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of Planning and Public Policy

Alan M. Voorhees Transportation
Oral History Project and Archive

Interview with Martin Robins, October 2012
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Disclaimer Statement

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[Interview Part 1 begins]

Nick: Great. So let's get started right away. I'd like to know a little bit about your early career and what got you interested in transportation, as a field, and how, what drove you to go this direction rather than any other directions you were thinking about?

Martin: Well it was kind of an unusual outcome that I ended up in the transportation field. I didn't start off there. I went to law school and one wouldn't necessarily end up where I did. But I can trace it back to just a general interest in transportation that I had as a younger person.

And then in college I wrote a junior paper about the origins of the Urban Mass Transportation Act, when it was called, we're talking about UMTA. And it was; I found it a very interesting subject. I was in a seminar at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University. So that was, I put my toe in the water for that, in the subject.

When I came out of law school, I, I didn't follow it up in any way. And I didn't really have any idea about following it up, and went into a private law firm after serving as a judicial clerk for a year. But along the way, I ended up detouring and going into the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office after being at the private firm.

And I was in the Hudson County Prosecutor's for about four years. And I had an absolutely wonderful boss who remains a very good friend of mine, Geoffrey Gaulkin, who was the Hudson County Prosecutor at the time.

And interestingly enough, my roommate in that office, we had offices which housed two Assistant Prosecutors was an individual by the name of Armand Pohan, who now is the Chairman of New York Waterway, which is one of my clients, a complete kind of a huge circle.

But still, he wasn't involved in ferry operations and I wasn't involved in transportation. We were just Assistant Prosecutors working on trying to clean up Hudson County's then-very corrupt political system. And after about three years, Geoffrey Gaulkin accepted, was nominated to be a judge and he left to go to become a judge.

And his Deputy, who is also a terrific guy, and actually served on the New Jersey Supreme Court for a short period of time, he also left to go into some other activity. And so I felt very insecure in that office and not really comfortable that the office was going to be as terrific of an environment as it was. And so I let people know that I was looking for a new job.

And a friend of mine knew a lawyer. He worked for a lawyer who, in fact, was a very good friend of the then-Commissioner of Transportation, Alan Sagner, who had taken over at the beginning of the Brendan Byrne administration. And it turned out that one person talking to another; they found out that they needed somebody that was particularly capable who could handle the public transportation section of the Attorney General's Office.

There had been a very strong person that had been in charge of it in the Cahill administration and then there was a vacuum, because that person left after the Cahill administration ended. His name is John Sheridan, who is, ultimately became Commissioner of Transportation in

New Jersey and is a very prominent person in the state today. And he left that position at that time and my name got into the mix.

I had an interview with Alan Sagner and I got the job. And so for about, I think about a year-and-a-half, I served as the Head of the Public Transportation Section, and learned a great deal about the crises that were enveloping public transportation in New Jersey, both in the railroad area and the bus area.

And I was involved in watching the thinking that was evolving, that there needed to be a public entity to take over the public transit function in New Jersey. And the first thing that happened was in 1975, which was just a year after, a year-and-a-half after I had gone to Trenton, I moved over from being a Deputy Attorney in charge of public transportation to becoming the Executive Assistant to the Assistant Commissioner for Public Transportation.

And the person who was in that position at that time is a name that is well known to many in our region, Peter Stengl, who later became the Chairman of the MTA. He was at that time the Assistant Commissioner and I went to work for him. And then my career began to take shape during that period of time. It was a very heady, important period in transportation policy making in the 1975 until 1980.

Nick: So how did you. . ?

Martin: . . . Through 1983.

Nick: How did you feel in that early time, without a lot of background in transportation? Did you feel overwhelmed or did you feel exhilarated?

Martin: No, I did not feel overwhelmed. There was a lot to learn, but unfortunately the staffing that was available at the Department of Transportation and the public transit field was very thin. And I, I had found, one of the things that motivated me was I found that in dealing with the people there, I was dealing with them as a lawyer, that I really had incredible curiosity about the issues that they were dealing with and that.

I felt that I could somehow I could figure out what to do just as well, or better, than they could. And so and I can see. . . I brought my legal background to bear, because there was a tremendous amount of fluidity in the legal context at that time, at both the state level and at the federal level. So I was able to apply my legal training to deal with those issues of legislation and administrative proceedings.

Nick: And so, and at this time, New Jersey Transit hadn't yet been created?

Martin: Correct. There was something called the Commuter Operating Agency.

Nick: Okay.

Martin: Alright which was under law, it had been in existence since about 1966, I think. And it was designed to handle the subsidization and the support of public transportation, from the government to the private companies that were running the service, be it bus or rail. And

it was composed of the Commissioner of Transportation, the Assistant Commissioner for Public Transportation, the Treasurer and the Head of the Board of Public Utility Commissioners, which has residual regulatory responsibility over those companies that were not receiving public support.

So it would meet, it would deal with all of the issues. It was not deemed to be a terribly effective organization, but it was really largely the, its role was shaped by the very difficult economic condition of the public transportation providers, the private providers, that New Jersey DOT had to deal with.

Nick: So you're an Executive Assistant to the, to Peter Stengl, take me through what happened.

Martin: There was. . . A lot happened. (Laughs)

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: In that period; and it laid the foundation for many more things happening.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: There were, from a. . . I'll give you some context.

Nick: Sure.

Martin: And then get into the personal. On the contextual side, the bus subsidy program skyrocketed. It was, during the tenure of Alan Sagner. And that happened because very soon after his administration took over, Transport of New Jersey, which was this massive bus carrier in all; all of the counties in New Jersey, it. . . Its operations fell into a position where it required public subsidy. It hadn't up until then.

Public transportation was different before the middle-1960's. But a lot of events were occurring and people were moving out of places like Newark and East Orange and there were. . . There was a great loss of patrons, a tremendous loss of patrons out of the public transit system during, particularly the bus system.

So Transport of New Jersey, which was a subsidiary of Public Service Electric and Gas, was asked for subsidy. And the amount started off relatively modest, but it immediately grew to something on the order of \$30 million to \$50 million a year, which in those days, was a lot of, a tremendous amount of money. So that was one of the things that was happening.

In addition, we also had the railroads that were providing the service in New Jersey, were in bankruptcy. And they were in various degrees of urgency to get out of their commuter rail service. And the most difficult situation involved the Central Railroad of New Jersey, which operates what it is now the Raritan Valley Line and part of the New York and Long Branch, excuse me, the North Jersey Coastline. It was then called the New York and Long Branch.

And they were; the trustee was desperate to end the service or to force as much money from the state to maintain the quality of the assets of the railroad. And he was constantly in court, in his bankruptcy proceeding, threatening to stop the service, threatening to . . . It was a . . . It was a very difficult set of negotiations. And I was involved in those during that period of time.

And the other two railroads that operated were the . . . The Erie Lackawanna and what became the Penn Central. And they were also bankrupt, but they were. . . New Jersey, the New Jersey operations either were not as big a drain on them or they were not as big a part of their overall problems. And so they didn't play the kind of threatening game that the Central Railroad of New Jersey did. So it was a very difficult environment in which to function.

The bus companies were threatening. If they weren't. . . Other bus companies were threatening to end service and there were other companies and they needed additional subsidy. So there was like, there were fires breaking out all over. It was like a period of no rain and brush-fires breaking out everywhere. And so it was a very, very difficult period.

And in that period, Alan Sagner decided to make a go at trying to put together a plan for public ownership or at least the potential for public ownership of the assets in public transportation in the state. And he put together a team. I was a peripheral member of his team, but I was involved and I watched and I listened and I learned.

And he hired a very good consultant and they put together a plan. And they proposed the creation of an agency for public transit, which was going to be called APT, nicknamed APT. And it was going to be there to modify the subsidy program, which had many, many weaknesses. And have a last resort provision for public ownership, unless it was determined that a company couldn't make it on this bus subsidy program.

But the legislature would not buy it. Alan Sagner did not have the credibility that was necessary to carry that off. Although he's a fine man, he wasn't. . . didn't have the credibility that his successor, Lou Gambaccini, had. And Lou Gambaccini was able to accomplish even more than Alan Sagner was even trying to accomplish. But that came later, a few years. But that was all part of this period.

Now what was I able to do during that period of time was that all of these railroads were in bankruptcy and there was a law that passed just before I came, in fact, to the transportation field, called the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1974, which was, to this day, one of the most remarkable pieces of legislation that I've ever seen.

What it attempted to do was to create a planning process under an organization called the United States Railway Association, USRA. That was to figure out how to recombine and reorganize the railroad operations, the freight railroad operations in the Northeast. Passenger was just kind of an afterthought, but it was the freight operations that were really important to the economy of the whole part of the Northeast.

When I say Northeast, I mean from Virginia all the way up into New England, and then definitely out into the Midwestern states, east of the Mississippi. And so it was a big swath of the economy of our country. And it followed the holdings of the Penn Central Railroad, which was the merger of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the New York Central Railroad.

But it encompassed the other railroads, too. I think there were seven railroads that were being reorganized; they involved all of the three that were in, operating in New Jersey.

And during that time, when I was working for, in the Attorney General's Office and later for Peter Stengl, I began to follow the USRA proceedings very closely and began to look for opportunities to come up with legislation that could help New Jersey. And one of my early achievements was in 1976 a law was passed that sort of it took the findings of the USRA and made the legislative changes that were necessary to allow Conrail to be formed. And it had a deal with commuter rail issues as well.

And one of the things I was able to do, working then with Senator Harrison Williams, Junior, who was then one of New Jersey's Senators and also very involved in public transportation issues, he was the Chairman of the committee that dealt with that subject, and still is the Banking and Currency Committee in the House of Representatives, is still responsible for public transit legislation.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: It goes back to at least then. And so I worked with his staff and came up with some amendments to the, to the bill that would benefit New Jersey, some of which were effective and some of which were less effective. But the one that was the most striking that we were able to get passed was that there was a provision in the, in one of the early bills that led to the regional, the Railroad Reorganization and. . .

Oh no, the Railroad Regulatory. . . It was the Four-R Act, and it was. . . I can't remember what all of the "R's" are. You'll have to get that.

Nick: That's a lot of "R's".

Martin: It was regulatory reform as well as the revitalization of the rail system in the Northeast. So it also had regulatory elements to it as well, that apply to the rest of the railroad system. But the thing that I was working on was I came. . .

I saw that there was a provision in one of the drafts that said that if there was going to be a sale of property from the bankrupt railroads to a railroad, an existing, profitable railroad, that the property would be sold at the net-liquidation value that the United States Railway Association had established for the value of the Conrail system, of the bankrupt system, that ultimately went to Conrail.

I said to myself, "Well if they are getting, if they are offering in this legislation to these profitable railroads a deal like that, because these were really bargain basement prices that were established in that liquidation value. If they could do that for the profitable railroads, well I can make a case that the property should be made available to the states and public agencies that perform commuter rail service.

And I, I wrote up a bill called The 900-Day Option, which gave these agencies 900 days to make up, after the transfer of the property from the bankrupt railroads to the successor, which turned out to be Conrail, it gave them 900 days in which to make up their mind. And that, ulti-

mately, New Jersey to buy over 400 miles of railroad, most of it active, in the state, for \$27 million, which was about one-tenth or maybe one-twentieth of what other public agencies had to face, in terms of price, on a per-mile basis. It was a remarkable thing.

And it gave; it set the stage for New Jersey Transit, because it gave the state of New Jersey the ownership of most of the rail right-of-way in the state. And the bankrupt railroads and Conrail were really its tenants. Ultimately the bankrupts weren't there, but Conrail was its tenant. And it put New Jersey in a very, very powerful position.

The only part of that that was not transferred under that 900-Day Option was the Northeast Corridor. Because at the eleventh-hour the Congress decided, as well as the administration of Gerald Ford at that time, to give the Northeast Corridor to Amtrak. So that was off-limits, but the stations of the Northeast Corridor, like the New Brunswick Station, were all made available for this purchase. So that was one thing.

I also was able, during that time, to write legislation that provided emergency operating assistance to New Jersey; there were \$35 million dollars. In those days, that seemed like a lot of money. And it was available to New Jersey to adjust from dealing on a bargain. . . In a very contentious way with the bankrupt railroads and now it had to, it had to pay Conrail in accordance with regulations that were set up in this Four-R Act.

An agency that was created to do that; was going to develop. . . We didn't know at that time what the regulations would be. So we feared that there would be a significant growth in the amount of money that the, that the New Jersey DOT would have to pay to the railroads. And we got this emergency assistance for about a three-year period. And that was very helpful in bridging that period of time.

We also tried to do some things with the Northeast Corridor to try to create a more equitable arrangement; to correct what we saw was going to be a problem with Amtrak, which has in fact developed over the years. But we weren't really very successful. It was very hard to get. We got a go pass, but it really was not effective and it was watered down and it never really had an effective role.

But those two, those other two, the 900-Day-Option and the emergency assistance were very useful. And it gave; it was a heady experience for me. Because here I was, I was then around, about thirty-three years old, thirty-four.

And I'd be going down to Washington and writing this legislation and being, you know, very sought-after by the Congressional staffs, and being able to provide them with good material that really was going to help New Jersey and provide them with quality answers. So it was a . . . So it was a great experience. So those were some of the highlights of that period in the middle-1970's.

But everything was going pretty poorly in transportation because, in New Jersey, because there was not enough funding. There had been, during the 1970's, the various administrations put forward three bond issues in 1973, 1974 and 1975 and they would have helped the public transit capital program. And each of those bond issues was defeated.

It was a time not that different from today, where there was a lot of public disenchantment with the government and the government's ability to spend money intelligently. Part of it was because the Cahill administration had not been very effective in dealing with public transit issues. And part of it was just a general disaffection on the part of the public.

So there had been three bond issues defeated. The last successful one had been in 1968, during the administration of Richard Hughes. So it was really, things. . . The well was quite dry. In fact, New Jersey didn't even have enough money, at certain points, to put up its federal share of highway funds. So it was a very, very difficult period.

And then, you know Brendan Byrne, who was then Governor. He was Governor starting in 1974, made up his mind that he was really going to do something about transportation. And he hired a person who was. . . The person I would consider, in terms of my career in transportation, without a doubt, was my mentor, and that was Lou Gambaccini.

Lou Gambaccini was, at that time, the head of the PATH system at the Port Authority. And Lou and I had gotten to work on a part of the Northeast Corridor Improvement Program, which had been passed in 1975, as a way to make the Northeast Corridor much more effective as a way to get people from New York and New Jersey to Washington and from New York to Boston.

And so Lou and I worked together on trying to beef, to use money from the Northeast Corridor Program at Newark Penn Station. And we worked on that through the period of the middle-1970's.

And it was a kind of a remarkable thing because all of our efforts came to a head in 1980/1981, just as the Reagan administration came into being. And we were in line for a major grant from the Federal Railroad Administration to the; to Amtrak and the Northeast Corridor Improvement Program to spiff-up Newark Penn Station.

At that time, almost none of the escalators even worked there. The station was in deplorable condition. It needed considerable infrastructure work and just a brightening up. It was really a very dreary place at the time, even though it was very well-designed originally.

And we were communicating with people at the FRA, the outgoing administration. And they were lining up the paperwork so that it would go down the chute and beat the people who were going to snatch it out of the chute and stop it in the Reagan administration.

Well it turned out that we were successful and the grant went through. And the rebirth of Newark Penn Station, which I use a lot, today, began with that, with that victory. And I mean it would have been criminal had the Reagan administration stopped it, and I'm sure they would have, because they were against everything having to do with rail.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: That was a very, very challenging and exciting thing to happen. Like I worked with Lou on that before he. . . You know through, like about 1976 through 1978. He was at the Port Authority. I was. . . Port Authority is a co-tenant of Newark Penn Station; they were interest-

ed in this happening. And so we were partners on that, on that episode. And we, we grew to like each other a great deal and spent time with each other, and talk.

