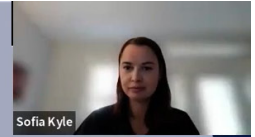




## Freight Moving Forward Event Summary

Virtual

Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 6:00 to 6:45 pm



## Freight Planning at NJTPA Plan and Tools

Sofia Kyle

March 25, 2026

### About UpNext North Jersey

UpNext North Jersey (UpNext) is an emerging leaders' group that engages young North Jersey residents in a dialogue with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA). The NJTPA seeks to better understand the values and needs of this demographic group regarding key transportation issues. The NJTPA provides UpNext members with unique opportunities to learn about and discuss timely topics related to regional planning and public policy, develop a network of peers who share similar interests, and engage with regional thought leaders and decision-makers.

The Public Outreach and Engagement Team, part of the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University (POET), worked with the NJTPA to plan and conduct this virtual event focused on freight planning goals in *Connecting Communities: The NJTPA Long Range Transportation Plan*, programs and tools for freight planning, and the Port St. Corridor Improvement Project.

### Overview of the *Freight Moving Forward* Event

This event included presentations from both NJTPA staff and UpNext members. Ted Ritter, External Affairs Manager at NJTPA, began by highlighting *Connecting Communities* regional freight planning priorities and some anecdotal e-commerce trends. Next, Sofia Kyle, the NJTPA's Multimodal and Freight Planning Director, conducted a presentation on some of the NJTPA's freight planning datasets and tools. Among these are the Regional and

Commodity Profiles, and the 2050 Freight Industry Level Forecasts Update. The event's final presentation was given by Garren Lewis who is a Senior Traffic Management Analyst at Port Newark-Elizabeth and an active UpNext member. Lewis highlighted the Port St. Corridor improvements taking place at the entrance to Port Newark-Elizabeth, one of the busiest ports in the country. Using aerial images of the Port, Garren highlighted some of the corridor improvements designed to improve safety, mobility, and circulation for trucks traveling in and out of the Port.

## Planning and Promotion

POET distributed a save-the-date graphic and RSVP via email, social media, and WhatsApp to UpNext members. Leading up to the event, POET and NJTPA staff met with Lewis and Kyle to plan the event, discuss potential presentation topics, and review the run of show.

## Agenda

### 6:00 to 6:05 pm – Introductions:

NJTPA and POET staff welcome participants and introduce presenters.

### 6:06 to 6:10 pm – LRTP: Ted Ritter

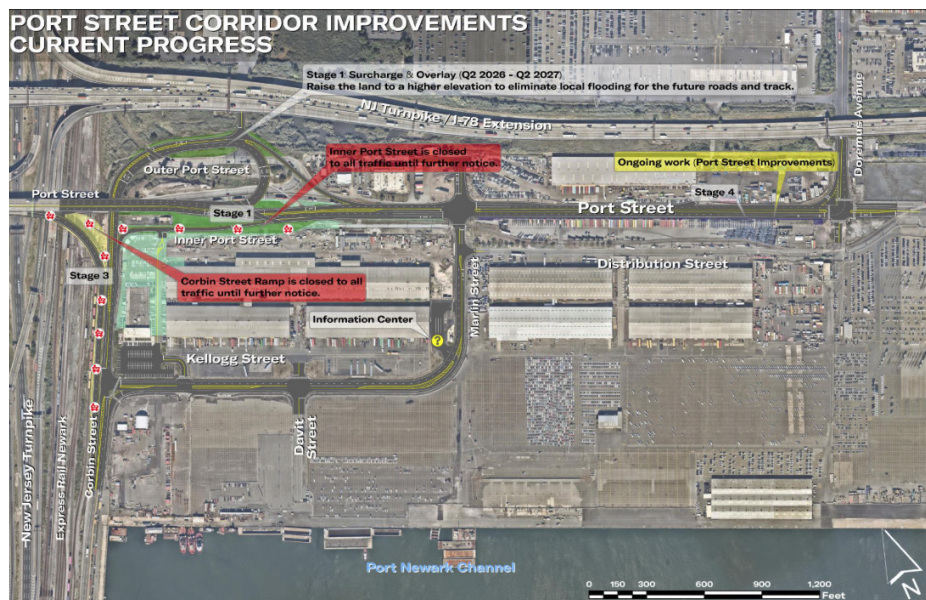
presents freight emphasis areas within NJTPA's LRTP.

6:11 to 6:20 pm – Freight Planning at NJTPA: Sofia Kyle presents on NJTPA's freight work through the Freight Concept Development Program and Subregional Studies Program.

### 6:21 to 6:34 pm – Port Street Corridor

Improvement Project: Garren Lewis presents on the Port Street Corridor Improvement project taking place at Port Newark-Elizabeth.

### 6:35 to 6:45 pm – Q&A/Discussion



## Attendance

Two UpNext members participated in the event. POET and NJTPA staff will attempt to increase participation in future events by more directly engaging group members in planning, scheduling, and promotion.

## Feedback

Questions about NJTPA's freight planning work focused on the frequency that Freight Industry Level Forecasts are updated and how NJTPA's modeling remains accurate. Kyle elaborated that NJTPA releases a new report every five years, and when compared on a national level, it is a relatively frequent update. In discussions about the Port St. Corridor Improvement Project, one theme that emerged was the interjurisdictional nature of the project. While Lewis did not have direct experience resolving conflicts among the different stakeholders at Port Newark-Elizabeth, he recalled some experiences that others in his workplace have encountered. Other questions focused on factors that might disrupt operations at Port Newark-Elizabeth, such as blizzards, and how operations are modified to still allow traffic to flow.