MAKING CONNECTIONS: Somerset County's Circulation Plan Update

Come to the Circulation Plan Update Public Meeting!

Join Somerset County and the project team for a discussion of the Circulation Plan Update. The Making Connections Plan will guide Somerset County's investments in all aspects of transportation, including roadway improvements, mass transit, and freight movement. The new plan looks to minimize the impacts our transportation choices have on the environment and address how to best allow our transportation system to handle growth in the future.

This is the second of three public meetings for the plan update. At this meeting we will review the findings of the study, examine key elements of Somerset's transportation infrastructure, and seek comments from the public on how they want to see people and goods move in Somerset County both now and in the future.

Please contact Walter Lane at the Somerset County Planning Board for more information

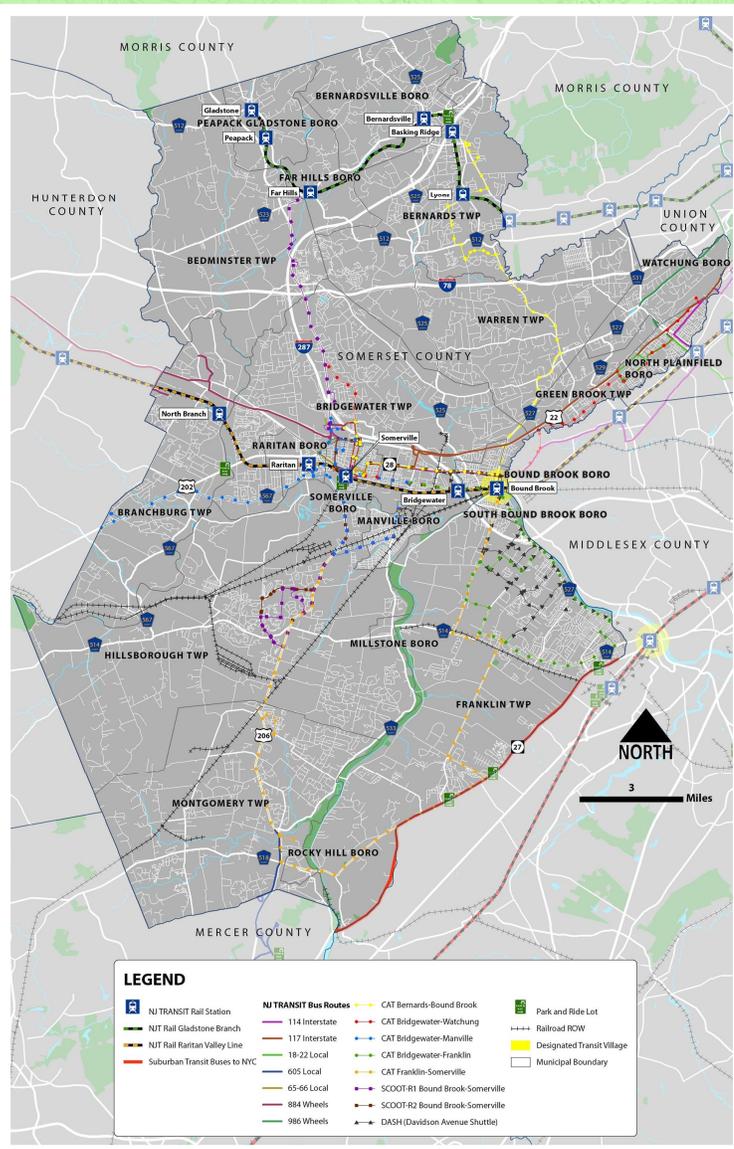
What: Public Meeting

Date: Wednesday, March 30, 2011

Time: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

Location: County Administration Building
3rd Floor, Freeholders Meeting Room
20 Grove Street
Somerville, NJ 08876

Free parking is available at the Bernie Field parking deck located behind the administration building off High Street.



Funding for this study provided by a grant from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority.

MAKING CONNECTIONS: Somerset County's Circulation Plan Update

Meeting Agenda

Date: Wednesday, March 30, 2011, 7 pm

Location: Freeholders Meeting Room,
Somerset County Administration Building

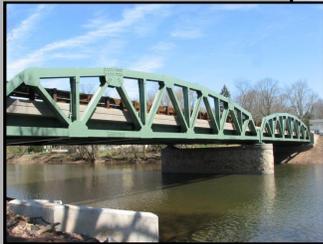
Subject: Public Meeting

1. Welcome - Somerset County
2. Introductions - All
3. Any NJTPA topics or presentation?
4. Study Overview - PB
 - Survey and focus groups – what you told us
 - Existing conditions – key themes and issues
 - Plan Vision - goals and polices
 - Scenario planning process
 - Making Connections (Blend) Scenario
5. Group Discussion - PB, All
6. Next Steps - PB