And along the way, he had a very high reputation. And along the way, he got an offer to take a leave of absence from the Port Authority to go to NJ DOT as the Commissioner. In fact, somewhere along the line he had made a presentation to Alan Sagner and the Governor about a kind of capital program that New Jersey Public Transportation System ought to have. And he showed his mastery of the subject.

Lou and I talked about taking the job. You know, it was fraught with all kinds of risks. But he was able to work out a leave of absence so that his pension was unaffected, and he was able to return at the end of a certain period to the Port Authority. And he asked me my advice and I pleaded with him to take the job.

Because I knew, I was in the Department of Transportation; I knew that if he took over, everything was going to be very different. He was extremely organized visionary; he understood what needed to be done. He could pick good people and I knew that he was going to rely on me, to some extent, which he did.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: I mean it's not only me, by any means, but that I would be in the inner-circle, which I was. And it turned out he decided to take the job. And then miraculous things started to happen, starting in the middle of 1978, when he took over as Commissioner. And the first thing that he did was to form a task force.

And he put me in charge of the task force, working with a former Hudson county prosecutor friend of mine, Bert Hasbrouck. And Judge Ken Levy was on the task force and a number of other people, Warren Ragnar who was also instrumental in the DOT at that time. We. . .

Nick: This was a task force for public transportation?

Martin: It was a task force established to develop a case for why the subsidy program did not work, why the opposition of public transport in New Jersey. . .

Nick: Right.

Martin: And Public Service Electric and Gas, how we could neutralize that and convince people that this was a very bad deal for the state, and I'll explain why in a moment. And to develop a legislation that could be the successor to that Agency for Public Transit that I was talking.

Nick: It was really. . . It sounds like it was really the start of redirecting the progress of public transportation.

Martin: Well it picked up on the failure that had occurred during the Sagner administration. I mean, you know they tried. They had some reasonably good ideas, but this was going to go much further. This was going to basically say that the subsidy program was "broke" it was

broken and it was not really fixable to be the major way for New Jersey to deal with its bus operations.

Now rail was in a different place at that time. And everybody always thinks that New Jersey Transit was formed to take over the rail operations; that's not true, actually. Because at that time Conrail, under the 1976 law and the final system plan of the United States Railway Association, it took over the operations of the commuter rail in New Jersey and Philadelphia, at least in those two places. And so we were operating under these subsidy guidelines that had been established under that law.

But Conrail wanted no part of that for. . . They wanted to get rid of their commuter rail responsibilities as soon as they could, and that is another chapter.

(Laughter)

. . . Which occurred in 1981. But a lot happened between 1978 and 1981. Lou took over. We put, we started working in 1979. . . Let's see, he took over in '78 and by 1978, the end of 1978, I can remember it so well. I began working with a person by the name Arlee T. Reno from Cambridge Systematics, who had been involved, actually, I believe, in the earlier Alan Sagner effort with, I think, a different firm.

And we began to put together the case. One of the things we did was put together the case why the subsidy program did not work. And we developed all kinds of data and all kinds of anecdotes about how it really wasn't accomplishing what anybody wanted. It was; there were no incentives in the program. Nobody could really dream of a way that it could be incentivized very effectively.

And that Transport of New Jersey was like a bank that was too big to fail, but it had. . . It was on the verge of failing because it was so huge, being the subsidiary of Public Service, Electricity and Gas that really, it was an easy step if you could take over Transport of New Jersey, you really took over the majority of the bus service in the state. So it was something that was very desirable.

Now stepping back in history, one of the reasons that the Sagner effort on public transit and the public transit agency failed was the dogged and effective lobby of a person by the name of John Gilhooley, who was the Head of Transport of New Jersey; he was the Chief Executive Officer. And he testified most vehemently that a public takeover was going to drive up subsidy costs. He had a chart that showed what happened in Washington when private operators were bought out and the public model came into being and took over public transit.

He claimed that there was a. . . He had this chart with the arrows with the line going up like this, to show the net costs to the public of that operation. And he was able; he and the local bus carriers in Jersey City and to some extent, Newark, were all; and private bus carriers up in Bergen County as well, or interstate carriers. They were all ganged up in the middle-1970's with, behind TNJ to stop the legislation.

And the legislature did not have a clue about what to do with the subject. So the key thing that we found was not only that the subsidy didn't work, but that in the intervening years, there

had been a law passed, a pension benefit corporation had been set up, and by federal law. Ironically Senator Harrison Williams was the moving party in that legislation and it was designed to protect the pensions of people who work for companies that went, ultimately went bankrupt and out of business. It's still functioning; it's still in the news.

What Transport of New Jersey. . . Well Transport of New Jersey had been operating for many years either in its own name or as a public service coordinated transport. And so it had a huge base of employees who had retired, who were taking pensions. And it had very sizable pension obligations, on the order of about \$80 million to \$90 million.

And what it was doing, from 1974 onward, was as it was required to make payments to assure that ultimately the pensions were funded, it was including it as a line-item in the subsidy request it would make each month to the commuter operating agency. And eventually what we did was we sat down with a wonderful law firm in New Jersey, under the leadership of Alan, the late Alan Lowenstein. And he had a younger associate named Bill Knox, who was a pension expert.

And we asked them to analyze what was going on, and how we might be able to deal with that, and whether we could force PSE&G's hand and say "You're responsible for these pensions. The State of New Jersey is not responsible for what was going on before you entered the subsidy program in 1974." You know by this time, you know, we're talking about 90%, 90% to 95% of the obligations had been incurred before then.

You know, you're responsible for it under federal law today. We don't feel that it is our job to pay for that. It was, you know, a sizable chunk of the burgeoning operating subsidy. And with the help of our lawyers, we made the case that we should stop the pension payments. And that made John Gilhooley absolutely furious.

And he came down one day to Lou Gambaccini's office at the Department of Transportation. He was a very commanding figure, almost out of like out of a play. He was very tall, very handsome with swept-back white hair, and was very stentorian in his speech. And he was also given to quoting Latin maxims. It must have been from his training from school. And so he was quite an adversary.

He walked into the office one day and I was the only person to witness this, other than the two people. And he was ranting and raving and saying to Lou Gambaccini "You cannot do this. How dare you? Where do you get off doing this? I'm going to make sure that anything you try to do in legislation is going to fail." And he tried to make Lou back off, and he was raising his voice and pounding the table. And Lou just stood his ground and said "We're going to proceed."

And behind the scenes, holes were made to the leadership of Public Service Electric and Gas and the word went to them that the Byrne administration, which was among the most courageous, there's more to tell about Governor Byrne. Governor Byrne was the most courageous Governor that I have ever seen. He may have been the most courageous Governor of the decade or maybe even the quarter-century, in all of the United States.

He was an incredibly effective Governor. And he got the word out to Public Service, Electric and Gas' leadership that there was not going to be. . . Subsidy payments were going to stop.

And we got the word back that if we put forward a bill and we were working on it at that point, if we put forward a bill that Public Service and Gas would pull off John Gilhooley he would not testify, and that they would quietly let the word out that the other bill should pass, they wanted to get out of the bus business and that; a remarkable and dramatic turnaround.

So we went, that just made us hasten our efforts to draw up the bill. And we had a wonderful period of time in which this group of about a half-a-dozen people, we would go up to an office that, again, Lou Gambaccini played a role in this. PATH had a, had offices at Journal Square at that time.

And they had, I think it was on the twelfth floor of the Journal Square Transportation Center, there was a conference room that looked out over New York Harbor. And it, you looked out on the Statue of Liberty. And I would sit at the head of the table and I'd look out, and we would be meeting and working on this and it was just an incredibly inspiring experience to address that legislation to work with these people, like Bert Hasbrouck and Ken Levy and to come up with a bill that we felt was really a good piece of legislation.

None of us had ever drafted, you know, anything like this. This was a . . . You know, you asked at the beginning "Are you up to this?" We took a lot of advice from other people. We got the bill; we got the bill drafted. And Lou took that and he took the what we called the "holler story" of what the subsidy program is like and another report that debunked things that Gilhooley had said in the past about how private operations was so superior to public. I mean all of this stuff you still hear (Laughs) in the world today.

And we presented it, began to present that to the legislature. And Lou was masterful, he is an extraordinarily eloquent person and his testimony was right on point. He, he had the credit, going back to the credibility, he had the credibility. Despite the fact that many of Governor Byrnes own democratic allies in the legislature were against the bill, we found one person who, in the legislature, who loved the bill and was our stalwart supporter.

His name is Frank Herbert; he's still alive. He lives up in Sussex County now. He was then a State Senator in Bergen County. He, I think, was only a one-term Senator, actually. But he was, because Bergen wasn't voting in too many Democratic Senators in those days, at least in his district. And he, he supported us at every turn. And we were able to get an adequate amount of support from Republicans in the State Senate, so that the bill passed a somewhat comfortable margin. I think you needed twenty or twenty-one votes at least, and we had twenty-three.

So the bill passed in the Senate and then the real test came in the Assembly, which was where the private bus carriers in Hudson County really had control. The Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Transportation Committee were both from Jersey City and they both were steadfastly opposed to the bill. And we had to try to work around that. And we got support from a few Republicans; noteworthy was the late Kerry Edwards, who later became Attorney General under Tom Kean. He was in the Assembly.

And we were able, the bill came up on a night, in the middle of a very hot night in the middle of the summer, it was July 19th. It might have started on the 18th, actually, but it went past midnight, the session of the Assembly. There was an incredible storm with flooding that occurred

right in the middle of the session. We were all down there, hoping that we could get the bill through the Assembly.

And you know, all of the failures. You know the bond issues that had failed, the previous legislation that had failed, there was a tremendous amount of opposition and there was some support. We ultimately got the forty-first vote, with several Republican votes, mostly Republicans voted against it. A goodly number of Democrats voted against it. But we got the forty-first vote and at 2:30, at 2:30 in the morning. . .

Nick: Wow.

Martin: It was an amazing event. And we were just dancing, literally dancing in the aisles when it happened. And it passed, it really, one of those political miracles that took place. And again, but the backdrop to that. . .

Nick: Now this in 19. . ?

Martin: 1979.

Nick: 1979.

Martin: Yeah, the summer of 1979. But again, there's an important backdrop that has to be understood. The reason that the law passed the Assembly was, again, Governor Byrne stepped in. And in his, this is in late June, Governor Byrne, and even after we got Public Service quieted down, neutralized, there was still tremendous opposition from, particularly from Jersey City and the private bus carriers.

And they were instrumental; they were like the core of the Democratic Party in the legislature, so he didn't even have them with him. But he decided in another gutsy thing, some would call it reckless, but he did. He said that if the legislature did not pass this bill, he was going to stop the bus subsidy program on July first and he gave them a few days to mull it over.

So when we got to the third week in July and the Sword of Damocles was hanging over the legislature. And he got the votes.

Nick: You need to have carrots and sticks, right?

Martin: Exactly. And he knew how to get legislation passed. Now whether he would have ever gone through with it, you'd have to ask him. But it was a remarkable show of political wizardry that he, that he showed in forcing that bill through. And it happened and then we set about setting up New Jersey Transit, and I was very much involved in that.

And after a little delay, I became the Acting Executive Director of New Jersey Transit in January 2000, excuse me, January 1980 the law, the first board meeting actually occurred. I was not the Acting Executive Director for that board meeting, in December of 1979. So we started working on. . . And it was my job to put a team together, you know.

We had some excellent people that had been recruited in the 1970's, the middle-1970's, before. . . Many of them were recruited after I had gotten involved in the management of the public transportation program. I worked under a gentleman by the name of Richard Anderson, who was a lovely, effective person who came from the Port Authority in the, around 1975 or '76 and was in charge of the program under the Commuter Operating Agency and I worked with him and Peter Stengl, so we were like partners.

And unfortunately he got ill and I don't remember if he died. . . He might have died even before the New Jersey Transit Bill was passed. He got cancer and he died, it was tragic. He was like in his late forties. But he was a wonderful person and was able to attract, with some of my help, some very good people that we brought in, one of whom is now the Commissioner of Transportation in Connecticut.

Another one is; another one was the head of the Los Angeles Area Commuter Rail System. Another one was an Assistant Executive Director of New Jersey Transit for many years and very effective. Another one was one of the leading planners at New Jersey Transit. These were the people that we brought in and we had them as a base.

But probably the two most, we also had Bob Innocenzi on the staff. We somehow had weaned him over from the highway side. He was a marvelous person in charge of, on engineering and you know the planning of projects. And another person that we brought down there, I mean it was interesting how all of these people, you develop the human capital and you really can go somewhere.

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: We brought in Richard Sorrells during that period of time in the '70's who later became the Executive Director of New Jersey Transit for a number of years and is now the Head of LMATA. And so he was helping us develop the capital program and I got to know him very well there and at the Port Authority. And it, so we needed to form the staff, so we had this nucleus and another person was Ben Feigenbaum who later came to head New Jersey Transit's bus operations.

They were remarkable people. But the two people I want to mention, before we take a break, the two people that were the keystones to my success, other than of course working with Lou Gambaccini, were George Warrington who was later the President of Amtrak and the Executive Director of New Jersey Transit; and Susan Kirk who was on the staff at the NJDOT and was ultimately was an Assistant Executive Director of NJ Transit and was, went off to work at Parsons Brinkerhoff.

Both Susan and George are two other people who died at very, very early ages and never were able to completely fulfill their careers. Susan really died at a, I think she was in her forties. And George died in his late fifties. And but it was, these were people that really were essential support in creating New Jersey Transit.

And Jerry Primo, when he became Executive Director in the second-half of 1980, recognized that these people were valuable. He made me an Assistant Executive Director and I

stepped down from being the Acting Executive Director and George and Susan took on very, very important responsibilities. So that's how New Jersey Transit was as it was formed.

Nick: Great. So should we take a break?

Martin: Yeah we should take a break.

Nick: Okay.

[Interview Part 1 ends, 54 minutes]

[Interview Part 2 begins]

Nick: New Jersey Transit, as we know, is a really unique entity in that it's a statewide transit service. What were some of the unique challenges that came out of that in the early years of New Jersey Transit, in terms of pioneering that type of a statewide service?

Martin: Well first of all, there was a template and that was of the Transport of New Jersey operation.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: It was virtually a statewide operation and so if you were. . . Once it was purchased by or would be purchased by the state, you would really be operating in virtually every county in the state. And it had a very significant presence in South Jersey, to go along with a massive presence in North Jersey.

And so there was even commuter rail service in South Jersey that came and went and then came again, that was there. And you have, of course, significant operations in North Jersey.

So it came naturally and the way in which it was easier to go that way. And when you're dealing with the legislature, it was very hard to draw boundary lines, because the people in South Jersey would say "Well what about us? Why aren't you attending to our issues? Are you leaving us with Transport of New Jersey?" It just wasn't going to work. So it was almost; the statewide element was almost a necessity in New Jersey.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: From, because of that template that Transport of New Jersey had in place and also the fact that the state has these two, not terribly distinct but fairly distinct, regions and they are competitive with each other.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And you really couldn't help one out and not help the other one out. And so one of the challenges was always trying to develop an appropriate South Jersey Improvement Program, and that remains a problem to this day. And the history of New Jersey Transit is replete with requests and demands from South Jersey to be treated in a way that they consider to be equivalent to North Jersey is treated. The South Jersey, the River Line is a perfect example of that.

