

**New Jersey Highlands Council
Transportation
Technical Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
10 August 2005**

Summary:

On Wednesday, August 10, 2005, the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) held a meeting at the New Jersey Highlands Council office in Chester, New Jersey. Notice of the meeting was provided to the public on the Highland's Council's web site. Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, of the Highlands Council staff, facilitated the meeting. In addition to Maryjude, Council staff members present at the meeting included: Steve Balzano and Kim Kaiser. Technical advisors present at the meeting, included: Richard Brail, John Ciaffone, Denise daCunha, Hamou Meghdir, Damien Newton, Robert Rau, Richard Roberts, Martin Robins, James Tripp, Herman Volk, Walter Lane, Gail Yazersky, and Bettina Zimny.

The meeting began with Steve Balzano outlining the charge of the Highlands Council and the regional master plan that will be developed by the Council. Steve then provided a tentative timetable of the delivery dates for the various tasks associated with this charge. Those in attendance introduced themselves and their background in transportation planning.

Maryjude gave an overview of the agenda and the purpose of this TAC. She asked everyone to consider, "What are the overriding transportation principles that we should be trying to achieve as we put together this regional master plan?" Following are the ideas and thoughts that were shared by the members of the TAC:

General/Act Mandates for Resource Preservation:

- Avoid transportation principles that conflict with the land preservation program:
 - Don't build roads in the preservation area
 - Don't build or expand roads in parts of the planning area that should be preserved
- Invest infrastructure in areas where growth should be encouraged
- Take into consideration the Highlands Region's location between a growing Pennsylvania housing market, affordability of Highlands housing, and a growing Eastern New Jersey job market, and the impact these markets will have on transportation (mostly through trips with neither end in the Highlands)
- Include local roads, etc. when developing transportation models and develop sub-area models.
- Differentiate and distinguish between trailing indicators and leading indicators when making calculations to determine where growth may be appropriate.

- Address the need for affordable housing along the popular transit corridors.
- Need to apply a set of checks and balances in making decisions about where growth is appropriate. The goal of alleviating congestion in one area should be considered along with additional factors before targeting an area for growth, because some of these areas will be the ones you most want to keep pristine.
- Congestion is a fact of transportation life and should not be the measure by which development decisions are directed.
- Education of the public is important where transportation improvements will be limited to intersection improvements and not road widening.

Transportation Planning:

- Bring someone onto the Highlands Council staff that will be able to run and develop models, as well as coordinate with other state agencies that have developed their own models.
- Determine how much congestion residents of the Highlands are willing to tolerate, during both peak and off-peak times.
- When dealing with models, understand that models typically tell you where you want to go. Instead, the Council should look at where they want to go, and build models that will tell them how to get there.
- Avoid trend analysis.
- Differentiate between work related and non-work related trips (through trips, commuter trips, and local trips), and project how these trips will break out in future decades. Determine where existing infrastructure is at capacity, where adding capacity may have negative effects, and where additional growth may be appropriate.
 - Determine what alternative designs will work best in potential growth areas.
 - Provide customized solutions to each of these areas.
 - Distinguish local trip-making from long-distance trip making.
 - Look at journey to work trips, as well as aging population trips.
- Gain a clear understanding of the origins and destinations for travelers in and through the Highlands.
 - For example, understand who is traveling to dense job centers such as Newark and New York, versus those that are traveling to disperse corporate parks in Morris County.
 - Make sure transit starts where it needs to start and ends where it needs to end to meet the needs of people.
- Encourage interconnectivity and the development of road networks when developers build new roads, etc.
 - e.g. Bring various parties together to create town centers.
- Circulation networks should be looked at closely within growth areas to help keep local trips off state highways/major roadways.
 - Design network to travel on local roads.

- Utilize a grid system design to increase alternate routes in compact growth areas.
 - Look at interconnectivity between developments.
- Consider impact of eco-tourism and agri-tourism trips on network performance.
- Need to identify which types of trips we are trying to impact.
- Consider sub-area modeling for growth areas – this needs additional level of data and will take some time to build the networks; more coarse level of analysis could be done in shorter term.
- Consider school-generated congestion (e.g. parents dropping kids off), and the effects of land use upon this congestion (e.g. schools that don't discourage high school students from driving to school).

Land Use/Smart Growth:

- Make areas as bicycle and pedestrian friendly as possible, as an alternate means for people moving to, from and within the Highlands.
- Incorporate land use principles into transportation studies.
- Bring additional population into Highlands areas with existing higher population densities, as a way to achieve both residential and job clustering and densities that, although it may not support transit, will create a better development pattern that may reduce auto trips.
 - Concentrate growth.
 - Use commitments to infrastructure improvements as an incentive to municipalities to engage in smart growth (e.g. create local road systems that will accommodate local travel for errands, etc., and avoid use of major state roads for local trips).
- Encourage interconnectivity and the development of road networks when developers build new roads, etc.
 - e.g. Bring various parties together to create town centers.
- Consider school-generated congestion (e.g. parents dropping kids off), and the effects of land use upon this congestion (e.g. schools that don't discourage high school students from driving to school).
- Bridge the gap between regional and local land use decisions that will ultimately affect transportation.
- Negotiate a rezoning or down zoning with municipalities, in order to reduce commercial zoning and increase residential zoning.
- Do more residential clustering, in such a way that some trips can be done via walking rather than driving.
- Address the need for affordable housing along key transit corridors
- Be conscious of the fact that municipalities that are designated as growth areas must be willing to accept growth.
- Encourage the growth of transit villages.
- Pay attention to the design and location of growth, so that density within the designated growth areas is sufficiently compact.

- Good site planning will be needed to make the best difference in creating smart growth communities.

Freight:

- Keep in mind the issue of freight traffic in assessing network performance.
- Consider the growth of warehousing activities within the southern portion of the Highlands Region.
- Consider impact of reactivating freight rail lines to alleviate roadway congestion.

Transit:

- Enhance existing transit, keeping in mind smart growth principles.
- Perform more transit oriented corridor studies; leading to improved bus service, etc., along these corridors.
- Make sure transit starts where it needs to start and ends where it needs to end to meet the needs of travelers.
- Determine where existing infrastructure is at capacity, where adding capacity may have negative effects, and where additional growth may be appropriate.
 - Determine what alternative designs will work best in potential growth areas.
 - Provide customized solutions to each of these areas.
- Encourage interconnectivity and the development of road networks when developers build new roads, etc.
 - e.g. Bring various parties together to create town centers.

Interagency:

- Coordinate between the various state agencies when planning for and making determinations regarding growth.
- Work in concert with planning groups from Pennsylvania (e.g. Lehigh Valley), and gain an understanding of their future land-use projections.

Studies:

- Rt. 9 is a success story.
- I-78 corridor study looking at transit-oriented options and local feeder roadways, household and transportation patterns.

The Highlands Council would like to thank everyone who participated in this opening meeting of the Transportation Planning TAC. We greatly appreciate any follow-up comments and questions about this summary report. Please contact via email: maryjude.haddock-weiler@highlands.state.nj.us. Notice of future meetings will be provided to the public on the Highlands Council website, www.highlands.state.nj.us, and via email to Committee participants.