MAKING CONNECTIONS

Somerset County's Circulation Plan Update



Public Meeting #2 – March 30, 2011



Study Overview

- Community-based planning process
- Existing transportation system conditions
- Comprehensive outreach and coordination
- Goals and policies to guide decision making
- Summary of conditions, issues, concerns, needs
- Scenario planning to evaluate potential outcomes
- Comments and discussion
- Planning Board review and adoption

Public Meeting #2 – March 30, 2011

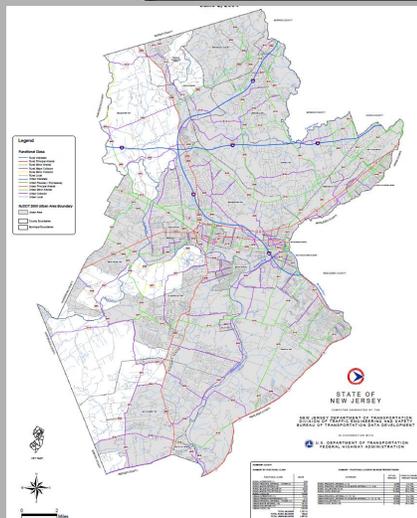


Existing Conditions

- Review of related plans, studies, and policies
- Multi-modal evaluation of transportation system
 - Roadway
 - Bicycle and pedestrian
 - Public and private transit
 - Freight and goods movement
 - Safety
- Greenhouse gases and climate change impacts
- Mobility and Community Form guidance



Multi-Modal Transportation System Functional Classifications



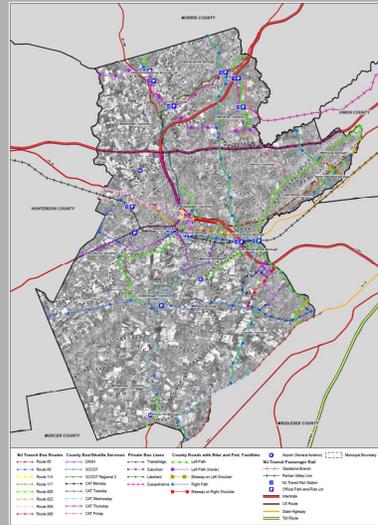
Class	Functions
Major Arterial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate regional through movements • Accommodate high traffic volumes • Maximize mobility, minimize interference
Minor Arterial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate through movements • Connect major arterial roadways with the collector system • Link centers
Major Collector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidirectional connection between local streets to the arterial system • Connect residential developments with adjacent land uses
Minor Collector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidirectional connection between local streets to the arterial system, albeit at lower volumes than major collectors • Connect residential developments with adjacent land uses • May include County roadways without collector function that provide access to adjacent land uses

Source: NJDOT



Multi-Modal Transportation System Transit - Rail

- New Jersey Transit Passenger Rail
 - Gladstone Branch (Morris and Essex Line) – Six stations within County
 - Raritan Valley Line – Five stations within County
- Commuter Rail Service
- Limited Intra-County traffic

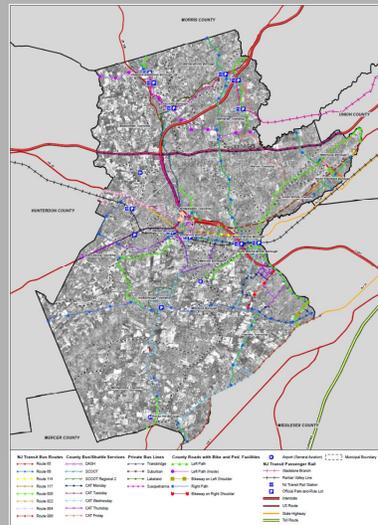


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Multi-Modal Transportation System Transit - Bus

- Public
 - New Jersey Transit Bus Service – Six Routes
 - Regional service to NYC, Newark, Plainfield, Lawrence Twp., and Clinton
- Private Operators
 - Lakeland Bus Lines – Bedminster, NJ to NYC
 - Trans-Bridge Lines – Bethlehem, PA to NYC
 - Suburban Transit – Princeton, NJ to NYC
 - Susquehanna Trailways – Two Routes
 - Sunbury, PA to NYC and Lock Haven, PA to NYC