Nick: And so a lot of the hard work seems like it had already been done in consolidating the bus service into. . .

Martin: And it evolved over many, many decades.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And because public service was a presence in so much of the state, it was. . . And I believe historically it might have been operating bus service before it was even generating electricity.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: So it could be. . . It just; it just was there and it needed to be picked up and moved into another entity; but as a whole, as opposed to chopping it up into parts.

Nick: Okay. Okay. So. . .

Martin: So I thought that that really came kind of naturally.

Nick: Yeah. So back to; back to your story.

Martin: Back to my story.

Nick: You're now, you've now. . .

Martin: Formed New Jersey Transit.

Nick: Formed New Jersey Transit.

Martin: Right.

Nick: Taken on this Acting Director position.

Martin: Right.

Nick: And. . .

Martin: Well, well yeah and that position, the key was in putting people; putting the people that we had in the right places to get things done. And as I said, we had actually a very talented staff by that point, by 1979. There were a number of very good people. We didn't have everybody that we needed, but we had a lot of good people.

And setting up an organization that made sense, we set about. . . one of our. . . Lou Gambaccini was responsible for selecting the Executive Director with the Board and he conducted a national search and looked actually across the border as well as up north as well as within the US. And he chose Jerry Primo, who was a supremely knowledgeable transit expert from the, what became the Federal Transit Administration. He knew capital planning and federal funding extraordinary well, which gave New Jersey Transit a big boost.

And he came in and you know right away he gave me several assignments that were really important. But even before he came in, one of the things that we did that I'm very proud of, during that period of organization, two things that I'm proud of.

One was that we took planning that had been going on for a number of years about the creation of a central rail maintenance facility in New Jersey. There wasn't one. We had aban-

done the shops that had been left behind by the various bankrupt railroads and Conrail used those.

And what we thought would be of extreme value was to find a location that was central and that could be efficient and that would be well-designed to provide a high quality of service for the several billion dollars of rail equipment that we already had at that time, and were going to purchase more of. And we, the staff came up with, ultimately with a very good location in the Meadowlands.

And I think one of the first, the first board meeting that I was in charge of with this baby transportation agency, we got the board to approve the purchase of the land and the authorization of the; of the building of the Meadowlands Maintenance Complex. And that's still there and still serving New Jersey Transit magnificently today, so I was very proud of that.

And we also got, kept moving on a reorganization of the bus routes in Newark and Elizabeth, the Greater Newark/Elizabeth Bus Study that was done by Ben Feigenbaum back in 1980. And that served New Jersey Transit well until another need to do that, about thirty years later.

So these are things that were; hard things that were undertaken by us in that very, very early stage in the organization, when Jerry Primo came on, he was just able to move forward from there.

Nick: But what was the decision making process in terms of. . ? It sounds like those are pretty tough things to tackle right off the bat.

Martin: Well they had been building for a while.

Nick: But they needed to be done?

Martin: Yeah, they needed to be done. And we had the people and we had the resources to be able to do it.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So I mean you know there was already quite a, you know commuter rail program in terms of supporting the railroads. And there had been improvements like the Aldine Plan that occurred before I even got involved in this, and re-equipping the railroads and things like that. But you know there were several things that really presented themselves as very important and we would be working on them as a staff at DOT. And we saw that they were ready to be taken to the next step.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So that gave us some momentum.

Nick: So as Acting Director, then you moved on to. . ?

Martin: I became the Assistant Executive Director.

Nick: Sure.

Martin: And had a variety of different responsibilities. I remember one of the things that I did was I . . . At that stage, I was of the opinion that New Jersey Transit had undertaken a massive responsibility and wasn't really organized effectively to deal with several scores, a score of railroad stations around the state, maybe over a hundred.

And I suggested and had David Sallo work with me on a station leasing program, a policy that encouraged municipalities to take, to adopt the station type of thing. And we accomplished about thirty to forty of those. And I think it worked largely well for that period for New Jersey Transit. I think now it has matured into an organization that can really handle that much.

Nick: And so those were active rail stations?

Martin: Yeah active rail stations; uh hum.

Nick: And so the municipalities or the partners would take on. . . ?

Martin: Take on. . .

Nick: The responsibility of maintaining them?

Martin: Maintaining them, right, and operating them.

Nick: Tell me a little bit more about that, because that sounds like it could be fraught with all kinds of problems in dealing with different municipalities.

Martin: Well there's no problems; I honestly didn't hang around on that program.

Nick: Okay.

Martin: . . . Enough to tell you all of the problems that arose.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: And you know people, some people didn't like the program that much. I felt it was a practical solution for the time.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Because we had a lot to do to get New Jersey Transit going. And the detail of dealing with those parking lots was, and stations, was I think more than we could handle. You know, we didn't have unlimited access to resources. So yeah, there were some communities that were. . .

Oftentimes you can tell that it wasn't going to work when the community didn't sign an agreement. And so they kind of like "died" on the, in the process of negotiations. But I think there were a number of good things and that was one way I spent my energy during that period of time.

But one thing I didn't mention was that finance was something that I became increasingly interested in and aware of its absolute, vital importance in the transportation area. And at the end of Lou Gambaccini's tenure in 1980. . .

Well first of all, 1979, he brought in. . . He asked George Warrington to take the lead on organizing the approach to the 1979 Transportation Bond Issue. And that was, this was after three consecutive failures in that decade. And I think it was about \$450 million, about \$150 million was going for the public transportation. And it was; it was going to help the state overcome that problem I was talking about, by not having enough money to meet federal match requirements in the highway program. And he did a marvelous job.

I was not directly involved in that, but he did a marvelous job with George of getting, making the point that the system, the Transportation System desperately needed, that there was decay going on, that there needed to be upgrading. And I can remember pictures of him standing under bridges. People still talk about this. He got great support; he engendered great support at the county level. And he had a program that people understood where he was going to go with it.

And it was like a model, a case study of how you sell a bond issue. And in fact he still talks about it today, because that doesn't oftentimes happen in public policy. And so you know, it was great to be surrounded by people doing their jobs so well and learning best practices.

He also, on his own, to a large degree started a conversation on stable and predictable funding for New Jersey. He; and that was something I got involved in largely sometime later when I came to Rutgers. I, I got very much involved in that because when the Kean administration came in, in 1982, they saw that the transportation funding needed to be continued beyond that bond issue.

The bond issue. . . This is the case where bond issue proceeds were rapidly spent, as opposed to. . . Because New Jersey Transit was able to do that, as opposed to the history in the earlier 1970's when the Department of Transportation was not spending bond issue monies. And that was one of the critiques that led to those failures.

And Lou was the advocate of stable and predictable funding and one of the things that he gets a real kick out of and that I'm, you know that's meant a lot to me is that the, John Sheridan and the Department of Transportation under Tom Kean made it a priority to create a stable and predictable funding source for transportation, by creating the initial Transportation Trust Fund in 1984. And I came later on to really understand that law much greater, maybe it was about fifteen years later when I was at Rutgers.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And that became a centerpiece of my work at the Voorhees Transportation Center. So everything has its roots.

Nick: Yeah. So you realized, you recognized that. . . You recognized the importance of finance?

Martin: That's right.

Nick: And. . .

Martin: And that became more and more important to me.

Nick: And so you started to pursue it at your time at New Jersey Transit or later?

Martin: Um there was. . . Let's see, there was an effort an effort in the late '80's when I was at the; while I was at the Port Authority. No, no, it was after I was at the Port Authority. I was actually at the Hudson/Bergen Light Rail Line when my colleague, Jeff Zupan, was the Director.

I had hired him. He was one of my first hires at New Jersey Transit, Jeff Zupan, a noted planner at the Regional Planning Association, spent about a half-a-dozen years, or maybe more, as the Chief Planner at New Jersey Transit and made a great contribution, which we'll talk about.

And it was during that time that Governor Kean proposed a five-cent increase in the gasoline tax to pursue the New Initiatives Program that Jerry Primo and George Warrington and Jeff Zupan had put together, which involved foremost the Midtown Direct or the Kearney Connection. It also involved the building of the Secaucus Transfer of Secaucus Junction; everything changed names, and the Montclair Connection, which became Montclair Midtown Direct.

And those projects were the centerpiece of the, at least a part of. . . There was a public transit centerpiece of his program. He only got two-and-a-half-cents from the legislature, but they were able, ultimately, to carry through the program, which was good.

It caught my attention how important finance was because if you have all of the best plans and nothing ever happens, which is unfortunately a situation where we tend to be in right now. We have very limited resources. And you can't do the very substantial and meaningful things.

Let me go back to my time at New Jersey Transit in the early days. It was a very exciting time to work there. You know, we formed this new organization. We, you know, had to find a headquarters. (Laughs) We found a building that actually is still there, but not used by New Jersey Transit. New Jersey Transit has graduated upward to better quarters.

But there was one; we wanted to put the New Jersey Transit in a place that was the heart of public transportation in New Jersey. And so we selected a building that was right next door to, that was relatively inexpensive, that at the time, that was right next door to Newark Penn Station and where all of these bus lines came in.

So that was another legacy that that period of time brought us was the selection of a site for New Jersey Transit, an initial headquarters. And we attracted a number of people from the staff who had been in Trenton or near Trenton to come up with us to this location.

It wasn't too long after I took over that, those assignments that another federal law change was going to have a dramatic effect on New Jersey Transit. And that was that it was going to affect me, and that was that Conrail desperately wanted to get out of the commuter rail business. It was a distraction to its business plan. And even though it was being compensated

fairly now, it didn't feel like this was where, how it wanted to continue to function and have to devote so much management time to the subject.

So Congressman Florio at that time, before he was Governor, was involved in another stage of rail, federal rail legislation that dealt with the Northeast. It was the Northeast Rail Services Act that was ultimately passed in 1981. And there were questions about. . . In the meantime, New Jersey was preparing to purchase all of those railroad lines under the 900-Day option.

Well it became very obvious over. . . Well first of all we tried to deal with the Northeast Services Act gave Conrail the out that it needed to get out of commuter rail. But then it left open what was going to take its place. I was involved in the discussion about the drafting of that act.

We created something in legislation called Amtrak Commuter that would have been a subsidiary of Amtrak, semi-independent, that would have been available to take over commuter rail service. And one of the things that I did, working with the staff in the unit in the Department of Transportation, which I haven't mentioned, where I worked at the end of; before New Jersey Transit was formed, it was the Office of Policy Analysis.

We were examining what options New Jersey should pursue to deal with this changeover of management of the commuter rail system. And we were first, because you know New Jersey Transit was so young and so unformed or virtually unformed, we were a little bit wary about recommending that New Jersey just jump in and take over. You know, because the ink was hardly dry on our legislation.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: So we toyed with the idea of making New Jersey the client of Amtrak Commuter. But the Reagan Administration was in office at the time, and they made it very clear to everybody, including Governor Kean and to us, that they really weren't very interested in that, in that happening. So they kind of threw us back on our own devices.

And New Jersey then, happily, in '81 was purchasing all of these railroad lines and it was in a position to make a decision to, in the ensuing time, to take over the service. And there was a deadline for the taking over the service, and it was going to be, I think, April 1st, 1983. And Jerry Primo gave me the assignment to oversee the initial stages of the takeover, which was very complicated.

And talk about things that were a challenge, that was a challenge, trying to figure out where the Gordian Knot was that really was difficult to untie to get a public agency to succeed Conrail, which was tied to the freight services and all of its business activities and business systems. It was really quite complex, but I had a task force working on that, D.C. Agarwal was a key person on that task force. I have mentioned him before.

And we kept plowing along and ultimately, you know got New Jersey ready. Jerry Primo hired somebody to be the head of rail operations and he took over from me that part of it. And then I concentrated on the labor agreements, which were all. . . All had to be; they had to be negotiated from scratch.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Because we had no intention of carrying over the railway program. We hadn't gotten management attention at the railroads in, see at that time it was about sixty-five years, going back to World War I.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: So it was definitely there were all kinds of abuses that existed in those agreements, from our perspective, and we needed to correct that. So we then, my effort went into planning the negotiations with the sixteen rail unions all at once, virtually at once.

Nick: Now what were your previous experiences in. . ?

Martin: In labor negotiations, none.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: None, but I had a person by the name of Frank Mason, who was the state's labor negotiator, he was helpful. And ultimately a mediator was brought in, Charles Serraino; I just remembered his name yesterday. He was a leading mediator in New Jersey, former Commissioner of Labor, and he was brought in to mediate for us on the state level. And it was. . .

D.C. did a marvelous job of developing a computer, with a firm, developing a computer program that could identify what various provisions of a labor contract would do, to reduce the cost of train engine crews, particularly, which is where a lot of the cost is.

And we had, you know a strategy that we were pursuing and we, we largely were able to pursue that because you know a lot of the workers would work over about a ten-hour period and they would have a chunk of time in the morning and a chunk of time in the evening and they would be paid for all of the time in the middle.

And what we were looking at was something "Eight within Ten", which was to give them, to make their workday basically, not to get the value of all of that time in which they were doing nothing, they can go out and do other jobs. But to strike a fair deal with them so that they get paid for all of it but they wouldn't be paid for another part of it.

And we used this computer model to figure out what the, you know, we had different formulations and we used the computer model to tell us what the financial outcomes would be, and how that could help the people who did crew assignments in their work. And that led to a crew assignment model that came out of that, ultimately, and has been a basic of New Jersey rail operations for years.

So anyways, the negotiations were not easy. All, there were three negotiations going on simultaneously. There was Metro North, that was, they were taking over from the Pennsylvania Railway, Pennsylvania Railroad, New York Central, etc and Conrail. We were taking over from the bankrupt railroads and then Conrail.

And then we had many unions because the unions had not in any way been modified by Congress. They were all kinds of different Chiefs, you know, for little villages of Indians. And then there was; SEPTA was also involved in negotiations. And a name that I'm sure is familiar to you from your research, David Gunn, was the Executive Director at SEPTA at the time.

So we were all doing this simultaneously and picking different positions on what we wanted with the different railroads. And we have a kind of a history of colluding on what we want to do. So the negotiations proceeded and they were very arduous. As I said, we were negotiating with many different types of unions.

We didn't have sixteen separate negotiations, but we had negotiations with the train and engine crews, the United Transportation Union, the Brotherhood of Railroad Engineers. We had a memorable negotiation with BRAC, the station agents and so on, you know, the clerical staff. We had separate negotiations with the maintenance of equipment union and then there was the maintenance of way people. So there were maybe about like six different clusters of negotiations.

Some memorable experiences, well one night we went down to negotiate with BRAC. And we were in a very fancy headquarters that BRAC had in Philadelphia and the negotiations went on and on and on. I don't even remember if they were successful or they weren't.

But what I remember was that they went on so late that there were no more trains from Philadelphia to North Jersey. And I had to sit in the 30th Street Station for quite a number of hours, waiting for the trains to start to roll. And it was that arduous.

There were Saturday night negotiations with the UTU (United Transportation Union). The UTU was a particularly interesting problem because we were really dealing with three different leaders, it wasn't one group. And they didn't have anybody that took total charge, that we could see. There was Dan Brogan from the Lackawanna. There was Charlie Jones from the Penn Central Railroad and there was Dick Venus from and his colleagues from the Central Railroad of New Jersey.

And they each presented different personalities; some of them were easier to work with than others. The most difficult was Jones, because he was angling to try to take control over the whole thing. And he was, you know, he had his fish to fry also at SEPTA, so he was a very, very difficult negotiator.

