



Charles Kenny, Chair
Jason J. Sarnoski, First Vice Chair
David W. Behrend, Executive Director

FREIGHT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

Commissioner Stephen Shaw, Chair
Commissioner Sara Sooy, Vice Chair

Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2026

I. Roll Call of Members

Freight Initiatives Committee (FIC) Chair Stephen Shaw, Morris County Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and eleven voting members were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

City of Newark moved the minutes of the December 15, 2025, meeting and the Citizens Representative seconded. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

III. Update on NJTPA Freight Division Activities

Sofia Kyle, Central Staff, shared a freight activity update. She said the NJTPA continues to advance the Freight Concept Development Program Studies. The Southern Middlesex County North-South Truck Corridor Project in Middlesex County focuses on the New Jersey Turnpike Exit 8A area. The core working group recently met to review updates on routing analysis, corridor movements, truck volumes, and an ongoing truck operator survey.

Ms. Kyle said they are progressing with the East Hanover Avenue Bridge Catenary Rail Clearance Project on the Morristown line. This project's goal is to address vertical clearance constraints to accommodate 17-foot-tall rail cars. Following a Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) survey and additional data collection, four locations have been identified as impediments in need of improvement.

She said NJTPA launched a new and updated website, and the freight page has been refreshed. Ms. Kyle encouraged everyone to take a look when they have a chance.

IV. Presentation: Industrial Real Estate Update

The Chair introduced Tom Tucci, Vice Chairman of Cushman and Wakefield, and Walter Lane, Executive Director, NJ Office of Planning Advocacy. Mr. Tucci co-leads a 17-person industrial team currently ranked as the number one industrial team in the world for Cushman and Wakefield. He is also the former president of the Society of Industrial and Office Realtors New

Jersey Chapter and a leader in Cushman's Third-Party Logistics (3PL) Advisory Group. Walter Lane is the Executive Director of the New Jersey Office of Planning Advocacy. Mr. Lane supports the State Planning Commission in advancing the State Development and Redevelopment Plan while working on various smart growth planning efforts. He has over 27 years of experience in land use, regional, and transportation planning, he has managed numerous award-winning projects.

Mr. Tucci said that tariffs gave tenants an excuse to move slowly; however, the actual market impact was minimal. In 2025 there was a surge of Asian-based 3PLs that accounted for 40 percent of all Class A leasing, outclassing domestic providers with high-end automation. A red flag of note is that their balance sheets can be shaky, making some landlords nervous about long-term underwriting and resale value.

He said that the geographic rule of thumb remains that the closer you are to Port Newark, the higher the rent. As shipping costs stabilize, tenants are migrating back toward the Port, and he said they have seen a massive divide in property performance:

- Class A (The Winners): High ceilings and modern tech are non-negotiable.
- Class B/C (The Struggle): These are seeing negative absorption. Owners of older buildings are facing a "modernize or fade away" ultimatum.

Mr. Tucci said that rents doubled between 2021 and 2024, and landlords are desperate to keep face value numbers high to please investors although tenant appetites have cooled. He said we should expect to see incentives such as 12 months of free rent (levels we have not seen since the Great Financial Crisis) and concessions like massive TI (Tenant Improvement) dollars and lower escalations.

With new construction hitting a wall in New Jersey due to high entry barriers, focus is shifting from building new sites to redeveloping obsolete older sites.

Mr. Tucci suggests that 2026 will be a year of normalcy with the pendulum swinging back in favor of landlords by 2027. This will be due to low new supply and the wave of COVID-era lease expirations. Amazon's recent leasing activity in Jersey City and Bergen County is a massive confidence booster for the sector and acts as a benchmark for everyone else.

Mr. Lane, in presenting the 2025 State Development and Redevelopment Plan, said the state is moving toward a 2050 roadmap designed to be an "evergreen" document. This new flexible approach ensures plans stay relevant as regulations change without needing a total restart. While the plan is technically "guidance" and not a law, he noted that agencies like the DEP use it to set their own rules. The Commission's role is to function as an advocate for local partners to make sure these agencies do not misinterpret the plan's intent. As part of the plan, the Office of Planning Advocacy will be updating the "Distribution Warehousing and Goods Movement

Guidelines” document and looks forward to working collaboratively with the MPOs in the region on this document.