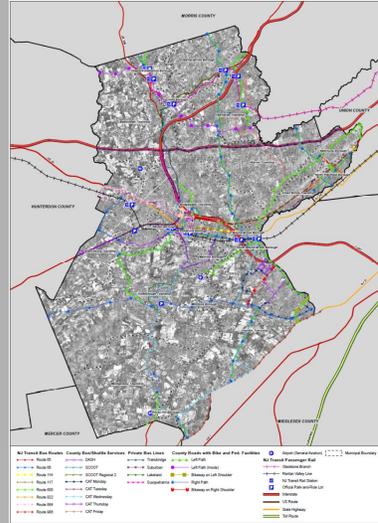


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Multi-Modal Transportation System Transit - Shuttles

- Davidson Avenue Shuttle (DASH)
 - One Route
 - Operated by County
 - Bridgewater to North Brunswick
- SCOOT – Two Routes
 - Operated by County
 - SCOOT and SCOOT Regional
- Community Access Transit (CAT) – Five Routes
 - Operated by County
 - Different route for each weekday



Public Meeting #2 – March 30, 2011



Multi-Modal Transportation System Transit – Park and Ride

- Thirteen (13) Total Lots
 - 11 associated with NJ Transit Railway Stations
 - 2 recognized by NJDOT (Bus)
- Promotes use of public transportation
- Reduces number of single-occupancy vehicles

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Multi-Modal Transportation System Airports

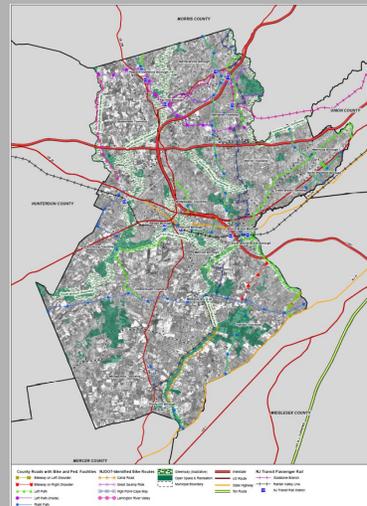
- Three General Aviation Facilities
 - Somerset Airport (Bedminster Township)
 - Central Jersey Regional Airport (Hillsborough Township)
 - Princeton Airport (Montgomery Township)
- Serve corporate and recreational users
- Provide access to pilot training facilities
- Serve as reliever airports

Public Meeting #2 – March 30, 2011



Multi-Modal Transportation System Bikeways and Greenways

- Bikeways (Outlined by NJDOT)
 - High Point to Cape May Bicycle Route
 - Lamington River Valley
 - Canal Road
 - Great Swamp
- County maintains ten miles of bikeways on roads

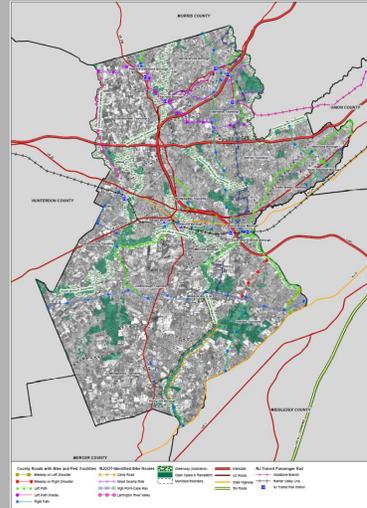


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Multi-Modal Transportation System Bikeways and Greenways

- Greenways
 - South Branch Greenway
 - North Branch Greenway
 - Second Watchung Greenway
 - Raritan River Greenway
 - Passaic River Greenway
 - Lamington River Greenway
 - Delaware and Raritan (D&R) Canal State Park
 - Peters Brook Greenway



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Multi-Modal Transportation System Crash Data

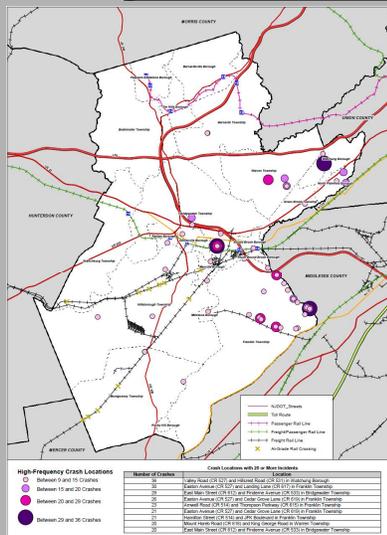


Table 2.12-1: Key Crash Locations

Number of Crashes	Location
47	Easton Avenue (CR 527) and Cedar Grove Lane (CR 619) in Franklin Township
36	Valley Road (CR 527) and Hillcrest Road (CR 531) in Watchung Borough*
30	Easton Avenue (CR 527) and Landing Lane (CR 617) in Franklin Township
29	East Main Street (CR 612) and Findene Avenue (CR 533) in Bridgewater Township
23	Amwell Road (CR 514) and Thompson Parkway (CR 615) in Franklin Township*
21	Hamilton Street (CR 514) and JFK Boulevard in Franklin Township*
20	Mount Horeb Road (CR 618) and King George Road in Warren Township*
20	East Main Street (CR 612) and Findene Avenue (CR 533) in Bridgewater Township