And eventually we got an agreement with them and they took it to their membership. I remember going in to the office on a Saturday afternoon, waiting for the meeting to end, of the workers. Now these were workers who had never been challenged before on their passenger agreements. The railroads just disregarded passenger rail negotiations because they were of no financial significance to them. And once they were being paid, it just flowed through from the state to the railroads.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So this was really a culture shock for them and there were strikes called at each and every one of the areas where the negotiations were taking place.

Going back a bit, one of the things that I had; I had brought this upon myself because I had been instrumental in getting a provision in the Northeast Rail Services Act that required that there be new agreements entered into, that there weren't carryover agreements, by law.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: They were going to be new because we felt that this is the time to make our stand. And so I paid the price of having to actually try to negotiate them, after having gotten that provision and it was very challenging; Saturday night meetings at restaurants and so on, and a strike.

And probably one of the most memorable moments I have ever had in my career was this. On that Saturday afternoon, the union called a strike and it was going to be effective on, very soon thereafter, probably the next Monday. It was the UTU. And we were; New Jersey Transit had been doing planning in case there was a strike. So there were, again, a number of people like Ben Feigenbaum were prepped and ready to go with plans.

But the irony was that I had gone through a very tense Saturday waiting for the result of the vote on the initial offer on the contract, and it was rejected. And then the next day I come, you know, we get together to start planning or implementing the very, very significant efforts to put busses in place of rail in New Jersey. And I found that Jerry Primo was out of the state and we couldn't reach him.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: So I was, at that point, the Deputy Executive Director, so I went from the frying pan, into the fire.

Nick: (Laughs) Oh.

Martin: And that day, I directed the staff in starting the implementation of the response to the rail strike. That was a lot of hard work on one weekend. But Jerry came back soon thereafter and picked it up. But the staff was wonderful; they had a lot of the answers. And the strike lasted; I think it was six weeks. It might have been; I don't remember exactly how long it was.

It lasted a while, maybe six weeks. Metro North strike ended first and they settled. We settled second, and I think we did well in the settlement. And SEPTA, under David Gunn, was the last to settle, and they were still slugging it out with each other well past our return to service. But it was; it was quite an experience. And as I said; Charlie Serrano was very helpful in that period, once the strike started, to bring the parties together.

There weren't many cases where there was really "bad will" and so on. You know, it was actually a . . . I wouldn't say a "pleasant" experience, but it was a memorable and uplifting experience in the end, when we got the agreement. And the agreement contained a lot of things that we had been trying to pursue and was vastly different from the old form of agreements, that we really had accomplished something. And it gave New Jersey Transit something to build on for years on end.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: But you never heard about arbitraries anymore, that was my favorite. You know, special payments made to people for moving a car or you know, stuff like that. It was, it was. . . The contracts were filled with unnecessary expenditures, so we got that all cleared up. We get an eight-within-ten initially. It changed over time, which made me sad, but we had it. I was no longer going to be in charge of that stuff.

And I think we got New Jersey Transit off to a great start. And the strike, I think, was very, a learning experience for the railway unions. They all sort of felt like "Well what was the. . ? No railroad worker should ever go without having at least one strike in his career."

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: And they, they got their chance. And it was a sobering experience and so we were. . . We were; all of us were happy that it was over.

Nick: And this was 1983?

Martin: '83, yes.

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: April first, it was April Fool's Day was the day in which the arrangements that we were trying to bridge. You know, we were trying to put new arrangements in place by April first, 1983. But we were unsuccessful. The vote occurred shortly before that and so we were into a strike.

Nick: And this is a time in the national atmosphere where union negotiations had been very contentious.

Martin: Yeah. I'm trying to remember what year it was that President Reagan fired the air traffic controllers. It was fairly close to that time. So labor negotiations were becoming more and more contentious.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But we were not doing it to prove an ideological point. We respected their collective bargaining rights. It was all about, in our mind, it was all about giving management the ability to run the service in a way that was not extraordinary, you know overly expensive, and that they could be able to position the people where they needed them, when they needed them.

Nick: Yeah. And like you said, a lot of these contracts hadn't been negotiated in decades.

Martin: Those. . . They had been just buried within larger contracts. And all of the passenger service stuff was unattended to for many, many years. So this is a big culture change.

Nick: Yeah and there was this financial pass-through from the subsidies from the state, so there was no. . .

Martin: Labor was never touched in those years.

Nick: Interesting.

Martin: Alright we're getting. . . We probably should take, wrap it up.

Nick: Okay.

[Interview Part 2 ends, 39 minutes]

[Interview Part 3 begins]

Nick: So I don't know where you want to begin from.

Martin: Well the next principal thing that happened was I entered into a competition for the vacant position of Director of Planning and Development at the Port Authority, which at that time was a very prestigious position.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And it was held by two very renowned planners, Roger Gillman and Ted Alcott. Ted Alcott had actually just retired as the Director of Planning and Development. And it was a choice position because it had in place a staff, at the time, of about sixty-to-seventy excellent planners in a variety of different fields, including the most outstanding one that was there, was Rosemary Scanlon, who is the Chief Economist to the Port Authority.

So it was really. . . But there were numbers of other very well-known and accomplished people. So I competed for that job and I didn't really expect to do that well in the competition. But I ended up winning the job. I mean the only real connection I had to the Port Authority was the fact that Lou Gambaccini was back at the Port Authority in his position of Assistant Executive Director; and I'm sure he was there rooting for me.

(Laughter)

So I, it was a new experience for me, but it was also a wonderful opportunity to rejoin Lou and our entire careers were together again after the marvelous experience we had from 1978 to 1980 to New Jersey.

Nick: So what challenges. . ? What challenges did you face at the Port Authority in that role?

Martin: Well the biggest challenge was Trans-Hudson Transportation, which fit exactly into my field of interest. So it was really a good fit for me. The agency was experiencing tremendous congestion on its; at its facilities. At that time, the economy was booming; this is in '83.

So the economy was starting to boom, congestion began to mount at the Holland Tunnel and the Lincoln Tunnel. The Port Authority bus terminal was overcrowded at the time, plus it was suffering all kinds of other issues, homelessness. PATH was under pressure.

And so the Port Authority took it upon itself to try to figure out what was going on in the Trans-Hudson market. And that was the planning and development department's role, to diagnose what the issues were.

And it was part of the; it was the beginning of what has been a remarkable transformation of the movement of people from. . . Well the Manhattan economy was going very strongly at the time and New Jersey, west of the Hudson, to be more specific, was playing an ever, ever greater role in filling the jobs.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And you know, during. . . It culminated many years later, but it started in this period. I think it was during the 2000 to 2010 period, 75% of the jobs held by suburbanites in Manhattan, the new ones, were coming from New Jersey, which is amazing. Because New Jersey doesn't, its population doesn't in any way correspond to that, compared to Long Island and Westchester.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And in fact the transportation systems from those places are in some ways superior to New Jersey's. But there really was something starting to happen and it was probably in the housing market.

The Gold Coast in Hudson County began, which plays a large part in my later career, began to boom. And I took a great interest in trying to figure out what was going on, and being able to document the patterns and the behaviors of the commuters, that was causing, that were causing these, the chronic congestion.

We worked on the start-up of a ferry system, which plays into my later life. Because they are now one of my major clients today, is New York Waterway, which was the pioneer in ferry operations. We conducted surveys at all of the facilities during the time that I was at the Port Authority.

We had a very good survey unit headed by a person by the name of Sam Berger, who has since passed. But Sam was a great colleague and he had a terrific team. And we did numerous surveys, we analyzed the survey information.

I brought in to head our analytical unit in transportation Christine Johnson, who later became a high official in the FHWA. And she was a very capable. We did a lot of interesting work trying to figure out, you know, why people were doing what they were doing. We uncovered the fact that there was a great deal of subsidization by employers of employee parking.

Martin: And we noticed that there was a very small provision that Congress Rangel had gotten through, which created the commuter tax benefit at \$15 a month, whereas the parking benefit at the time was like \$100 a month.

Nick: These are people commuting from New Jersey to New York, Manhattan?

Martin: From anywhere into Manhattan. But what we were documenting was the New Jersey of West-of-Hudson.

Because it includes Rockland and Orange County. There, you know, it would be like 10% or less of that. But they have to be recognized, because they are, it's a growth area and it's a comp. . . That's a whole other issue I've forgotten to mention, that I've got a lot of Rockland interest, because I've been working up there for half-a-dozen years.

So we identified that and we did some analysis. And Lou, with my help, established. . . We established a group called the Employer Liaison Transportation Office. And we brought in a person that I worked with in Trenton, at the Division of Policy Analysis, at DOT, Larry Hiller.

And he took that over and eventually that developed into the Transit Center, which flourished for, as a developer of the transit check. It developed for, let's see. . . It was about twenty years, more than twenty years until it recently sold its operation to another firm.

So that was one of the things that Lou was very proud of, was doing that at the Port Authority. And I was; provided all of the, with my team, we provided all of the ammunition for creating that office and building a constituency to expand the commuter tax benefit from \$15 to some parity, which it is, this instant, with the parking benefit.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Which, in my mind, the parking benefit shouldn't even exist. I don't understand why. If President Obama can get rid of that thing, it would save the federal government some money. I don't see any policy reason why that should exist.

Nick: Right.

Martin: No one should get a tax benefit for that. So he hasn't called me.

(Laughter)

Martin: Maybe I should write him a letter.

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: So that was one of the things that we did. We also, that was one of the outcomes. We, it eventually led to the formation of a Trans-Hudson Taskforce, which was designed to really monitor the Trans-Hudson system and come up with solutions to it, especially. . . We came, we thought about a lot of things.

Probably the most interesting part of that, in retrospect is not the outcome of it, but the people that were involved in it because of. . . What we did is we recruited from the PATH operation Richard Sorrells to be the Co-Head of that. And the other person that was the head of it was Richard, Rich Roberts, who I brought over from HMDC when he had, when his career had hit a little bump.

I recruited him to the Port Authority. That was another fantastic addition. He stayed on at the Port Authority after I left and ultimately helped to hire me, had Access to the Region's Core. And I have continued to stay in touch and do very good things with him, here at Rutgers and even beyond. He is a tremendous resource; he's another one of the unsung heroes.

So we had Richard Sorrells who ultimately became the Executive Director of New Jersey Transit, because George Warrington knew him also, and was very keen on him as well. George

and I shared many things, including an appreciation of Richard Sorrells. And then I had Rich Roberts and they made a terrific team and they developed a lot of good information.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: The Port Authority was also, we spun off a group that was not under our guidance but we created the case for it as a Part of the Trans-Hudson Task Force was the ferry operation. And that's where, you know Arthur Imperatore have started; I think in that time period, he started the operation from Port Imperial to Midtown Manhattan. And that kind of caused; everybody was like "What is this man doing?"

(Laughter)

Martin: And you know there was a lot of stuff going on.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And a lot of uneasiness because the Port Authority liked to be in control of everything. But Imperatore really did us a big favor and it popularized ferry service and got the Port Authority ready to invest in the institution of ferry operations at Hoboken.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: I remember, one of the things that's most memorable about my tenure there was something that didn't happen. I went on a field trip out to Vancouver to see the Vancouver Ferry Operation, which was a very efficient side-loading ferry that still exists in the Vancouver Harbor. And I was extremely impressed by it, but I couldn't convince anybody in the Port Authority that it was going to be a better solution than the front-loading ferries that exist.

And ultimately the other people that took charge of the ferry situation, I was glad to see that they did something because ferry operation started in Hoboken and they exist today. And in fact, the Port Authority was able to forego a major investment in the Hoboken to . . . Let's see, the Hoboken to the World Trade Center line to enable. . . They used the ferry as what they called a "load shedder" so that was, that evolved at that time.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And so those are some of the things that happened, but there was a lot more that was going on. We started a study, under the Leadership of Lee Goodman, who was assisted by Joanne; her married name now is Papageogiou. We studied the Goethals Bridge.

And this has a particular place in my heart, because we studied the Goethals Bridge. Nobody wanted to hear about the Goethals Bridge, but we saw the Goethals Bridge as a very undersized, almost a dangerous infrastructure resource that desperately needed attention. They had ten-foot widths, two lanes in each direction, a huge amount of trucking had evolved that went between New Jersey, particulately New Jersey warehousing and New York, including Long Island businesses, and so it was very, very overburdened.

And we studied it and Joanne put a lot of personality into that presentation. And we actually launched an effort at the Port Authority to do something about it. The sad part about it is it languished for lack of political will from I would say the late 1980's all the way until just a couple of years ago when the Port Authority finally took some measured steps to make that project go. It's now supposed to be a public-private partnership.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: It still hasn't yet come together.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But it's supposed to come together and it's on their capital program, the capital program. So I'm glad I lived long enough to see it go from where it was then, which was a very good idea. Every time I drive over that bridge, I occasionally have to go to Brooklyn or Long Island and I'll use the bridge from my home in New Jersey. And it is, it is kind of a scary experience, I think.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: Narrow lanes.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And it really was obsolescent for many, many years. So I'm hopeful that that will be another thing where we started the process, you know.

We also did a lot of work in the freight area. We had something I inherited from Ted Alcott, the Freight Services Improvement Conference, which was an interesting collaboration with the private sector. I enjoyed doing that work.

We had a person on our staff by the name of. . . Two people I want to mention, Matthew Edelman, who is not now the Head of TransComm, another Lou Gambaccini creation. I think we mentioned that in the Gambaccini interview. Matthew was the head of that, was the head of the freight union.

And I had a person who played a role in my professional life thereafter, Anne Strauss-Weider was on the staff, and who developed in an extraordinary professional in the area of goods and so she was on our staff. And I mentioned Rosemary Scanlon.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Who, you know, was really one of the deepest thinkers, had such an integrated understanding of the regional economy. It was a shame that her career didn't kind of continue to thrive at the Port Authority. But the Port Authority is an institution that undergoes changes and ups and downs.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And so she ultimately left. She's now the head of the real estate, Dean of the Real Estate School at NYU. And she provided excellent thinking about world trade flows and things that the Port Authority could do to prepare for changes in world trade, particularly as it related to the Port Department, which you know to get ready for various changes in trade flows.

So it was; it was a very heady period. It was, I had two times, two different periods that were connected but it was like a halcyon period and then a less-than-halcyon period. The halcyon period when Peter Goldmark was the Executive Director who hired me. . .

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And Lou Gambaccini was the Assistant Executive Director. And then Lou took on a greater and greater role on the Trans; took over the overall oversight of Trans-Hudson Transportation. And I, as the Planning and Development Director, fit in kind of a matrix/management way with him.

He also oversaw tunnels bridges and terminals and; not directly but he was a person that was in charge, and the PATH system. And it all worked very well. It was a good management team and a good management structure, and that went on during the Peter Goldmark period.

And then Peter decided to leave, he had his own agenda in life and he decided to leave. And it led to a vacuum and that's where Governor (Mario) Cuomo fit in, because he appointed Stephen Berger.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And the truth be told, I just didn't really enjoy working for Stephen Berger. I found him to be a very difficult person to work with, and whereas Goldmark was much fairer and easier to work with.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And Lou had a lot of conflict with Stephen Berger as well. And it was a very difficult period at the Port Authority. And we brought in an individual by the name of Hugh O'Neil who was very close to him at the Port Authority and Hugh and I did not see eye-to-eye on a lot of things. Nor did Hugh get along with Rosemary Scanlon, whom I thought so highly of.

And so there were difficult times at the Port Authority. And as things evolved, it ultimately, after about, I was there from the middle of 1983 through 1987, so that was three-and-a-half years. It was a good tenure, the staff had grown. We had a very, very proficient staff in transportation planning and surveying and economics, freight analysis. It was really a remarkable group of people, and fun to work with.

