In attendance:

**Chairs**
Mike Kerwin, Somerset Business County Partnership
Mike McGuinness, NAIOP New Jersey

**Task Force Members**
Jorge Cruz, New Jersey Community Capital
Neil Weissman, Complete George
Adam Bradford, Hunterdon County Planning
Denise Nickel, Middlesex County
James Bonanno, Monmouth County
Gerald Rohsler, Morris County
Rick Cippoletti, NJTPA
Gabrielle Fausel, NJTPA
Zenobia Fields, NJTPA
Lois Goldman, NJTPA
Anne Strauss-Wieder, NJTPATony Corsi, North Jersey Partners
Peter Palmer, Freeholder, Somerset County
Walter Lane, Somerset County
Philip Kandl, Union County

a) **Recap of Focus Areas**

- **Integrating TNJ into NJTPA planning:** The Executive Summary for Plan 2045 – Connecting North Jersey, the NJTPA regional transportation plan, was distributed. The plan, which contains strategies that draw from the TNJ planning effort, is out for public comment until November 9. This furthers the objectives of TNJ in areas of freight and repurposing sites and the Emerging Centers Program. NJTPA has attended industry summits on healthcare, tourism, and other industries to explore workforce development needs.
- **NJTPA staff gave an overview of Competitive Focus Areas**
- **Retail environment:** Online shopping is having a strong effect on brick and mortar retail locations, affecting real estate markets and land use, but it presents opportunities
  - Shopping online saves people time and money. Tourism, leisure, and experience retail, such as the American Dream in the Meadowlands, can capitalize on this.
  - The region must respond by promoting flexible land use, allowing for co-working and co-creating centers and incentivizing incubator space.
  - Somerset County has a record of successfully reinventing office campuses.
Focus Area 1: Create and retain well-paying jobs by supporting growth in our region’s key industries

- NJTPA reported on initial efforts to map the location of open job positions by business sector in the NJTPA region relative to the transportation network. Accessibility to major employment centers was mapped based on drive time and transit.
  - Distribution centers hire through unemployment agencies. These positions won’t show up in job listings data. Check data with Department of Labor.
  - This data could be shared with one-stop centers, especially in low income areas.
  - The Task Force consensus is that NJTPA should proceed with the study and a call should be held with interested Task Force members to discuss development.
- Higher education and employers are not talking to each other. The Task Force should recruit higher education representatives. Talent Networks are housed within universities so should connect with Talent Networks as well.

Focus Area 2: Enhance North Jersey’s innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem

- The task force believes that the marketing of New Jersey tourism as an economic asset is minimal because, the wages in this sector are very low.
- Verizon gave the Somerset County Business Partnership a presentation on 5G infrastructure, and the group discussed the need to pursue 5G infrastructure. There are several pilot cities, one of which is in NJ. To entice Verizon to pursue a pilot city in the NJTPA region, we should try to leverage Verizon’s location in NJ.
- Panasonic (located in Newark) is looking for a site for a smart city demonstration project.
- The Task Force should hold symposium on the transformative effects of cutting-edge tech.
- Liberty Science Center has been innovating in how it is growing. It is expanding programming and offerings to produce new jobs in STEAM and learning opportunities for kids.

Focus Area 3: Strengthen the region’s economy by building on existing assets and infrastructure

- A freight guide is being prepared by NJTPA, including curb space management, complete streets, and other topics.
- NJTPA is in process of updating project prioritization criteria. In the next Task Force Meeting, we could have a guest speaker involved in that project discuss prioritization process as relates to employment and private investment.
- Potential speaker: David Zimmer – in charge of Environmental Infrastructure Trust. Now working on transportation.
- Coordinating economic marketing and tourism marketing is highly effective. This should be discussed at the next meeting.
- The group also discussed how important it is for a champion for economic development be found. This was compared to the transportation safety field, which has found that champions are critical to changing safety culture and conditions.

Focus Areas 4: Align workforce training with industry needs.

- PANYNJ has a Department of Labor grant to set up an apprenticeship program that exposes youth to the port and to jobs in logistics and distribution in Newark/Essex area. There is a
shortage of qualified personnel. There’s a new school in Newark with tract for logistics and distribution.

- Vocational training funding has been slashed at the state level. NJTPA can offer letters of support for funding applications, because vocational training is included in the TNJ plan.

b) **Discussion of TNJ Training Institute**

- Based on Task Force discussions, NJTPA proposed a training on repurposing brownfields. Task Force members recommended doing a series – a workshop on office and a workshop on retail.
- Redevelopment is increasingly occurring in suburban areas, but local governments require expertise. NJ Redevelopment Authority provides training on brownfield redevelopment. League of Municipalities also offers training.
- Brownfields have become viable investments in certain areas and among certain developers in the urban core, due to high land values.
- The legalization of marijuana would create demand for retail space.

c) **Plan of Action for advancing Focus Areas**

- Main identified actions:
  - Symposium and TNJ Training Institute
    - Repurposing vacant retail and office space: The task force is interested in redeveloping/repurposing vacant/declining office parks and retail locations that aren’t being leased.
    - Information technology infrastructure and the NJ economy (Verizon’s 5G proposals)
  - Job accessibility mapping
- Some resources are available for VTC to provide staffing to execute some of the recommendations of the four Task Forces.
- NJTPA will need Task Force member feedback on freight guide soon.
- Further discussion of new Amazon headquarters: We can leverage the fact that NJ met all Amazon requirements. Amazon is looking for quality of life for employees and to be close to talent.

d) **Next Steps**

- Schedule a webinar/conference call to discuss next steps in developing job opening accessibility mapping tool.
- Plan for a symposium that looks at how technological disruptors create opportunity. “How competitive edge innovations transform us”.
- Discuss with chairs the issue of coordinating a marketing campaign for New Jersey by working with Choose NJ, economic development, and Retail, Hospitality and Tourism Networks.
- Discuss with chairs the recruitment of representatives of higher education and Talent Networks.
- Invite NJTPA Capital Programming and Systems Planning Staff to make a presentation at a future meeting about the NJTPA Project Prioritization Criteria and Regional Capital Investment strategy.
• Begin planning for one or two training workshops about repurposing, with the possibility of one on office space and one on retail space.