Note: * Denotes recently completed projects or projects under design.
Source: New Jersey Department of Transportation

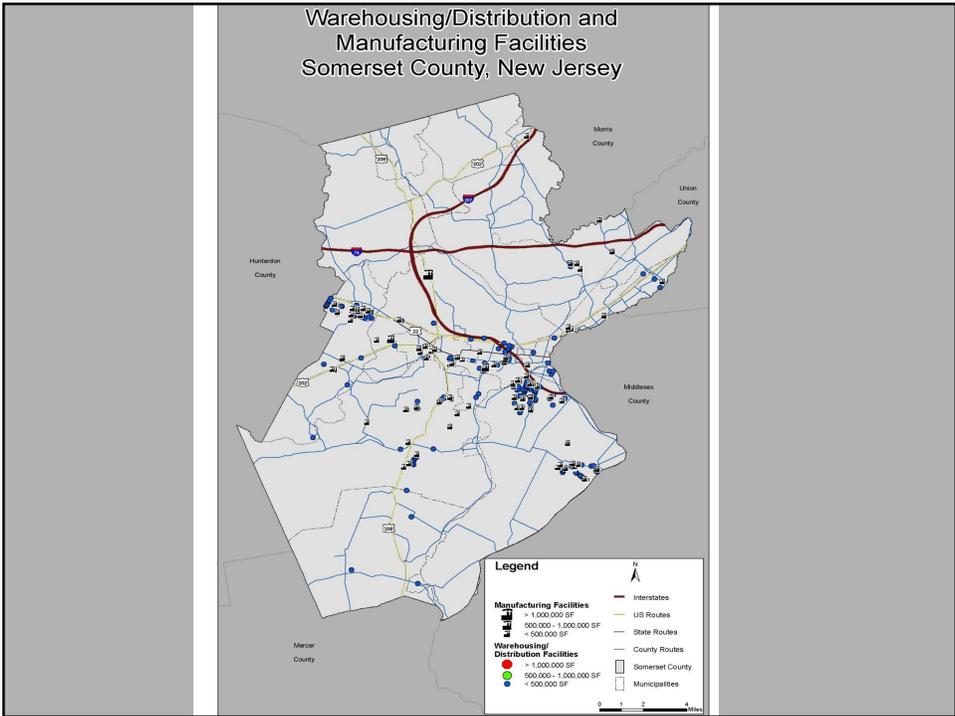
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Freight Context

- Access to major east-west and north-south roadways via I-78, I-287, and NJ Routes 22, 206, and 202
- Access to two national railroads – CSX and Norfolk Southern – with industrial sites located both within and immediately outside of the Conrail Shared Asset Area
- A diverse industrial and distribution business base, including steel, paper, pharmaceutical and medical manufacturing, plastics, building materials, and retail distribution
- About 40 million sf of industrial properties

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Issues and Considerations

- Not located immediately on the New Jersey Turnpike, the supply chain spine of the State
- Several key routes are highly congested, particularly I-287.
- No warehouses larger than 500,000 sf exist in the County. Many buildings are older and smaller
- Industrial sites compete with locations in Middlesex, Union and Mercer Counties in New Jersey and locations along I-78 in Eastern PA
- Limited large green field parcels for new development; must focus on reuse of existing and/or brownfield properties
- Must balance industrial and freight related development with other land uses within the County

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Moving Forward

- Somerset County has a diverse array of industries and freight-related operations including:
 - Medical and pharmaceutical companies, such as Centocor Ortho Biotech, Oticon, and Roche
 - Transload operations, such as Dameo in Bridgewater
 - Regional sort and distribution operations, such as UPS and Baker and Taylor, both located in Bridgewater
 - Quarries, including Stavola (which supplies NJ Transit) and Trap Rock Industries
 - Centrally located within New Jersey, making the County suitable for regional distribution activities
- New concepts, such as compact freight villages, can be considered to advance economic development objectives

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Outreach and Coordination

- Community-based planning process
- Comprehensive effort to gather feedback and guidance
 - Steering Committee – guide study and review findings
 - Focus Groups – represent broad spectrum of interests
 - Planning Board Chairmen – represent local government
 - On-line Survey – prioritize goals and policies
 - Public Meetings – inform public and gather comments
 - Somerset County Planning Board – review and adopt Plan