In fact, another person that I brought in there was Debbie Finn, who was my Administrative Assistant, or at least. . . That's not her proper title, but she was in charge of administration of the department. And her career took off after I left in other fields, and she's another person that is very much involved in Lou's life, as a person trying to maintain the legacy of Lou Gambaccini.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So we really had a terrific staff, but it just wasn't to last forever; those things don't.

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: And eventually an incident occurred in which Steve Berger decided to split the Planning and Development Department between the transportation planners and the economists, the transportation economists.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: We were so closely wed and had developed such a good relationship that it seemed, to me, to be a very, very bad decision. It may have been aimed at me. So anyways, my jurisdiction was reduced and I decided before that really took effect to ask Steve Berger if I could take a mobility assignment and go where. . .

I gave Bob Kiley a call and I asked him if he saw any opportunity for me to assist him on a mobility assignment with Berger. They knew each other very well, Berger and Kiley.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Because Berger had been on the MTA board, as you are probably aware of.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So we worked that out. And in the beginning, it was around January of 1988; I went on a six-month leave of the Port Authority and was working out of the MTA. And it was a very interesting experience; I really enjoyed working with Kiley and others there.

I think Mort (Downey) was still there at the time. And I got to watch, up close, how the organization was working, got to know a lot more about New York, New York City transportation, which has always been very helpful to me to have had that exposure.

Nick: How do you feel about the MTA as an organization, compared to the Port Authority and the New Jersey Transit that you had been to before? Do you have thoughts on that?

Martin: They are very different organizations.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: Extremely different. New Jersey Transit is really, on its face, in my mind, the soundest, by far.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: By far. It is, and I had a big role to play in figuring out what it ought to be and how it should be governed. It's not perfect, but I think it's close to being about as sound of a pub-

lic transportation agency as there is in the United States. It has had a pretty glorious history for public transportation agencies from 1979 when it was, the law was enacted, until the present time.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: I mean it hasn't been perfect, but it still, even under the current circumstances and the death of ARC [Access to the Region's Core], which of course has kind of cast a pall over it. Even with that, it still provides marvelous service and has really boosted the state of New Jersey. I think the State of New Jersey is immeasurably better today by. . . And people, I don't think most people really appreciate this, but it measurably benefitted by the confidence the public has in New Jersey Transit as an organization.

It is tightly structured in that it has a Board of Directors, which is seven people. Its, we made it so the government had three of the members, including the chairman, which really ties it, for better or for worse, to the Governor's office.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But it really, it really makes it an important instrument of government. But the four private members can provide other perspective and sometimes even opposition to some of the governmental policies.

And it has, Lou did some incredible things that had a legacy, that created a legacy that lasted at least twenty years after his leaving, by appointing two board member, in particular, who are outstanding and they served fifteen or twenty years. Martin Brodie, who was the head of Restaurant Associates, he was in the food business, they ran restaurants.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: . . . His company. And then the, probably the most spectacular of them all was John McGoldrick, John McGoldrick from New Jersey. He was, at the time, he was a partner at McCarter & English, a Newark law firm. And he served for a very long term on New Jersey Transit and provided continuity and integrity. And the organization has just, I think, has just a very "positive hangover" from that period. And so it really works well.

I think the MTA is, is not. . . What you've got to remember is the New Jersey Transit is a statewide organization.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Which gives it a link to the legislature and. . . But it, so some degree, there are some geographic differentials there in that there are some parts of the state, limited parts of the state, that have very little public transportation.

You can go to the north, very northwest or the very southwest and you could say "Well where's the public transportation?" But they're areas that are very under-populated.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: The critical parts of the state are covered from Central New Jersey all the way up to the New York border and then the Southwest corner, in the Camden metropolitan area, Philadelphia. And New Jersey Transit is able, and has been paying attention to all of those areas, provides decent service, or better. And take the rail service that it inherited, and really build it into an asset, particularly in Northern New Jersey. And so even in Southern New Jersey there's even some of that now.

So I think the way it works with the legislature and the way it works with the Governor's office, the way it works with its overall domain of public transit, it seems as if people are satisfied that this is a public agency that "fits" its purpose.

I never had the same feeling with the MTA. I always felt that the MTA was somehow misshapen and that, first of all, it only serves a relatively small geographic portion of New York State. Maybe it's, of the state's economy, it's at least a half, but it's a small portion of the state. In Albany, that's meaningful.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: The second thing is the way it is organized with, into regional areas, where it inherited the Metro North Operation, which was the Conrail operation before that, the Pennsylvania Railroad Operation and then the Long Island Railroad. And it amalgamated all that into the, what was the New York City Subway System, Transit Authority.

It was a very odd mixture and you really have the different. . . In a much clearer case you have the suburbanites and the urbanites, you know, at war with each other, or not seeing each other's interests. And then on top of that you have the whole issue of, which is really, to some degree, a positive, I would say overall it's a positive, with the Triborough; well it was the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And being able to get there, which was (Richard) Ravitch's great accomplishment, of getting those revenues into the MTA. But it really, it leaves the MTA sort of covering a lot of different bases and not being very clear about what its mission is, its relationship with the city is dreadful and it has devolved into a worse and worse relationship, where the city used to be a major contributor.

That, to me, is indicative of something that's sick in the overall structure. So you've got problems within a region and you've got between the suburbanites and the city, typified by that payroll tax that was passed a few years ago.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And that really created enmity between the suburbanites and city. And you've got the city pulling its money out in the Giuliani administration and not really ever putting its money back in.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But you do have the tolls, you know, rising to rather stratospheric heights, being able to support the transit system. I think it's, it's a very uneasy marriage. And I don't know that I have a better idea about how it could be done.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: But I don't think it's the best way. And so I considered it; compare that to New Jersey Transit is much more centralized, focused and tighter relationship that, between the Governor's Office, the legislature and the Agency. And you really get, you know, a better buy-in there.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Again, not perfect. The New York case was the biggest setback that New Jersey Transit ever suffered.

And the Port Authority. . ?

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: Well the Port Authority has a grand history. . . I mean it was; I mean I was so proud to become a part of that family and to become part of that history. But I think that during the time that I was there and thereafter, the Port Authority has evolved in ways that are very detrimental.

Back in the early '70's, the idea or before the early '70's, the idea of Governor's wielding their veto power over Port Authority actions was unheard of. Nobody really had the impetus to do that. And that gave the Port Authority a huge amount of sway, people like Austin Tobin, and to some degree Peter Goldmark.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But as the years went on, and Governor's became more emboldened, starting with my personal hero, Brendan Byrne, who was always protecting the PATH there. It, I think that the agency began to fall into a trap. And the trap is that it has become far more demarcated between what is New York's and New Jersey's. I don't believe it was quite that way.

And they have also developed this moray that the, which is relatively new, that the Executive Director is chosen by the Governor of New York and the Chairman is chosen by the Governor of New Jersey, which really puts the Governor of New Jersey at a disadvantage.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: And the reason and the way to counter that was, it's like one wrong causes another wrong, two wrongs don't make a right. The Governor of New Jersey, as the years went

on, saw that they had to have, in a sense “a presence” in the leadership, the executive leadership, of the organization. And that’s where the Deputy Executive Director position came.

And that, I think, has been very, very unwholesome to have an Executive Director appointed by the New York Governor, who is tied to the New York Governor and a Deputy Executive Director, who is listening to what Trenton is telling him or her.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And I think that produces a lot of uncertainty and lack of cohesiveness in the organization.

Nick: How did that compare to the prior. . ? What was the prior mechanism for. . ?

Martin: It was much more unified. I mean there wasn’t a Deputy Executive Director that was anything other than an appointee of the Executive Director.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: I mean it was an ordinary person. That was a staffer who had risen above the others.

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: You know, to be the Deputy Executive Director. And so the organization had a unified sense of leadership from the Executive Director position. And the Board was involved, but not overly involved. And they gave a lot of deference to the Executive Director. You’ve got to remember, they came off the period of Austin Tobin.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So there were about thirty years of Austin Tobin, that’s a long time.

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: He left a huge imprint. But the imprint was, there was a tendency to want to not repeat the Austin Tobin experience, because he had been so powerful and seeming contemptuous of other people, though that’s arguable.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: He was a controversial person. And there were those, like Lou, who would be very supportive of him. But you know there are also other points of view. But the Governor’s really looked at the charter of the Port Authority and said “Hey, we can have much more control over this organization.”

And now, what you’re hearing is that Governor Christie is stoking the organization with scores of appointees, which is unheard of. I mean there might have been like five or ten in the time that I was there, that were like that or maybe even less.

And now they are everywhere and people are complaining that they are not fit for their jobs. And it really created like a fifth column within the organization. That is not, that is a prescription for disaster.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And I think people, everybody I talk to says "Martin, the Port Authority is not the Port Authority that you worked at."

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: It was there at the latter part of the Goldmark years, and it was a very self-respecting organization. It was well-respected and it respected itself.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And it was very proud of itself. And I don't think the staff feels that way anymore. I think even the New Jersey Transit has suffered some setbacks, and I'm pointing to one that was a real morale killer besides the ARC project, was the taking away of their public transit passes, which had been a tradition. I was involved in setting that up at the. . .

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: I was the; I think I mentioned this in the previous time that we met, the Deputy Executive, and I was the Acting Executive Director for six months. So I was very much involved in a number of human resource policies at the inception. And one of them was to do the, which was kind of, which was a traditional practice among transit agencies. . .

Nick: Uh hum, and a good-faith gesture to the employees.

Martin: Right and it really, you know we felt that we could ask them to go the extra mile if something happened. And that rail strike was a case in point where they really did that. We had a tremendous response from our employees to, you know, to help people at the transit terminals and park-and-rides, which were set up to replace the rail service when it went down for six weeks. So it's just hard to believe. . .

It was a smaller transit system, the ridership was about half of what it is today. But it, I think that that is where I would compare. . . So there really are three different organizations, with three different histories. And I would clearly rate New Jersey Transit as still the soundest, although it is now entering a very rocky period, very rocky period.

And I would add there that my concerns is that it had been the beneficiary of some very generous capital financing support from 1980, already starting from about 1979 when Lou got his bond issue passed, all the way till somewhere in the Corzine years, until a greedy Corzine, calamities in public transportation financing.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And now it is really heading onto rocky shores, so that could hurt the agency. Unlike the MTA found, I mean it's like a repeat performance, so we're heading into that thing where it's a political no-no to raise the gasoline tax and the loser is going to be New Jersey Transit and New Jersey DOT.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And the longer that goes on. . . And it could go on for I'd say until 2017. It's a very, the result is going to be, I think, very, very harmful. And it could hurt New Jersey Transit. So if we had this conversation in 2016, I might have a different opinion because I think that the erosion that I'm describing is starting to occur.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And that's what the MTA went, they had no solid funding support for years.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Until Ravitch was able to right the ship. Funding is such an important thing. Of course the Port Authority lives on its funding.

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: And it's handicapped right now by two things which are related to each other. One is the over-commitment it was forced on the World Trade Center. The World Trade Center should be rebuilt to some significant extent, but the Port Authority was not, financially it was not the right entity to do that.

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: It doesn't have enough robustness of revenue sources to want undertake all of that. It is not a general purpose government.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And so it's put under great strain. And right now we are trying to raise its tolls in 2010, in a super-urgency. And I think that a lot of eggs were broken in that effort. And I think that the Governor has peeled back the toll increase, probably in some orchestrated attempt, and the result is that it's not going to be able to get done what it needs to get done, how it needs to get it done. And so it is, although it is the most self-sustaining of all of the organizations, it too, is in some form of financial distress, and it could get worse.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So I think that the thing to watch, my advice, if I've learned one thing. . . The one thing I've learned is you've got to watch, with these agencies, how they are being financed. Are they being. . . ? How is it being financed? And is it sustainable? And if it isn't, watch out.

Nick: Uh hum. Uh hum.

Martin: That's where the problems start.

Nick: So we should get back to. . . Back to where. . .

(Laughter)

Martin: So anyways, I went to the MTA and I became sort of an APTA-groupie during that period of time, for about six months. And accompanied, what the reason for that was Bob Kiley assigned me to assist him in, I can't remember the exact name of the effort, but it was a. . .

Maybe it was Transit 200, I think. It was an effort to try to organize public awareness of the need for a much higher amount of transportation funding.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: At the federal level. And he was, made the chairman of a committee at the American Public Transit Association. And that's where the APTA-groupie would come from, because they were in that position, there were numerous meetings that were held around the country, and I traveled hither and yon.

I think I went to St. Louis and I went to Monterey California, I remember those two trips.

Nick: Was Lou involved in that as well?

Martin: Um. . .

Nick: I know that he was involved with APTA, but. . .

Martin: Lou, at that time, was probably, 1988, was probably having his own transition, actually. That might have been the period before he went to SEPTA.

Nick: Okay.

Martin: So I don't think he was involved. I don't remember him being involved. I think it was kind of a little. . .

Nick: Like a junket?

Martin: In his case, it wasn't a junket, it was a down period where he went to Institute for Public Administration in New York and he was there for a period, a short period of time. And so he was not involved.

But I, I enjoyed doing what I was doing. I worked quite a bit with a fellow that I became friendly with, named Bernard Cohen who had come from Boston and was eventually highly placed in the Kiley administration. And I enjoyed it. I mean I knew it wasn't going to last.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And during the time that I was doing that, I got, you know to know a lot of people nationally. I got to really become knowledgeable, ever more knowledgeable about federal policy in public transportation and enjoyed it, enjoyed the six months considering that it was a difficult commute over from where I lived to the Madison Avenue Offices of the MTA and all of these trips.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But it was, it was manageable and it was fun. But I happily was recruited during that period of time by Hazel Gluck, whom I owe a great deal to. Hazel Gluck was in the Commissioner of Transportation and her aide was Judy Shaw. And they recruited me to be, to be in charge of what was then a floundering effort to start on Governor Kean's mission to build a light rail system on the Hudson River waterfront.

And that is, that turned out to be one of my proudest times. It didn't have the happiest ending. (Laughs) But the system did. And I, I mean you know you live in the political world; and you know you have to accept the ups and the downs.

I took over that office. It was a terrible set of quarters in Hoboken terminal. It was just dreadful, I couldn't stand going to work there for about two or three months. They were really bad offices, they were all crowded and antiquated and just horrible.

But we had a staff that had been assembled by my predecessor and it, and everybody had the impression he'd been in office for about six months, but the process of starting to prepare to apply for an alternative analysis for transportation under the Hudson River light railway had been going nowhere. It was like on a treadmill.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So my job was to come in there and make it work. And in the process, I also was able to find new office space.

(Laughter)

Martin: Have decent office space then in a high rise in Jersey City.

Nick: It's amazing how much that environment can matter.

Martin: It made a huge difference. It made a huge difference. We were really quite proud of ourselves once we got there. They weren't palatial, but they were very, very nice and they were in a good place in Jersey City. I mean it wasn't on the waterfront, which I wish it had been, but it was at Journal Square, but that was of little consequence.

And we put together a staff. One of the people that was there, Jerry Newton, who preceded me, he was my Deputy and a very able engineer/architect. And we also had, I hired Dick Hearn, who just passed away in the last month, at seventy-two, I think. Dick was the Chief Engineer that I hired, and he actually stayed with the project right through to its construction and was really, largely responsible for that to happen.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: A lot of, he deserves a lot of credit for that. A very colorful individual who was on our staff was Tony Grazioso, who was a Jersey City practitioner of the arts of Jersey City.