Mr. Tucci said that Amazon is the ultimate "everything" player, and their network is becoming increasingly specialized—moving from massive fulfillment centers down to "Sub-Same Day" (SSD) hubs aiming for five-hour delivery.

He said Asian-based 3PLs are expanding rapidly (70 locations in a year), pushing the industry to be more efficient. The biggest bottleneck for high-tech facilities is power, with limited availability and rising costs.

He said New Jersey is leaning towards incentives instead of penalties to get towns and counties on the same page to break infrastructure deadlocks. Tariffs have sparked huge interest in Foreign Trade Zones (FTZs), allowing companies to store goods tax-free. However, the approval process takes about three to six months. Businesses cannot wait that long to react to daily trade policy changes, and many are rerouting goods to more "liberal" ports like Houston or back to China.

Class B and C facilities, especially in the Meadowlands, are struggling because their truck courts are too small for modern 53-foot trailers.

Mr. Lane added that the new state plan suggests repurposing these Class B and C facilities, by turning older sites which already have utilities into housing, mixed-use developments, advanced manufacturing hubs, and specialized logistics nodes.

Following the presentation, participants asked questions related to the [presentation](#). Questions and responses can be found in the meeting [recording](#).

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

The Chair asked for updates from committee members. Janice Doyle from NJDOT said they have responded to the FHWA’s request for updated Jason’s Law Survey data outlining state-owned truck parking facilities, capacity and utilization. The NJDOT is also planning their Statewide Freight Plan Update and will report on coordinating goals and objectives for specific modal analysis, focusing on highway, air, cargo, data, rail, maritime, and pipeline. The NJDOT also completed their truck parking study phase 1 and will release the data when available. They are also reviewing the feasibility of publicly owned parcels in the state for potential development. In addition, the NJDOT may advance the Truck Parking Action Committee to support the advancement of different parcels and recommendations to create a P3 Truck Parking guidebook. The next Freight Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for March 27th.

Stephan Pezdek, PANYNJ announced the 2025 numbers for the Port: 8.9M TEUs and over 700,000 rail lifts. He said the Port had a productive year and is in alignment with the growth pattern projected for in the Port Master Plan 2050.

VII. Next meeting: April 20, 2026 (Virtual)

VIII. Adjournment

City of Newark made a motion to adjourn at 2:22 p.m., Somerset County seconded, and it carried unanimously.

Freight Initiatives Committee

Attendance

February 17, 2026

VOTING MEMBERS	
Mark Kataryniak	Hudson County
Hon. Stephen Shaw	Morris County
Trevor Howard	City of Newark
Hon. Charles Kenny	Middlesex County
Sara Sooy	Somerset County
Kamal Saleh	Union County
Alan Kearns	NJ TRANSIT
Michael Elenski	Gov's Authorities Unit
Janice Marino-Doyle	NJ DOT
Stephan Pezdek	PANYNJ
Charles Burton	Citizens Representative
OTHERS	
Various members of Central Staff	NJTPA
Chris Townley	Middlesex County
Tom Drabic	Sussex County
Jack Kanarek	Dewberry
Tanner Thul	Hudson County
RJ Paladino	NJ TRANSIT
John Hayes	Morris County
Jim Hess	
Leslie Fordjour	NYMTC
Blake Dunn	NJDOT
Kyle McGraw Stephan Pezdek Todd Goldman	PANYNJ

Jash Gill	
J Sherman	
GRE	
George Bulow	NJ TRANSIT
Liz Ward	
Miriam Schwartz	PANYNJ
Rick Matias	Union County
Rickie Clark	FHWA-NJ
RonPC	
Sydney Chan	
Ken Wedeen	Somerset County
rwekmeister	
Scott Parker	Jacobs
Tom Tucci	Cushman and Wakefield
Walter Lane	NJ OPA
Will Cao	
Chris Wichman	GeoTab
Dan Gastaldi	PANYNJ
Blair Kelly	PANYNJ
Benjamin Woodward	SJTPO
Stephen Chiaramonte	WSP
Andras Holzmann	Passaic County