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Focus Groups

- Five sessions were held – April thru August, 2010
 - Freight and goods movement
 - Public transit
 - Mobility and safety
 - Economic issues
 - Critical infrastructure and climate change
- Variety of interests represented
 - Public sector
 - Private sector and business
 - Advocacy groups and stakeholders

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Focus Group Comments

- Expand bus service to include north/south routes
- Transit needs are underserved in central and southern part of the County
- Commission a study into parking at rail stations. Current ownership of lots is not uniform, and access, policies and fees vary
- Take advantage of redevelopment to support transit through higher densities
- Explore incentives for public/private partnerships with large business in the County
- Implement traffic calming as appropriate
- Encourage transit village and appropriate densities as part of bypass development
- Increase network connectivity in key areas along arterials
- Consolidate driveways and parking on major arterials
- Conduct safety audits at high accident locations
- Expand and connect Greenway corridors
- Provide access to employment for economically disadvantaged and disabled individuals
- Consider transportation needs of youth, seniors, and other users with no access to cars

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Goals and Policies

- Started with 2003 Circulation Element
- Updated based on:
 - Steering committee input
 - Comments from focus groups
 - Survey results
 - Comments from public meeting
 - Reflect current state of practice

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Goals and Policies

- Maintain and Modernize the County Transportation System
- Reduce Traffic Congestion
- Reduce Green House Gas Emissions Contributing to Climate Change
- Protect and Enhance the Natural and Built Environment
- Support Economic Activity in Town Centers and Business Corridors
- Improve Mobility and Connections between Travel Modes
- Integrate Transportation, Land Use, and Site Design
- Maintain a High Level of Safety and Security
- Monitor the Performance of the Transportation System



Key Themes

- Create a robust **multi-modal** transportation network
- **Maintain and improve** existing highway system
- **Traffic safety** is a major consideration
- **Increase** mass transit usage
- Plan elements should promote **sustainability**



Diverse Needs, Concerns, Issues

- Multi-modal network
 - Improve bus and transit service, add station parking
 - Add sidewalks, bicycle accommodations, greenways
 - Trucks and freight industry are critical to local and regional economy
 - Improve roadway network connectivity
- Maintain and improve
 - Explore public/private partnerships to fund needed improvements and expansion
 - Expand critical roadways including U.S. 206
- Safety
 - Improve safety and livability of roads and communities
 - Roadway safety is a priority
- Sustainability
 - Redevelop urban centers with transit supportive density
 - Connect people with opportunities through transportation

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Scenario Planning

- Developed a series of alternative scenarios
 - Reflect potential desired outcomes and visions
 - Based on infrastructure, demographic, land use elements
 - Facilitate compare and contrast using performance measures
- Tool: North Jersey Regional Travel Model (NJRTME)
 - Multi-modal with enhanced Transit component
 - Based on approved demographic projections
 - Testing of projects, policies, environmental and land use issues
- Many variations tested
 - How does each scenario meet Plan goals and policies?

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Scenario Planning

1. Somerset County Baseline
2. Highway Rich
3. Transit Rich
4. Blend Scenario

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Projects by Scenario

Project	Scenarios			
	Baseline	Highway Rich	Transit Rich	Blend Scenario
Highway				
Brown Ave - relocation		x		x
West County Dr	x	x	x	x
Orchard Rd - Connection to River Rd		x		x
CR 518 - Intersection	x	x	x	x
NJ 22 Widening	x	x	x	x
Chimney Rock Rd Interchange	x	x	x	x
I-287 at Easton Ave Interchange	x	x	x	x
U.S. 206 - Bypass and 15 N Widening	x	x	x	x
Amwell Rd Signal Improvements	x	x	x	x
Easton Ave Jersey Barrier		x		x
New crossing over Raritan River		x		x
Weston Canal Rd Signal	x	x	x	x
US 202 at 1st Ave - widening	x	x	x	x
Diamond Hill Rd Interchange	x	x	x	x
Diamond Hill Rd - widening		x		
Transit				
West Trenton		x	x	x
Hudson River Tunnel	x	x	x	x
Regional Service Enhancement			x	x
Flemington			x	
Travel Demand Management				
TDM Strategies (moderate)		x	x	x
Improved Network Coverage			x	x
Improved Bus Service			x	x
Improved Rail Service			x	x
Parking Fee Increase			x	x
Increase Percent Walk to Transit			x	x
Capacity and Highway Maintenance				
Five % Reduction in Capacity due to Funding Shortfall	All Roadways but County Routes	N/A	N/A	N/A
Demographic Data Projections				
Municipal Demographics	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan

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Somerset County Baseline

- Follows current trend line of growth and development patterns for Somerset and region
- Only approved NJTPA TIP and Plan projects
- Adopts NJTPA assumption for road maintenance
 - Capacity reduction due to funding shortfall
- Represents the *Baseline* for comparison
 - What would happen if no new plans, policies, vision were introduced?