Nick: (Laughter)

Martin: Had been involved in working at the Transport of New Jersey back in the '70's and had gotten to know them and had been hired by New Jersey Transit and then we found a place for him on a Hudson County project, because he had all of these connections in Jersey City. And he was fun to work with; I had mostly "ups" with him.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: And he also has passed away, which is sad.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: And so there were others, like Gwen Watson was there, who was the Secretary of New Jersey Transit in later years. Chitra Radin who has now her own firm in environmental work and she does a lot of work with New Jersey Transit. I see her all the time at meetings. I have done some work with her here, when I was here at Rutgers. Linda Mosch, who's in charge, today, of the Northern Branch Project at New Jersey Transit. So she still can make her mark on that one.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: One of the people that I particularly enjoyed working with was Neal Fitzsimons who is back at New Jersey Transit and is managing the contract between New Jersey Transit and. . . He's in their light rail area and he's managing, helping them manage the contract between New Jersey Transit and what is now URS, the company, the design, build, operate, maintain company that runs the light rail line.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And so he and I have, for a number of reasons, through my current work, we have a lot to do with each other. And that staff was really, I probably have not mentioned everybody, I know I haven't. But those are some of the people that were particularly memorable to me on that staff, and that really provided. . .

Also I can't forget Joe Higgins, who had been a New Jersey. . . I worked with Joe on the Conrail takeover effort. You know, when we prepared for the takeover from Conrail that led to the strike. So he was on that task force. He came over and joined me and did the property work, which was very important on a light rail line.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So we, you know we got going on that. Oh and of course there was Tom Schultz, who just left New Jersey Transit and quite an illustrious career, actually. But he was the Chief Planner that I had at the waterfront. And we, we really accomplished a huge amount.

And there were many, it was a project, it was a wonderful project because there was so much public support for it that we, in most cases, we were not battling to get people to appreciate the project. There were issues, there were significant issues.

But our biggest problem was kind of intra-New Jersey attention is that when Governor Kean was in office, the Hudson River waterfront, the gold coast, was the center of his attention. He really believed in it and he wanted to see it, properly, that a public transportation system be built that would tie it all together, because the transportation linkages were nil.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: They were incredibly poor at the, until that time. And when he left office, Governor Florio took over. There was a turn of attention away from Hudson County and much more of the attention went to Newark.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: And that ultimately led to a much less successful system. The link between, which I think has been under-managed and under-promoted, between Newark Penn Station and Broad Street. But when you think about how much that has not added to Newark and compare that to what the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line has done for Hudson County, it was really, I think, an error in judgment on the part of the Democratic administration not to maintain the full commitment.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Like number one primacy of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line. And we had to struggle to get attention in those later years, during the period of. . . I served under three Governors in that period, Governor Kean, Governor Florio and then Governor Christine.

And Governor Christie picked back up on where Kean was, with a vengeance, which I'll explain, which actually led to my leaving. And maybe that was for the best. But it was, it was a very. . . Three very different atmospheres.

Nick: Was it, was it Corzine or Christie?

Martin: It was. . .

Nick: Florio. . .

Martin: Corzine didn't come in until later.

Nick: Oh, it was not Chris Christie?

Martin: No, no, it was Christine Whitman.

Nick: Christine Whitman

Martin: Whitman, yeah. Christine Whitman was Governor starting in 1994.

Nick: Right.

Martin: She won the election of 1993. She beat out, by a hair, she beat out Florio.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And so it was, it was actually a very interesting experience. I mean I. . . It is constantly on my mind because what I'm doing now; I've had numbers of clients and issues that pertain to the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line.

One of my principal clients is New York Waterway and I use the system, one way or another, to get up to their offices, which are hard for me to reach, up at Weehawken, up above the Lincoln Tunnel. But I use the system to go from some, either park-ride on the system or the exchange place station to go up to the offices at Weehawken. So I'm constantly on it, and watching what's going on.

And when I was here, we did, I'll get to this later in some future interview, probably. I was, with Jan Wells, we studied, intensively, the development that followed the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail line. One of my favorite parts of that system was the fact that I could see that transit-oriented development was going to be very significant on that.

So this is like, in my mind, it is the showcase project in America, of how a transit investment from scratch can reshape real estate investment and create, you know, a new way of mobility in a region. And I think it's a marvelous thing that's going on. You know, it's slowed down, of course, during the recession, a great recession.

But the first signs of spring are the cranes that are popping up all over Hudson County and they are popping up around the stations on the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail line. And so what has already been documented, by Jan Wells and me, is being repeated again. And I hope that there is a continued documentation of it, because it's a great story.

And it really shows, you know, there are people that don't believe in public transit investment and there have been some questionable public transit investments, but this was one where the ground was so fertile there was. . . Governor Kean was so right, there was this "gold coast" and it needed this transportation linkage, these transportation linkages.

And by us designing the system so that it nearly, it either maximized or nearly maximized the potential reach of the system and connectivity of the system, it really has proved to be a remarkable thing. The ridership is now about 22,500 people a day, and it's growing. And we were, you know, we were anticipating maybe 50,000. And I, we'll get there.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: We'll get there as the development continues in Hudson County. It is remarkable how the system, has adapted to it. I hope that there are, there are a few more additions to the system that are built because it really provides a wonderful secondary foundation for the public transportation in the state.

Nick: Now going back to the shift that you mentioned from the Hudson Bergen system to looking at Newark.

Martin: Yeah.

Nick: Were there aspects of the Hudson Bergen system that you were hopeful would be advanced forward that didn't get advanced?

Martin: Yes.

Nick: And that put constraints on it overall?

Martin: Well there was. . .

Nick: Can you speak more specifically about that?

Martin: It had nothing to do with Newark.

Nick: Right. Right.

Martin: It had to do with Hudson County.

Nick: Right.

Martin: And there were things. . . There were some very interesting stories. There are at least. . . How many stories? At least three stories, four stories. The whole system is just like, you know you take a ride and there's a story at almost every station.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: One of the stories that I like to tell is that when we were planning the system, we had the Weehawken Rail Tunnel as one of our assets, alright. And there was a tremendous effort at the very beginning to get overpasses. . .

Excuse me, get a new rail line built on the western side of the Palisades that would allow freight to come down into Jersey City and into the yards in Kearny so that the freight didn't have to come onto the waterfront, through the tunnel and back through the back of Hoboken and then weave its way towards the Kearny yards.

So what, the Weehawken Tunnel was a critical ingredient. We knew that we could use it, but we had to get, had to get Conrail out of the way. But that wasn't, I mean that was pretty straightforward and we did a huge amount of work to do that.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But the part of the story that was interesting was that we had the Weehawken Tunnel and we didn't really know what to do with the Weehawken Tunnel, other than to use it as a way to start the system. And there were difference of opinion among the engineers whether or not we could really. . ?

How we could serve the incredibly dense population atop the Palisades and Union City and Weehawken and North Bergen and West New York, those four communities that are bunched together, the North Hudson Cluster. And there was; some people felt that there was no chance that we could build a station atop the tunnel.

There was one location that was obvious for that, about 48th Street and Bergenline Avenue. And we were also looking, they said the tunnel, that the elevators were going to be too big and too slow and too this and too that and it was going to be too hard to build them.

And then so we were starting to look at another idea of an incline down the western slope of the Palisades to a station at the portal of the Weehawken Tunnel, which probably is a good idea, too, but it was one or the other at the time. And Senator Menendez, then was a State Senator, Tony Grazioso also brought me to his office. And he was insistent that we build that station at 48th Street and Bergenline Avenue. And he said "If you want my support, you've got to build that."

And so we went back to the drawing board and you know I'd always felt that it was a good idea, if it could be done. And the engineers looked and thought and scratched their heads. They found a somewhat similar station in Portland, Oregon at the zoo, which is up on a promontory. And they came to the conclusion that it could be built. It's now a very successful station, very successful.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: In fact, one of the great stories that Neal Fitzsimmons tells about it is when the line was ultimately extended in 2006 to the Weehawken Tunnel and to that station, the weekend ridership on the line from that station was vastly greater than what ever had been anticipated. Why?

Because the mainly Hispanic population atop the Palisades desperately wanted access to Newport Mall, a modern, moderately-priced, comfortable, appealing shopping area. And they were, the people were able to hop on the elevator and go down to the station and get to the Newport Mall in about twenty minutes, which was about like a third of the time that it would have taken them to go by bus. And so it became an enormous staple in their lives.

Nick: Is that something you were able to identify beforehand or only after?

Martin: It was unanticipated consequence.

Nick: Okay.

Martin: I mean the thing about transportation is that it's filled with unanticipated consequences. But if you build it right and you give people the opportunity, things happen.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And that was a marvelous outcome. I can't say I predicted that.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: I am very happy that it was done. It goes back to that meeting with Senator Menendez, you know.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: We had a whole other lively debate that Tom Downs, who was then the Commissioner of Transportation, was involved in about where the line would be built in Bayonne. Our preference was from a transportation planner's perspective, that Avenue C, which is right in the heart of the peninsula, the Bayonne Peninsula, and in the heart of the residential neighborhoods of the city, and a very wide street.

It had more lanes that it needed; would have been an ideal place to locate the Bayonne piece. Because everybody from the west side of Bayonne, equidistant from the west side and the east side could have come to Avenue C and it would have had marvelous ridership.

We were toying around at the time with running the line through the west side, after it came up into Jersey city, swinging it a bit west and then tying it together with the west side line. And that, I think, turned out to be a very bad idea from the point of view of selling the system.

Bayonne is a very insulated community and it didn't want to have anything to do with the west side of Jersey City, which was a troubled area. And you know, very poor, it was mainly African American and so there was a tremendous amount of resistance in Bayonne to a line that would go on Avenue C and in any way traverse to that part of Jersey City.

So we, in my earlier career, I had been involved in the acquisition of Conrail's, I guess it was the Central Railroad of New Jersey's Bayonne line, which went down the west, east side of Bayonne, pretty far from where people lived, to some extent.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But somebody to ride was there. And it went down 45th Street, 34th Street, 22nd Street and ultimately has been extended to 8th Street, which is a good extension. But you know it was definitely lopsided, it was separated by a highway from the city. It's not an easy place to get to.

But the city fathers and mothers found it much more appealing that the system would be there, that they could build for the future on it, and that it was out of the way. It didn't, in any way, perturb anything else in the classic world of Bayonne.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: What one of the again unintended consequences, although, you know theoretically Avenue C might have been a great idea, the Military Ocean Terminal at Bayonne, which occupied a huge stretch of land to the east of the line I Bayonne, between about 34th street and 45th street, that land was declared excess by the military after we had. . .

Nick: Hum.

Martin: . . . Done all of this work, and the issue was already resolved and we were going on the west side, the east side, excuse me, going on the east side. And that land is now, part of that land now, at least, is being developed, has been developed, will be developed as a marvelous new community, right next to the light rail lines. So there again, we never anticipated that we would have that. It looked like a dead zone when we were laying out the system.

Nick: Wow.

Martin: Oh, there's the Military Ocean Tunnel, what good is that to this system? Well it is going to be valuable. You know the recession really dealt it a tremendous setback, but ultimately it will come back. And so we are also very interested in Staten Island, getting busses from Staten Island to come to the light rail line; that was, we all worked on that. And we have some of that happening.

The park-rides have been well-used for people coming off of Route 169. So it, it really has worked okay, on the east side. But you know, you never know. Another, it was quite a controversy for a while and the political will of Bayonne prevailed.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And we had, we did have the right-of-way, so it was something that had been purchased in the 900-Day Option that I had talked about at our previous thing. So that was a, I felt good about the use of that, of that planning judgement that we made back in 1978.

Then another, there were two other major controversies. I mean there were plenty of controversies.

Nick: (Laughter)

Martin: There were three others. There was one constant tug-and-pull in Newport, the LeFrak family that owns Newport, about how much of the system had to be elevated in their property.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: And how much could be operated at grade. They were; they were so opposed to at-grade operations. I never really understood why. And so the ultimate plan included many more lineal feet of elevated structure, which raised the cost of the system.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: As it goes through, after it enters their property. You know, and the station is at grade and then it goes up as it passes near the area above the Holland Tunnel. The other really major controversies were around Hoboken and about the alignment within Jersey City, downtown Jersey City.

The one in Hoboken was resolved after I left. We had no, we're trying to thread the line through a remarkable piece of real estate, starting at the Hoboken terminal and going up by the, what was then the Port Authority piers, which were undeveloped. And then along what's called Frank Sinatra Drive, underneath Stevens Institute, with nice access to Stevens.

And then up through a very promising waterfront development on Hudson Street between, I think 11th and 14th. And then it would go over and head towards Weehawken, and there was more development in there. I mean if you go there today, you can see incredible development.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: We wanted the light rail to serve this very; this would have been a rich market. I mean every way, these are well-heeled people and this was going to be people that would have used public transportation because, you know, if you live in Hoboken, you're not really driving your car very much.

Nick: Right.

Martin: And so we really, we worked very hard on trying to develop an alignment there. The alternative was to use the abandoned railroad right-of-way around the back of Hoboken, and avoid all of that, in the front of Hoboken, and send the line through the area right below the Palisades and on this abandoned railroad right-of-way, through an area that was, had many, many detractions.

One was a public housing project that kind of might scare away some users. Another was, and they may not have used the system that much, because they weren't really, many of the people weren't working.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: There were a lot of factories that had been abandoned, some of which were polluted. They polluted the ground. There were bus parking lots all around this area, with guard dogs. There was a sewage treatment plant. It was really a very unappealing area, and this was at the bottom of the Palisades.

I think the only thing that was seemingly appealing were to be if there were to build an elevator to go up to Jersey City Heights, which was right above this area, which is a relatively, which had been a relatively stable neighborhood.

Well during an election following my tenure there, this is a municipal election, former mayor Anthony Russo, I think his name was Anthony, Anthony Russo, convinced mayor, con-

vinced Governor Whitman that he would support her in her effort to get re-elected if she were to move the line from the eastern side of Hoboken to the western side of Hoboken.

And you know, with a lot of chagrin New Jersey Transit, my predecessors, ultimately caved in, because the Governor wanted Mayor Russo's support. Mayor Russo ultimately went to jail, I might add.

Nick: (Laughs) Oh.

Martin: Unlike many mayors of Hoboken. He went to jail for taking bribes and he made the deal mayor, with Christine, and the line was moved. And then the law of unintended consequences started. The elevator has been successful.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But the development community eyed this area not as a detriment, but as an opportunity.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And they bought up a lot of either abandoned buildings or abandoned lots and have been filling the western edge of Hoboken rather dramatically, over the past decade. And now there is ridership at both the 2nd Street station and the 9th Street station.

And I would say that you know, again, I think the people in Hoboken that know the score would love to see more light rail on the east side, maybe not on Hudson Street. But I think that, I think that it would be, in an ideal world, there really ought to be lines on both sides of the city.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But the western side has not been a disaster at all, at all. And the other one that was probably the most pitch, biggest-pitched battle, which actually occurred when I . . . It occurred when I . . . I'm trying to remember, it may not have been resolved when I left, but it was getting resolved, was the route into and through Downtown Jersey City.

Mayor Schindler was then the mayor. He lived in the Van Vorst neighborhood and was very tight with the people who lived in the neighboring Paulus Hook neighborhood of brownstones. And there were two routes, whichever route you took upset people.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: We had a route that I thought, in the long run, might have been better. But again, you can't have a crystal ball. Of course I never had my theories tested. The route that we had would have come into Downtown Jersey City after serving the Liberty Harbor North Development, which it does now, and which has been a major investment area.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And then it would have turned onto Marin Boulevard and gone into a short tunnel at Marin Boulevard and gone near City Hall, in the back of City Hall and then gone up. . . No, I guess it would have come up, it would have had an underground station connecting to the, I think it was an underground station connecting to the, to the PATH system. Or it might have been at that point, on the surface, but very close to the Grove Street station.

