

Shevell Appointed to VTC Advisory Board

VTC Advisory Board Chair Arthur E. Imperatore, Jr. has announced the appointment of Jon Shevell to the board. Shevell is the vice chairman and executive vice president of New England Motor Freight, Inc. (NEMF), one of the largest family-owned trucking firms in the country. Shevell is responsible for NEMF's major accounts, including Goodyear, The Gap, and Home Depot, and is often cited in industry publications and called upon to speak about sales and marketing issues. Shevell joined NEMF in 1980 as assistant to the president. He was named executive vice president in 1990, and in 1992, added the responsibilities of vice chairman.

Most recently, Shevell has been working with fellow advisory board member Bill Bierman, Martin Robins, director of the Voorhees Transportation Policy Institute (TPI), and consultant Anne Strauss-Wieder to organize a symposium of freight transportation leaders that will serve as the basis for an organization to regularly address freight transportation issues in the state. The proposed organization, the **New Jersey Freight Mobility Partnership**, will provide a neutral forum that brings together business and government for the development of common policies, discussion of freight-related concerns, sharing of expertise, and a common project and research agenda. The kick-off symposium targeting government transportation officials and freight and rail industry leaders is being planned for the spring. Representatives from all aspects of the freight industry in New Jersey are involved in the planning of the symposium, including Maher Terminals, Inc., White Rose Foods, New England Motor Freight, Inc., CSX, the New Jersey Motor Truck Association, and the New York Shipping Association. 📺

TPI Releases Study of NJ Transit Finances

The Voorhees Transportation Policy Institute recently released a report entitled "A Recent History of NJ Transit's Operations and Capital Budgeting: Too Many Objectives, Too Few Resources, No Accountability." The study, conducted by Martin Robins and Neal Denno and funded through a grant from the J. C. Kellogg Foundation, found that "an impending crisis affecting the agency's entire fiscal structure is just around the corner."

According to the TPI report, inadequate capital resources have led to three threats to NJ Transit's fiscal health:

- Diversion of sizable amounts of capital funds to fill its operating deficit;
- Long-term debt service obligations brought about by the decision to purchase 2,000 pieces of necessary bus and rail rolling stock through borrowing, as opposed to customary pay-as-you-go financing; and
- Promotion of new rail system starts which have been partially financed from the capital budget and through additional borrowing.

The tragedy of September 11 has only compounded NJ Transit's problems as ridership and service demands have increased on key rail routes into midtown Manhattan.

The report makes several recommendations to the leadership of NJ Transit:

- Ask the legislature to address chronic inadequate funding of the operating budget through the General Fund;
- Establish strategic investment priorities that husband the agency's available capital funding for the preservation, replacement and improvement of the existing system; and
- Place a moratorium on commitments to new start rail projects and develop a strategic process for new start priorities. 📺



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VTC NEWS

VTC and NJDOT Collaborate on Context-Sensitive Design Projects

The VTC is completing work with the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) on two context-sensitive design projects. The first is a report entitled "Flexible Design of New Jersey's Main Streets," in which recommendations are made for changes in policy and standards for highways serving as main streets. The study is slated to be the first in a new book series, tentatively named the *Voorhees Progressive Transportation Series*. The second collaborative project is in the area of training. TPI has offered guidance and content for the first two rounds of the NJDOT's training course on context-sensitive design, and negotiations are underway for a permanent course that would be offered through NTI.



Warsh Discusses NJ Transit Plans

On November 8, the VTC hosted NJ Transit Executive Director Jeffrey Warsh as he presented "New Transit Initiatives and Response to September 11." Warsh discussed the effects of the September 11th tragedy on NJ Transit operations and future NJ Transit plans, particularly the future of new start projects like the Secaucus Transfer.

Weinstein Gives Farewell Address

The VTC sponsored NJDOT Commissioner James Weinstein to speak at the Bloustein School on December 8. Weinstein offered "Retrospective Perspective," his farewell address, in which he discussed changes that have occurred within the DOT and challenges that lie ahead for his successor.

Commuter Benefit Program

The NTI and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) presented an information session on the Commuter Benefit Program on October 1. In 2002, the monthly commuter benefit that corporations can offer their employees will be increased from \$65 to \$100 per month, yet many companies are still unclear as to the tax savings they can achieve by offering this benefit. In the spring, a two-day practical course will be offered on the benefit program.



Commissioner Weinstein (right) is presented a copy of the Athenian Oath by former commissioners John P. Sheridan, Jr. and Lou Gambaccini

Regional BRT Workshop

Increased traffic congestion over the last decade has resulted in many communities seeking federal funding for transit improvements, namely Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). In November, the NTI, the Region 2 University Transportation Research Center, and the FTA presented a second regional BRT workshop. Participants of the conference included the New York State Department of Transportation, the New York City Department of Transportation, MTA NYC Transit, NYCTA, and the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council.

Penn's Neck EIS Study

On behalf of the NJDOT, the TPI held an environmental scoping forum and open house on the Penn's Neck Area Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Study on December 4. The purpose was to initiate dialogue with the public and receive comments on the appropriate scope of the EIS. More than 100 interested citizens provided testimony at the event.

NTI Offers MEP Course

NTI's new course, Managing the Environmental Process (MEP), was piloted in New Brunswick in December. Participants included representatives from NJ Transit, the MTA Long Island Railroad, the MTA New York City Transit, the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, the U.S. EPA, the NJDOT, the NYDOT, and the Chester County Planning Commission. The course covers the methods and procedures for the evaluation of proposed transit actions in accordance with the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality implementing National Environmental Policy Act.

Larrousse Selected to TRB Committee

NTI Director Paul Larrousse has been selected to serve on the national Transportation Research Board's (TRB) special committee that will examine workforce development issues in the transportation industry.

Robins Attends Smart Growth Meetings

At the invitation of the Brookings Institution, NTI Director Martin Robins attended a Transportation Policy Research Roundtable in Washington, D.C. in November to discuss policy research that may be required to support a smart growth agenda in the renewal of federal authorizing legislation for transportation. He also participated in a strategy session conducted by the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities in New York City in December. The meeting brought together smart growth advocates from New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut.

NTI Staff On the Move

NTI staff participated in meetings in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and the National Highway Institute dealing with the reauthorization of TEA-21, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. Staff members also attended state transit association meetings in Washington, Wisconsin, Alaska, and Minnesota as part of NTI's continuing efforts to reach out to transit organizations of all sizes that may not be part of the national trade groups.