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Highway Rich

- Primarily highway-based improvements
 - Capacity, intersections, interchanges
 - Traffic operations
 - Raritan River crossing
 - Adds total of 6 projects vs. Baseline
 - Regional rail expansion - West Trenton only
- Includes TDM/TSM elements
 - Low-cost operational improvements
 - Policies that shift travel demand (i.e. work at home)
 - Highway and transit ITS improvements

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Transit Rich

- **Prioritizes transit-based improvements**
 - Regional rail expansion - West Trenton and Flemington
 - Local and regional rail and bus enhancements
 - Same highway projects as Baseline
- **Includes TDM/TSM elements**
 - TDM/TSM the same for each alternative scenario



Blend Scenario

- **Prioritizes multi-modal improvements**
 - Regional rail expansion - West Trenton only
 - Local and regional rail and bus enhancements
 - Subset of projects from Highway Rich
 - Evaluate benefits of new Raritan River crossing
- **Includes TDM/TSM elements**
 - TDM/TSM the same for each alternative scenario



Performance Measures

Comparison of Performance Measures between Existing Conditions and Future Scenarios

	2009 Existing	2030 Somerset Plan Baseline	2030 Highway Rich	2030 Transit Rich	2030 Blend Scenario
Total Person Trips (all modes, thousands)	1,087.4	1,283.0	1,252.4	1,252.4	1,252.4
Transit Person Trips (thousands)	17.8	27.0	27.3	28.5	28.2
Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT, millions)	10.338	11.698	11.630	11.601	11.620
Vehicle Hours of Travel (VHT, millions)	0.317	0.408	0.386	0.385	0.385
Average Speed (mph)	32.59	28.67	30.11	30.13	30.17
% VMT at Congested Conditions	18.1%	22.5%	20.6%	20.5%	20.6%

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Scenario Summary

- Demographic shifts support transit, help mitigate congestion
- All scenarios result in degraded mobility from current conditions
 - Travel under congested conditions projected to increase by 25%
 - Increasing congestion impacts County and local street systems
- Conditions can be mitigated in Build scenarios but not resolved
 - Highway Rich – Mitigates congestion compared to Baseline
 - Transit Rich – Further mitigates congestion
 - Attracts auto trips to transit through new and improved services
 - Blend – Best overall in terms of performance measures
 - Benefits core towns by shifting travel to interstates which are better able to accommodate additional trips
 - Mitigates congestion impacts to County and local street systems

Public Meeting #2 – March 30, 2011



Summary

- Making Connections Plan
 - Update of the Somerset County Circulation Element
- A community-based planning process
- Safely connecting people with opportunity through transportation

Public Meeting #2 – March 30, 2011

TM



What's Next?

- Draft Making Connections Plan
 - Review by Somerset County and Steering Committee- early Spring
 - Draft Plan to County Planning Board- Spring
 - Distribution of Draft Plan- Spring
 - Planning Board Hearing to adopt Final Plan- early Summer

Public Meeting #2 – March 30, 2011

TM



MAKING CONNECTIONS: SOMERSET COUNTY'S CIRCULATION PLAN UPDATE
 County Administration Bldg, Somerville, NJ - Freeholder's Meeting Room

Wednesday, March 30, 2011
 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Name	Representing/Address	Phone	Email
Pat Flannery	BWT	705-6300	mayer@bridgewater.nj.gov
GEORGE KELLER	WARREN TWP.	908 647-0819	GEOFKELLER@aol.com
ROBERT GARY	11	908 647-5963	
Anne Shreiss-Wulder	ASWinc	908 654 5144	ASW@AS-W.COM
Susanne KAISER	ARC OF SOMERSET COUNTY 101 INDUSTRIAL PARKWAY BRANCHBURG, NJ 08823	908-707-1112 X 37	joannek@thearc.org SOMERSET.ORG
Susan Smith-Peter	Somerville	848 565 8683	susan.smith.peter@ DENI.COM.NET
Peter Bilton	Civic Eye Collaborative		peter@civiceye collaborative.com
John Maddalena			
Robert BARTY	Resident	908 722 7428	BARTY@A.T.NET
Tom Forsythe	Bridgewater Englewood	908-725-6300	tforsyth@bridgewater.nj.gov