It would have been an excellent connection. And there were very good reasons for doing that, to making that connection, to which I'll explain.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And then it would have come down big, broad Christopher Columbus Drive, which is a very, very broad street. And then ultimately it would have turned towards the south, towards the Colgate property and then ended in that area. It would have avoided passing through many of the, particularly the Paulus Hook neighborhood that was concerned about the light rail line passing at their doorstep.

And then the system could have evolved operationally so that trips could have come into that place and come back and forth. And it probably would have worked out very, very well. But there were all kinds of objections. People were afraid of the tunnel that we were going to build. The reason that I thought it was really a great idea was that. . .

One of the interesting things about doing that, a little digression. . . One of the interesting things about doing the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line project was the antipathy towards New York commuting that existed in Hudson County.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: When I arrived there, a guiding principle that my predecessor had allowed to be adopted was that the stations should be built as far away from the Path stations as possible, to discourage people from transferring and going into New York. I thought that was absolute insanity.

And I changed the policy completely and said "We're going to try to get as close as we can to the PATH stations." And in fact, there are two stations on the system, at Pomona and Exchange Place which work quite well as transfers.

But I also wanted to see Grove Street. . . And if you, the beauty about Grove Street is that if you are coming up from Bayonne or Western Jersey City, and you are heading towards Midtown Manhattan and you want to take PATH into 23rd Street or 33rd Street or 14th Street, the best way to do that, the most convenient would have been to have a station at Grove Street, where you could transfer to the PATH station and PATH uptown.

Otherwise you would have had to stay on the light rail line and go all the way through Jersey City to Pomona, adding about another twelve to fifteen minutes to the trip. And it seemed to me that it would have been a smarter thing to intercept PATH at Grove Street. But that opportunity was not to happen.

There was a tremendously virulent opposition on Essex Street to another alignment which was kind of a straightforward alignment, maybe even more straightforward, which came through that Liberty Harbor North area and went directly through some very under-utilized land, along Essex Street and then turned at Hudson Street, up the waterfront, which served the Colgate property the most effectively.

Colgate loved that idea. And Colgate was very influential with Brett Chandler. The people that lived on that street, and this occurred after I left, I think, were they were like violently opposed to having the light rail line on their street, because it was a very narrow street. And basically the street was going to be swallowed up by the light rail line.

So I really liked the other alignment better, because I didn't, we didn't have to do that to that block. But on the other hand, what it turned out was that the area between Liberty Harbor North and Marin Boulevard and Hudson Street became an incredibly successful developmental corridor. And it was the first one to blossom in Jersey City, when the line was built. And so that may not have ever happened, unless we we'd ever built a loop, which would have been a smart idea, too, I think.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Because again, like Hoboken, the area has got so many potentials that you really need to have more public transportation accessibility. But the decision was ultimately made to go that way and it's worked out quite well. Actually the people, you'd have to find out what they think on Essex Street. I mean some of the properties have not been redeveloped or fixed up and some of them have and it's kind of a mixed bag.

Nick: Is that in the area of the line that is just the light rail and the street is closed off to traffic?

Martin: It's not. . . It may be, yeah, except for parking, I think.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: It's not much traffic on it.

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: Its right just before you reach the waterfront area, before you stop going north. It was hard. It was hard. But and I felt, another thing that could have happened is that there is an old, ancient shopping area. Ancient, meaning like 1900's shopping area up, starting on Newark Avenue and Marin Boulevard and going west. And there were a whole bunch of old shops and everything and the merchants there were very interested in seeing the line come out of that tunnel and come right up to their corner, of Christopher Columbus and Marin.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And I think that the light rail line would have provided that shopping area a tremendous boost. So some things are positive and you give up on other things, you know.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: You know, and that's, that's the hard part of this kind of work is choices have to be made and sometimes, you know, you're not, you're certainly not able to just make them on your own. There's a great intermix of political pressures. But there, I think Colgate combined with Mayor Schindler, really swung it in that direction.

Nick: Yeah I think in general, in these types of projects, its balancing the development opportunities of underutilized land with the existing potential for ridership from the existing high-density areas.

Martin: Yeah.

Nick: And how do you balance those two?

Martin: Right. And then in this case, there was a shopping area that could have been, become much more accessible.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So you know it was a fascinating experience. And I replay it in my mind every time I go on the line.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: It was really an interesting an experience as I've ever had. I mean I think that, it was, it was rich with possibilities. It came to an end when Governor Whitman decided, under Frank Wilson's leadership, to go the direction of the design, build, operate, and maintain. And my skills didn't really fit that, so I started looking for another job when I knew that they were going.

And they were interested in getting me to retire at age. . . No actually that's not true, I got it wrong. I got it wrong. I began to look for another job, I didn't retire. I began to look for another job.

And was always eyeing going back to my base at the Port Authority, eyeing what was going on regarding Trans-Hudson Transportation Task Force. Because there were projections that evolved from the work that had been undertaken at the Port Authority and New Jersey Transit that there was going to be this ever-growing tidal-wave of usage coming from West of the Hudson River and what were we going to do about it?

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And so while I was at the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line, I kept in touch with Rich Roberts, who had moved over to New Jersey Transit. And he was sparking. . . Excuse me, he hadn't yet. He was at. . . Everything is often confusing. He was at the Port Authority still; he remained at the Port Authority.

And he was sparking an effort at the Port Authority to get Access to the Region's Core initiated. He was working with, I think, Dick Leone and the Executive Director of the Port Authority to get some money and he was looking to get New Jersey Transit interested and the MTA. Getting New Jersey Transit interested wasn't too hard, Al Harf was, had been puzzled about this for a long time, and was really worrying about it.

He was the Planning Director at New Jersey Transit. His staff people like at the time, Jack Kanarek, they were all fiddling around with this idea, trying to come up with solutions that weren't going anywhere. And then Rich somehow inveigled, and this goes back to some of the other things that we were talking about, inveigled the MTA, and you know, starting with Bob Kiley, Bill, Bernard Cohen and Bill Wheeler, to participate in access to the region's core.

And they formed a projected oversight committee with the three agencies. The Port Authority put up a majority of the financing; the other agencies kicked in. And they then went about hiring an Executive Director or Director of the Access to the Region's Core Project.

And I applied with every bit of gusto that I could, because I loved the subject from my work at the Port Authority and my work at New Jersey Transit, because it had always been an important part of my New Jersey Transit work. And which leads me to an anecdote there.

And I applied for that job and they appointed me the Director 1994. So I went back to the Port Authority, working in the World; that was then One World Trade Center, for the second time in my career. And this was after the bombing of 1993, so I missed all of those events, because I was there before and after 1993 and before the horrors of 2001.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And I; I got a staff. It was a rather limited staff. I hired David Wadawsky to be my Deputy in short order. And a fellow by the name of Al Lowenstein, Al Lichtenstein, excuse me, Alan Lichtenstein, who was an analyst, had been working with me at the water front. And I, I got started on it.

Oh I wanted to go back and give you one of the reasons why I was really married to this idea of Trans-Hudson Transportation. Back when I was at the early days when I was a Deputy Executive Director of New Jersey Transit, Governor Kean hired a management firm to analyze New Jersey Transit's business model. And this firm came with a lot of biases about the New York region and public transportation.

And they came with the idea that Manhattan was dead, it was a shrinking part of the regional market and was not a place that New Jersey needed to worry about getting its workers. They completely overlooked some very, very important factors, like the power of the financial sector and the wealth that was generated by the Manhattan Central Business District.

I reached out; this was when I was Deputy Executive Director. I reached out to Rosemary Scanlon, who was then the Chief Economist at the Port Authority. Got to know her better and asked for her help in trying to turn around this perception that New Jersey should disinvest in Trans-Hudson Transportation.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: Now you know that the ridership into Penn Station has gone from 40,000 to 80,000, around that time to the present.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Those people couldn't have been more totally wrong.

Nick: No.

Martin: And it would have been; that's like kind of like the same thing as the Hudson County people who wanted to build the system so that it didn't disconnect it with the PATH system.

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: I mean these are basic principles of transportation policy and anyways. . .

Nick: It seems to be a continuous theme in New Jersey politics, at least.

Martin: Yeah.

Nick: Of trying to disconnect from. . .

Martin: I think Governor Kean was hopeful and maybe these consultants were hopeful that they could dissuade New Jersey Transit from pursuing a policy like that.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But ironically they were, their advice, they never came to that final conclusion, they changed their tune. And during Governor Kean's administration, some very important things happened that really reinforced New Jersey's commitment to Manhattan. And the two that stand out are the decision to build, to launch what was then the Kearny Connection Project that led to Midtown Direct, which was a phenomenal success, on the Morris Essex Line.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And we pulled a large partner thinking about ARC and the; also the decision to proceed with the Secaucus Transfer, which ultimately wasn't opened until 2003. But talking about, talking about the late 1980's, so really, and the third one was advancing the idea of the Montclair Connection, which brought together rather anemic Montclair branch with the Boonton Line, and paved the way for some very important transportation growth in the long-term future.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So it, the Kean administration ultimately was convinced to adopt a New York-centric strategy and it really. It really has paid off, because of the growth of everything. And that

led, that laid the foundation for. . . That was all going on as ARC was under, you know, in gestation, from 1994 to 1998, in my tenure.

And we, one of the things that happened during that period of time was that the Midtown Direct Project came online in 1996. And as I said, it was a phenomenal success. You know, it went from zero trains and people going directly on Morris & Essex into Penn Station to something like 11,000 in the space of just a few months or years.

And it is now a staple of the system. And is, I think, that the towns that are served by it have seen major property value increases beyond the norm and have seen a resurgence of investor interest in their communities because they now have a line of virtually equal potential, maybe even better, than the northeast corridor.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Because they also have access to Hoboken and that route into Lower Manhattan and PATH. So it's been; you know we were watching all of this very carefully and it reinforced our view that there had to be, that probably we had 135 alternative ways to proceed.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: And we ultimately, you know, scaled it down and scaled it down and we came to four. But the one that I felt all along was the most promising was kind of an organic growth of the existing New Jersey Transit system, which I think is turning into a great system and could have been, could have emerged as a really high-class system if it were connected into New York adequately with enough train capacity.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And that's where the plan went. And you know, I wasn't there to guide it all the way and I wasn't there to suffer the horrible consequences of Governor Christie killing the project.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: But it was really going to be the capstone of this step-by-step emergence of New Jersey Transit's rail system from being kind of a laughing stock, broken down system with the Morris & Essex running on the rattan, with rattan seats that were in the car since Thomas Edison opened the system in 1932. (Laughs)

And they were, the Central Railroad of New Jersey being in total decrepit state. And the Pennsylvania Railroad running those, years ago, those old red cars that, I can remember riding on one of them and looking through and watching the tracks go by underneath my seat.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: It was a very decrepit system at one point. And New Jersey did what it could to build it. But the accumulation of all of those investments, but particularly ones like Midtown Di-

rect and the Secaucus Transfer and the Montclair Connection really set the stage for launching a great system that had transformed a very disorganized and decrepit operation into something really of great utility. And we saw ARC being the capstone of that.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But there was always a lot of push-back to ARC. In even the time that I was there, there were people like Congressman Rowe who spoke poorly of the, ever be built, of no value. And Frank Wilson who was reputed to have to have said about the Montclair Connection that he wasn't interested in connecting the dots, which made me livid.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: Because the Montclair Connection was a very important connecting of the dots, to demean years and years of sound transportation planning that people like Al Harf had done was, to me, very discouraging. Or even the Secaucus Transfer which was really, you know, linking the system and providing all kinds of possibilities. We wouldn't be having the Super Bowl in New Jersey if we hadn't built the Secaucus. . .

Nick: Right.

Martin: The whole, the whole system was going to be built off of that connectivity. So I mean I was there when all of those things were being discussed. And back working, this goes back a ways when I was at New Jersey Transit and at the Port Authority, I worked very closely with Jeff Zupan. And others like George Warrington, when he was there, on the planning of a variety of different things. And Jeff, you know, he developed the New Initiatives Program with George.

And I, from my perch at the World Trade Center was employing them and supporting them in every way that I could with staff support, with information. And I think that they really embarked on a marvelous thing. I remember working with Stan Rosenblum.

This goes back; even I think I was at the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail working with Stan Rosenblum on what was called The Urban Core idea where he finally came up with a way to bridge a problem that New Jersey had with federal legislation. Federal legislation had the new starts category and it had rail rehabilitation.

New Jersey's projects, the ones that were most interested in, were the Kearney Connection or the Midtown Direct, the Secaucus Transfer and the Montclair Connection. They were neither a new start or . . . Because all they were were ways of reconfiguring the rail system.

Nick: Right, basically enhancing the efficiency of the existing system.

Martin: Exactly and the utility.

Nick: Utility.

Martin: . . . Of the system. And they were not, nor were they rehabilitation and there wasn't that much money in rehabilitation. They had the least big-ticket items. So they came up, with the help of the Congressional delegation, they came up with The Urban Core, which pumped in, in one of the federal laws, I think it was around 1992, am I correct? No, it would be a little later, about 1995 or 1996; they pumped in about \$600 million into New Jersey.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: For the list of projects. I've even got that list in my papers, because it was such a proud thing. And it really, it was another like unsung part of how getting New Jersey, you know, really advanced.

We were doing our own thing, we had the Transportation Trust Fund and everything, but it really, really added another thrust of money where we could call upon the federal government and not be hamstrung by the structure of the program.

Nick: Right.

Martin: And Stan Rosenblum and George Warrington cooked that up. And I was. . . They called me up and they were seeing my council and I was; I can remember Stan leaning on my office window and saying, telling them "This is the greatest idea. You guys gotta go all out to make this happen."

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And it was very valuable.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: So we. . .

Nick: Do you want to stop for today? Yeah we're pretty close.

Martin: Maybe that should be; maybe that should be it for today?

Nick: Yeah and we can maybe continue. . . So we left off really, well I went back but we left off somewhere in ARC.

[Interview Part 3 ends, 94 minutes]

[Interview Part 4 begins]

Nick: Okay so last time we left off, we talked about HBLR and we talked about the ARC project that you were involved on or in. That leads us, I guess, to you. . . Well why don't you tell me how you ended up leaving those projects and what led you, I guess next in your career, to here, at Rutgers and the Voorhees Center?

Martin: Well there was a change in policy at NJDOT during the latter portion of the ARC, my stay at the ARC project, which was from 1994 to 1998. And I got the message that the Commissioner at that time, Frank Wilson, preferred that I retire.

So that message was delivered to me and I then went to my retirement counselor, my tax accountant and we talked it over. And it seemed like since I had twenty-eight years in the, credited to me in the New Jersey pension system, that I could get a pretty decent pension and I could continue to work. I was, at the time, fifty-six years old.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So I, I went about, you know, leaving that job and beginning, just to just figure out what would be next. And I was contact by Lou Gambaccini, who was a constant theme in the thread of my life, soon after I. . .

Because he had asked me when he went down to SEPTA in the middle, middle/early-1990's, he had asked me whether I'd want to go to SEPTA and I told him that I didn't, I didn't want to leave New Jersey where I lived, in Westfield.

So I, he contacted me and we were talking and he said that he had some feelers from Jim Hughes about establishing a transportation research function at the. . . Well there was no Voorhees Transportation Center; it was in the Bloustein School.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And he asked me if I was interested. And I said "Yes, I was very interested in an idea like that." And I combined that possibility with doing some private consulting, which, you know, started from zero and slowly grew as the years went on.

