



**Bergen County Master Plan
Minutes of Meeting
Transportation Scoping Session**

Meeting Date: July 16, 2009

Place: NJTPA, Newark

By: Darlene A. Jay

Attendees:
See attendance sheet

The meeting opened with Mary D. Ameen from NJTPA. Then Donna Orbach and Carlos Rodrigues spoke briefly. Maurice Rached presented a short PowerPoint with slides from the Steering Committee meeting to outline the master plan, County issues and the three regions we have broken the County into for visioning.

Mr. Rached noted that the PowerPoint presentation will be available online. The slide detailing where Bergen County residents work spurred the most conversation. Richard Roberts from NJT noted that people who work in New York City make more money and that many people still drive into the city because they can afford the parking, tolls, etc. Mr. Roberts mentioned that NJT is working with Bergen County to deal with inter-county transportation. He also stated that when we talk about transit, we must address land use because there is a linkage.

At the conclusion of the PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Rodrigues opened the discussion:

Bus Rapid Transit

- **Donna Orbach** stated that the County hired an in-house consultant (STV) a few years ago and decided it would be good to come up with some initial routes to get started and then went to NJT
- **Jim Gilligan from NJT**, is the BRT expert
- **Richard Roberts**, NJT will have to do “BRT Light” because they don’t have the separate ROW, the goal is to run at the road speed and therefore going to be an incremental system
- **Jim Gilligan**, more people have been using the bus to get to NYC than rail, there are three types of bus systems in Bergen County – inter-county, inter-state, local
 - o NJT launched a bus study with NJTPA and Coach USA, which is called the Northeast New Jersey Metro Mobility Study
 - o Study has four phases with recommendations over an 18 – 24 month period
 - o They are currently four months into the study, there will be outreach
 - o At the present they can’t put another bus at the Port Authority in NYC



- **Richard Roberts**, University of South Florida has a BRT Institute and it has good research
- **Jim Gilligan**, NJT is looking at shopping malls as park-n-rides
 - o NJT's biggest problem is operating costs, they can get money for construction, but not operating
 - o George Washington Bridge Terminal bus station has been dying since 1970's
 - o Bus system service speed has been decreasing over past 10 to 15 years, when that happens cost increases
 - o Route 3 is the biggest bus corridor in Bergen County
- **David Gee from Coach USA**, they have reduced service at the George Washington Bridge station by 50%
 - o Lots of gypsy vans at George Washington Bridge
 - o Gypsy vans are undercutting bus service price
- Concern if the gypsy operators disappear tomorrow we have big problem because a huge number of people will be left without transportation
- Passaic bus terminal has largest number of gypsy operators
- **Jim Gilligan**, People using gypsy mostly undocumented because they are used to it from their home county, driver speaks their language and they are afraid that the government is riding the NJT buses and will deport them
- **Richard Roberts**, Academy is a contract operator of NJT
- **Coach USA**, need more park-n-ride lots in Bergen County

Passenger Rail

- **Richard Roberts**, ARC project will allow for a one ticket ride on the Bergen-Passaic link
 - o Rail and bus should be looked at integrated system complimentary to each other and not as competitors
 - o Service frequency more important than cost of ride
 - o Meadowlands service begins July 26, 2009
- **Coach USA**, ARC is going to divert our customers
- **Richard Roberts**, the West Short Line will evaporate if North Branch goes light rail
- **Dave Liebgold from New Jersey Meadowlands**, is it possible to get employment density on the maps? Mr. Rodrigues answered yes.

Transit Oriented Development

- **Vivian Baker from NJT**, asked what kind of Master Plan are we creating, how will it function?
- **Donna Orbach** responded that it will be a living document with example ordinances, and that there will be visioning beginning in the fall
- **Debbie Lawlor from New Jersey Meadowlands**, what about form-based codes? Are you looking into NJDOT's mobility and community form program?
- **Vivian Baker**, when visioning you should look at the existing densities of the neighborhoods and then reveal to them what that is to help the municipalities realize that they are already dense



Ferry

- **Jim Gilligan**, every time ferry raises fare or cuts service, they chase people back to the bus system
 - o New ferry stations should be transit corridor friendly
 - o Problem with highway is that with bus service there is a huge parking lot between the highway and the building
- The highway needs to be thought of as a transit corridor and NJDOT needs to make them bus friendly and safe

Cc: Farouk Ahmad, Bergen County
Donna Orbach, Bergen County
Christopher Helms, Bergen County
Carlos Rodrigues, RPA
Corey Piasecki, RPA
Joseph J. Layton, Maser

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