MAKING CONNECTIONS: SOMERSET COUNTY'S CIRCULATION PLAN UPDATE
 County Administration Bldg, Somerville, NJ - Freeholder's Meeting Room

Wednesday, March 30, 2011
 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Name	Representing/Address	Phone	Email
Jane Kohuta	42 Coddington Pl. Somerville, NJ	908-526-5014	jkohuta@optonline.net
PATRICIA SCAGNONE	Somerset County	908-231-7030	Scagnone@co.somerset.nj.us
TIMOTHY M TAYLOR	Rubae Farms Found	908-243-3636	ttaylor@ddcf.org
Dan Hayes	Bridgewater Twp	908-256-5901	d.hayes@bridgewater.gov
CHRIS THOMPSON	397 NEW CENTER RD HILLSBOROUGH NJ	908-243-3650	CHOMPSON@DCE.ORG
FRANK BANISCH	BEDMINSTER BOENMERS		
Sean Carroll	Rutgers University	508-273-3360	SeanCarroll@eden.rutgers.edu
Charles Massy	Rutgers University	732-492-3477	cmassy@eden.rutgers.edu
DAN YUO	Rutgers University	609-634-1586	yulo@eden.rutgers.edu
Brady Walligan	Rutgers U	609-410-2381	brady.walligan@rutgers.edu

MAKING CONNECTIONS: SOMERSET COUNTY'S CIRCULATION PLAN UPDATE
 County Administration Bldg, Somerville, NJ - Freeholder's Meeting Room

Wednesday, March 30, 2011
 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Name	Representing/Address	Phone	Email
Megan Kelly	NSTPA	973-639-8414	mkelly@njtpa.org
MIKE KLING	HATCH MOTT MACDONALD	973-912-7535	michael.kling@hatchmott.com

Project Team

MAKING CONNECTIONS: SOMERSET COUNTY'S CIRCULATION PLAN UPDATE
County Administration Bldg, Somerville, NJ - Freeholder's Meeting Room

Wednesday, March 30, 2011
7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Name	Representing/Address	Phone	Email
MARINE CURBERSON	M.A. CURBERSON, C.C.C.	856-795-8485	maculbertson@verizon.net
Walt Lane	Somerset Cty		
Ken Weden	Somerset Cty		
Sadyn Flor	TEAM ASSOCIATES	732-671-6400	JFlor@tamobmass.org
Petar Krenn	PB	609-513-3539	Krenn@pbworld.com
Joseph Fishingier	Somerset County	908-231-7619	Fishingier@co.somerset.nj.us
Hub BAK	Somerset P.D.	908-231-7021	hzbak@co.somerset.nj.us

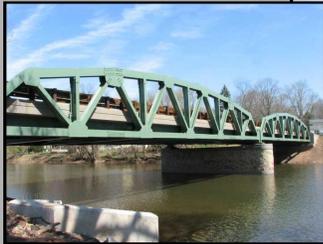
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Public Involvement

Somerset County Planning Board Meeting

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Somerset County's Circulation Plan Update



Somerset County Planning Board Meeting – June 21, 2011



Vision Statement

- *The Making Connections Plan:*
 - **Creates** a robust multi-modal transportation network
 - **Maintains and improves** the existing highway system
 - **Expands** the regional transit system
 - **Enhances** traffic safety for all travelers and all modes
 - **Promotes** sustainability

Somerset County Planning Board Meeting – June 21, 2011



Goals and Policies

- Maintain and Modernize the County Transportation System
- Reduce Traffic Congestion
- Reduce Green House Gas Emissions Contributing to Climate Change
- Protect and Enhance the Natural and Built Environment
- Support Economic Activity in Town Centers and Business Corridors
- Improve Mobility and Connections between Travel Modes
- Integrate Transportation, Land Use, and Site Design
- Maintain a High Level of Safety and Security
- Monitor the Performance of the Transportation System



Overview

- Community-based planning process
 - Comprehensive outreach and coordination
 - Goals and policies and Vision statement
- Existing transportation system conditions
 - Summary of conditions, issues, concerns, needs
- Scenario planning process
- Implementation plan
- Comments and discussion
- Committee review and adoption



Outreach and Coordination

- Community-based planning process
- Comprehensive outreach effort
 - Steering Committee – guide study and review findings
 - Focus Groups – seven meetings, broad spectrum of interests
 - Planning Board Chairs – represent local government
 - On-line Survey – prioritize goals and policies
 - Public Meetings – inform public and gather comments
 - Somerset County Planning Board – review and adopt Plan



