



## MEETING NOTES

<b>PROJECT NAME</b>	Warren County Transportation Plan
<b>PROJECT NUMBER</b>	30900091.001
<b>DATE</b>	14 July 2020
<b>TIME</b>	04:00 PM (Eastern Time)
<b>VENUE</b>	GotoMeeting
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Public Transit Focus Group Summary
<b>CLIENT</b>	Warren County

### Public Transit Focus Group

This focus group session brought together a group representing a variety of interests centering on public transit in Warren County. Focus group participants included experts and stakeholders with a mix of state and local knowledge and experience. Following a welcome, brief overview of the study goals and timeline, and sharing of guidelines specific to the online format of the discussion, study team members (from WSP and FHI) led a discussion among the participants:

- Debbie Martin: Abilities of Northwest Jersey
- Brian Miguel: New Jersey Transit (Grant Administrator for Community Transportation)
- Louis Milan: New Jersey Transit (Capital Planning)
- Chris Sandiford: New Jersey Transit
- Carla Mae Weimer: Seniors of Hackettstown & Students at Warren County Community College
- Carmela Slivinski: Executive Director for Dawn Center for Independent Living
- Dan Callas: President of TransOptions TMA
- Heidi Herrick-Lynn: Director of Rehabilitation Services at Family Guidance Center of Warren County
- Carol Cook: Warren County Transportation Advisory Committee
- JanMarie McDyer: Warren County Transportation Coordinator
- Mike Taylor: Easton Coach
- Linda Empson: Easton Coach
- Scott Clark: Transbridge Lines
- Mark Ertel: Director of Operations Transbridge Lines
- Jan Michener: Hackettstown Town Council
- Gina Marie Williams: Public Stakeholder
- GJ Atwood-Waller: Warren County Transportation Advisory Committee
- Lisa LAST NAME: Public Stakeholder

## MEETING NOTES

Others present included:

- Dave Dech: Warren County
- Valarie Discafani: Warren County
- Blythe Eaman: North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
- Jessica Ortiz: FHI
- Debbie Hartman: WSP USA
- Charlie Romanow: WSP USA

During the discussion, participants were asked a number of open-ended introductory and follow-up questions to spur conversation.

The following issues were raised and discussed among the participants and study team. Comments and concerns are separated into three categories: Challenges, Strengths, and Opportunities

### Challenges

- COVID-19
  - Safe/CleanFacilities
    - Ensuring transit drivers are safe during the COVID-19 pandemic
    - Ensuring there is sufficient personal protective equipment for everyone
    - Ensuring vehicles are kept clean for passengers and drivers
  - County Transit
    - Warren County did not stop its public transit services but did reduce its hours
    - Are only transporting up to five passengers per vehicle at a time
    - Still providing trips for essential needs (dialysis, groceries), but other trips are halted
- Funding
  - Funding is primary challenge for improving public transit in County; farebox recovery covers very little; no funding for nighttime service
  - Reduced state funds from casinos pose a challenge
  - Many passengers don't pay the suggested fare
  - Advertising can bring in small amount, but minimized by cost of purchasing advertising wrap
  - Suggested that funding should not only be allocated based on population, but on lack of other available resources. A stable funding source would improve service
- Other
  - Can do more to improve public transit access to church, restaurants, etc.
  - Challenge of connecting transit service with services outside of County; some people go to doctor's appointments outside of Warren County
  - Narrow streets can preclude public transit service
  - Demand for more service to locations with several medical offices
  - Demand for service to community college at night
  - Bus service can be physically very shaky and uncomfortable on certain hilly roads
  - Suggestion made that each town have its own jitney provider/route
  - Hackettstown/Mansfield shuttle service ended ten years ago; County transit hasn't been able to pick up those trips

## MEETING NOTES

- AccessLink website is very difficult to use

### **Strengths**

- Many believe the County is doing the best it can with the resources provided
- Good public transit services to colleges during the day
- Good public transit connections to Phillipsburg service

### **Opportunities**

- Existing shuttle service into Hackettstown is good, but would like to see more service, particularly to downtown Hackettstown
- TransOptions TMA provides some resources; helpful to expand opportunities and utilize techniques from other TMA's and agencies