Existing Conditions Assessment

- Multi-modal network
 - Improve bus and transit service, add station parking
 - Add sidewalks, bicycle accommodations, greenways
 - Trucks and freight industry are critical to local and regional economy
 - Improve roadway network connectivity
- Maintain and improve
 - Explore public/private partnerships to fund needed improvements and expansion
 - Expand critical roadways including U.S. Route 206
- Safety
 - Improve safety and livability of roads and communities
 - Roadway safety is a priority
- Sustainability
 - Redevelop urban centers with transit supportive density
 - Connect people with opportunities through transportation



Scenario Planning

- Multimodal scenario planning process
 - Evaluate infrastructure, TDM, and policy initiatives
 - Same model, demographics, assumptions, performance measures as NJTPA Plan 2035
- Developed and tested scenario alternatives
 - Somerset County Baseline
 - Highway Rich
 - Transit Rich
 - Blend Scenario



Scenario Summary

- All scenarios result in degraded mobility from current conditions
 - Travel under congested conditions projected to increase by 25%
 - Increasing congestion impacts County and local street systems
 - Demographic shifts support transit, help mitigate congestion
- Conditions can be mitigated in Build scenarios but not resolved
 - Highway Rich – Mitigates congestion compared to Baseline
 - Transit Rich – Further mitigates congestion
 - Attracts auto trips to transit through new and improved services
 - Blend – Best overall in terms of performance measures
 - Benefits core towns by shifting travel to interstates which are better able to accommodate additional trips
 - Mitigates congestion impacts to County and local street systems



Implementation Plan

- Highway capacity
- Transit capacity
- Traffic safety
- Integrated land use and transportation planning
- Emerging planning and design concepts
- Public outreach and education
- Bicycle and pedestrian
- Freight and goods movement
- GHG Adaptation & Hazard Mitigation
- Aviation



Implementation Plan

- Highways
 - Brown Avenue extension
 - Easton Avenue median barrier
 - Raritan River crossing scope development
 - Support High Priority NJDOT Projects
- Transit
 - West Trenton restoration
 - Supporting policies, services, pricing
- Traffic Safety
 - Continue to address high crash locations



Implementation Plan

- **Integrated land use and transportation planning**
 - Somerville redevelopment
 - Hillsborough Town Center
 - Transit villages
- **Emerging planning and design concepts**
 - Explore siting of electric vehicle charging stations
 - Expand ITS implementation, including traffic control and VMS
 - Explore innovative stormwater alternatives
- **Public Outreach and Education**
 - Continue and expand public outreach efforts



Implementation Plan

- **Bicycle and pedestrian**
 - Expand network of bicycle compatible roadways
 - Address sidewalk gaps
 - Improve bike and ped access at transit stations and stops
 - Consider Complete Streets design principles for road improvement projects
- **Freight and goods movement**
 - Eliminate the grade crossing on Main Street in Bound Brook
 - ITS improvements, including traffic control and VMS
 - Improve rail bridge serving Dameo transload facility to 286k
 - Explore freight village opportunities



Implementation Plan

- GHG and hazard mitigation
 - Prioritize GHG mitigation actions
 - Fuel efficient fleet vehicles
 - Low carbon fuels
 - Alternative fuel vehicles
 - Implement Somerset County Hazard Mitigation Plan actions
 - Implement local improvement to transportation infrastructure, and public facilities and buildings
 - Prioritize maintenance of identified emergency evacuation route
- Aviation
 - Monitor implementation of FAA Airspace redesign initiative



Summary

- Making Connections Plan
 - Update of the Somerset County Circulation Element
- A community-based planning process
 - Comprehensive outreach and stakeholder coordination
- Scenario planning process
 - Compare and contrast investment alternatives
- Implementation matrix
 - Multimodal infrastructure and policy initiatives
- *Making Connections:*
 - *“Safely connecting people with opportunity through transportation”*



Next Steps

- Planning Board approval to release Initial Draft Making Connections Plan
 - Draft plan is distributed to the municipalities and posted on the Planning Board web-site for a 30 day public comment period
- Initial Draft Plan is revised based on comments received
- Final Draft Making Connections Plan is distributed to the municipalities and posted on the Planning Board web-site for a 30 day public comment period
- Public Hearing Date will be set for either August or September to Adopt the Making Connections Plan



Discussion

- Comments and questions
- Potential/Pending changes to current Draft Plan



For further information, please contact:

Walter Lane, AICP/PP

Supervising Transportation Planner

Somerset County Planning Division

(908) 231-7021

lane@co.somerset.nj.us