And while I was at the Voorhees Transportation Center, I didn't work full-time, I worked four-days-a-week, so I had a little bit of time to build up my private consulting practice, but it was modest in the early years.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So my concentration was on starting something at the Bloustein School, and I did. I had a long list of things that I wanted to do research on. I came down here to New Brunswick; the Dean was very, very supportive. Lou and I, the sequence was that I was here and I think, as I remember it, Alan Gibbs, who was then the head of NTI, suddenly passed away. He was around sixty years old.

And the Dean asked Lou to come in and take over NTI. So eventually what happened was I had this little unit that was just a few of us. I hired Claudia Danku, who is still at the Voorhees Transportation Center, a wonderful hire. Jillian Thomas and myself were here for the; first it was Claudia and me and then Jillian joined us. Jillian did pedestrian and bicycle safety work, and that was one of our initial specialties.

And then things transpired in 1998 in which the Dean and Ralph Voorhees were able to convince Alan Voorhees that there ought to be a Center named for him.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And that what we did was we took my unit and NTI and Lou combined it into the National Transit Institute and there was a research component of it. And it got the name of Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center. And that was all celebrated in a formal Rutgers program in December of 1998.

So we, and with that came an endowment from Alan Voorhees that has been very helpful. It was over a million dollars, and continued an unstinting support from Ralph Voorhees when he was well and able to make contributions. He was extraordinarily helpful to us in those early years.

So we got started. And my, one of the first things I did was hire Jon Carnegie, and he is still here.

Nick: What, what were some of the areas that you identified as key research areas that you were interested in pursuing?

Martin: Stretch my mind a little bit now, going back a decade or so.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: We're talking about; you know the turn-of-the-century and the early years.

Nick: I'm just saying; did you envision the research center as being something where you could work in partnership with the state? Or did you envision it as. . . ?

Martin: Yes.

Nick: . . . As something broader than that.

Martin: Well it was; a partnership with the state was going to be a part of it. And we had a lot of contacts locally, between Jon and myself. Jon had been working in Mercer County in a variety of public and non-profit positions. And I had this long career in government.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So we really were able to build on that. And I'll give you; I'm trying to think of some of the things that were most noteworthy of those early years. Number one was we established a pedestrian and bicycle focus, which ultimate led to a contract with the Department of

Transportation, in which we provided them with staff support on the pedestrian side. And later, that grew to further support when the Safe Routes to School program came out.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So the department, rather than expanding its staff, used the Voorhees Transportation Center as a staff, and that still is in existence today. It's probably in about; it's approximately a decade now that that's been going on. And Safe Routes to School is probably about six years old now; six or seven years old.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So we really established a presence in that field. And from that work, my proudest accomplishments were, there were a few. . . There was one wonderful symposium that we had, called Common Ground. Ultimately Jillian left and she was replaced by Sharon Roerty.

And Sharon Roerty was a very good organizer and we held a symposium called Common Ground. And it drew about 150 people, and a lot of energy and a lot of excitement about pedestrian safety was generated in that, in that symposium. I was very proud of our accomplishments as we kept, you know, helping to expand the Department of Transportation's interest in and commitment to pedestrian safety.

The crowning glory of all of that was that later after Sharon left, I was working with Ranjit Walia. And this was, I guess, it culminated at the end of, at the beginning of 2010, but it went on for several years. We did extensive research into the history of the pedestrian safety statutes in New Jersey and found a very interesting evolution that occurred.

It was a real resonance to reports that were written in the late 1920's about how automobiles had taken over the road and that pedestrians were in jeopardy and that there needed to be some balancing of the rights between the two. Because you know at that time, the automobile was a relatively new factor in people, in lives and it was; sharing of space was, the road space, was really a big issue.

And it, that research really opened my eyes to the historical evolution. Because after that period of kind of feeling out what the effect was of the automobile, in the post-war era, there was, all of the blame shifted to pedestrians.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And the auto interests really held complete sway and there was really very little concern about pedestrian safety for a long time. You'd read reports of, police officers would constantly blame pedestrians, particularly older people, for not being more cognizant of the presence of automobiles and the dangers of automobiles to their health.

It was, we. . . We then, working with the Kris Kolluri, who was then the Commissioner of Transportation, we drafted a bill to build on earlier work by Linda Stender and John Bramnick, two Assemblymen from Union County, to change the law from motorists having to yield, which didn't seem to very effective. . .

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: To stop and remain stopped. And that law was passed at the very end of the Corzine administration, on the last day of the Corzine administration.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: It was signed by Governor Corzine. And in the lame duck legislature of 2010 and it is now the law and we're still working with. . . In fact Charles Brown was down there today, probably talking about how they could build on that law. And there's a lot of interest and there was recently a Star-Ledger editorial about that subject, so. . .

Nick: How, how active were you in pushing that legislation?

Martin: Very active.

Nick: Very active.

Martin: Very active. I oversaw the development of the material. I testified at the state, before the Assembly Transportation and Authorities Committee.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: I talked to legislators in the Corzine administration, and I was absolutely thrilled that it somehow made it over the finish line before Governor Corzine went out of office.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: So yeah, it was something that I was very much involved in. I worked with, extensively with the people at DOT, like Sherri Davis. And my number one ally, who's actually been a business ally of mine, in my later career, was Pam Fisher, who was the Director of Highway Traffic Safety and a terrific representative of safety interests of New Jersey. So we all teamed together.

We also were working with another person that was involved was Zoe Baldwin, who was then with the Tri-State Transportation Commission, ah Campaign, excuse me, Tri-State Transportation Campaign. And she now is at Senator Lautenberg's office. She's his Chief Transportation Aide. So it's wonderful to have these longstanding relationships with people.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So anyway, that was, that one theme, which was also another area where we really began to build. And it came, over time, was transit-oriented development.

One of the important things that happened to the Voorhees Transportation Center in those years was that Jan Wells, who is a housing expert, had been here in the Blaustein School, was willing to come over and work with me, donning two hats. One was as the, she was the administrator of the Voorhees Transportation Center, working very closely with Claudia, she was our budget manager. And we always needed to worry about budget.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Because the money was not flowing and it was a struggle. And the second thing that she did was establish a kind of a practice in transit-oriented development. She also oversaw what we were doing in the pedestrian and bike, bicycle area and helped establish the work with the Safe Routes to School, which is a very major activity at the Voorhees Transportation Center today.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But her work in transit-oriented development was very well suited to her background. And in the course of that, she worked very closely and produced a number of articles with a graduate student, John Renne, who was here for a number of years, who ultimately got his PhD, whom I helped recruit here.

And John was a terrific asset. And during the time that John was here, we established a transit-oriented, Transit-Friendly Development Newsletter, working with New Jersey Transit.

Vivian Baker became our patron and supported, got money to support it. And the Transit-Friendly Development Newsletter, which is still evolving, is now in its seventh year of existence. And is a staple of information about the burgeoning activities in transit-oriented development in the state.

I'm very proud of that and Stephanie DiPetrillo came, was tutored by Jan and ultimately took it over and is handling it very professionally. So that's become, it's like another legacy in the Voorhees Transportation Center.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Working with John Carnegie was a distinct pleasure. He's a terrific, reliable and effective worker. We had one particular experience in which we worked extremely closely, and that was one that has not ended up in any real results, but it was a very interesting experience and we both got a great deal out of it. And that was the Penns Neck Area draft Environmental Impact Statement, which was a major project, got several million dollars to do a draft environment impact statement of the area on Route 1, near Princeton University, the so-called Penns Neck area there.

There are three traffic lights in that area, Harrison Street, then there's Fisher Place and then there's the second big one, after Harrison Street, was Washington Road. And the fact that there were traffic lights in that location, it was very problematic for the road network. Tremendous delays were building at those points.

And we worked on trying to; and there had been a tremendous controversy between the community and the Department of Transportation on an earlier study, which called for eating up a lot of the land that Princeton owned, the university owned. (Coughs) Excuse me, between Lake Carnegie and Route 1 for a connection to Washington Road. And we came up with a different solution during the course of the study and with a lot of excellent citizen input.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: I used to say to Jon that this was the most erudite audience that we ever had to deal with.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: The people, first of all, were very, very hostile to us at the beginning. They thought we were just going to be tools of the Department of Transportation and they had nothing but bad things to say about the Department. And we brought in; ultimately we brought in a public outreach specialist, Bonnie Weiss, who strengthened our team. And we were able to diffuse the bad feelings that existed.

But every time that we presented our findings, we felt like we were taking an exam. And that we were being graded by our audience. They were very, very demanding, holding us to very high standards. And it kept driving us to do better and better and better.

The problem was that when we came out with a; we had been guided by one administration on the basis that money wasn't really a major object, that we could design what needed to be designed. And the people that we were working with didn't really bring the engineers from DOT into the picture entirely.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And when the project evolved, it was going to be a short tunnel under, starting from the area where the road, Route 1 goes down quite low, underneath the Princeton Dinky Bridge and the tunnel would have continued that low elevation under Washington Road and then on its way to Harrison. And then there would have been an overpass at Harrison.

And it was really a very elegant solution and it would have really created an excellent transportation system in that area. And I'm very sad that it never has transpired. But the Department of Transportation had second thoughts about the quality of the rock in the area. They second-guessed the consultant that their environmental people had brought on.

And ultimately the decision has been made that they're not going to build that tunnel. And I think that, I think it's unfortunate, because the solutions are Band-Aids that have been developed.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But John and I worked on that project for about two years, extensively. The documentation was that high (gestures). John worked extraordinarily hard and he was wonderful, he managed the process. I helped him manage it. And we really enjoyed ourselves most of the time, but it was very taxing. A lot of nighttime, thirty-five nighttime meetings spread out over about three years.

Nick: It seems like quite a different project for you, in terms of the rest of your background being transit and. . .

Martin: Well I had had some exposure to highway work.

Nick: Okay.

Martin: Early in my career, working at the Department of Transportation in the Office of Policy Analysis.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And so I had some familiarity with it. And of course what I mainly had was experience with drafting environmental impact statements.

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: And that was, so that related to both the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line and the ARC projects, which were environmental impact statements. So in that aspect of it, it was really a continuation. There was a lot of similarity.

Nick: Uh hum. Uh hum.

Martin: But the area really needed solutions and it needed solutions that were different. Because it's a very, the area that was involved is a very sensitive area, with lots of different interests. And people didn't want to see certain trees destroyed, they didn't want to see this or that. How it would affect Lake Carnegie, actually the Millstone River? So there were many, many interests that were at play.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: So that took us, that was a major factor in the early stages. Another area that I got very deeply involved in at the Voorhees Transportation Center was finance, transportation finance. And I had the good fortune of having Neil Denno as a colleague at the National Transit Institute. And I asked him to help me on a study. I had first started a project that never was completed (laughs) to document the history of transportation finance in New Jersey.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And I have a lot of material that, if I ever, somebody ever is interested, I might continue it, pick it up again. I did retain the materials.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: It, what I was very interested in at the time was, and I published some articles on this, on the state of the transportation trust fund. And I had students helping me, one of whom was Jack Trapuntino, who went to work at the NJ Transit after he graduated from here.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And what I was really interested in doing was understanding how transportation finance had evolved in New Jersey. And what led to the Transportation Trust Fund, to really

understand it. Because it happened during my career, but I honestly was not really close to the doings of the Kean administration when it was enacted.

So I really got into understanding even the legislative history of the bills and what it was trying to accomplish. I talked extensively to Roger Nutt who was a former colleague of mine at the Department of Transportation, who was instrumental in advising the Governor's office on the structure of the Transportation Trust Fund. And I became fascinated with what was happening to the Transportation Trust Fund and I wrote on it several, a number of different times.

And I'll get back to Neil Denno in a minute, because I backed up a bit. Because I was, I actually conferred with a person named David Beal who had been a public finance expert in New Jersey. And he taught me the finer points about the Transportation Trust Fund and public financing. And I was able to understand it and write a cogent article about how it had been formed and what its intentions were and how the Christine Todd Whitman administration was undoing it.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Which was my theme, which is still a theme today. It had been viewed as a self-replenishing fund, with very limited bonding capability. It was only as an adjunct to a pay-as-you-go stream of funding. But what happened was that in the 1990's, there was a reluctance to tap that stream of funding, and expand it.

And instead, decisions were made to continue to spend out of the fund by violating the principles of pay-as-you-go, and basically turning the fund into almost an entirely bonding mechanism. And the more you bond, the greater the back-flow is of need to pay off the bonds.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: A revenue stream, the revenue stream needs to go to that. And as the years went on, it became more and more evident that the revenue streams that were available at the time were going to be exhausted in paying off the bonds that were being issued as the Transportation Trust Fund both ramped up to meet the needs of the state.

And it did so not by raising more funds, because Christine Todd Whitman was generally against tax increases. Although she did propose one tax increase, which blew up on her, a gas tax increase.

So they were relying entirely, more and more and more on bonding. And it set up a whole series of crises, several of them, I guess, over the next decade, which I followed both here at the . . . It was mainly here at Voorhees, as the fund would run out of revenue, it got to the point where every penny that was coming in that was dedicated from the gasoline tax was dedicated to the paying off of bonded indebtedness.

And so they added some revenue by tapping the general fund in two ways, and I was involved in that. I think that occurred in 2000, where I worked with Mitch Bagger and the late Alex Decroce. But they ended up tapping other funds in the general budget, because they were. . . At that time the state's budget was flush and they could do that, and they did.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And so they gave another life to the Transportation Trust Fund. But the process of bonding continued under Governor McGreevey and then under Governor Corzine, although he didn't intend to do that, initially. He bonded it out and then it got to another crisis, again, in 2010, in the early stages of Governor Christie's term. But I was, I was already largely gone from the Voorhees Transportation Center by then, but I wrote about these things extensively.

And I wrote about, with Neil Denno, getting back to Neil Denno, a very important piece about how during the Whitman administration, there was a borrow-and-spend frenzy that went on. And although some very good things happened, like the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line was financed, but also the South Jersey Light Rail Line, which was far less meritorious, was financed at \$800 million.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: There was this frenzy of bond spending from the bonded indebtedness in the Transportation Trust Fund. And there were a number of other fiscal gimmicks started, like the use of federal rehabilitation funding to pay for preventive maintenance, which were things that were not really capital needs.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: They were marginal, and so that became an addiction to them, about \$350 million a year.

Nick: Whew.

Martin: And so federal capital money was really going into quasi-operational needs.

Nick: Do you remember. . . ?

Martin: . . . Misuse of that money.

Nick: Do you remember the timeframe in which the bonding against the Trust Fund began?

Martin: Oh yeah, it started in. . . Well originally there were these short-term bonds, ten-year bonds.

Nick: Yep.

Martin: That started in the, when the Trust Fund was inaugurated in 1984. And that continued and Governor Kean was able to get additional funding from the gas tax in 1988/1989. It ended up a cross-over between those two years. And so it was able to pretty much stay at an even keel.

Then it was during the Florio administration that it began to rely more on the bonding and rely less on pay-as-you-go, to an extent, because there was a pretty severe recession in New

Jersey in the early 1990's and it was looked at, Governor Florio was elected in, I guess it was 1991. Am I right? I'm trying to remember.

No, he was probably elected in '89. But by '91 he was doing that, working with the Republican legislature. '91 was that hallmark election in which the Republicans swept into power in the legislature, during the Florio administration as a backlash to his other tax initiatives.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And so they started some deviation from the pay-as-you-go practices of the Kean administration. And then when Christine Todd Whitman took over, in 1994, critical decisions were made. And later on, they started; they started to bond extensively, got legislation to allow them to bond much more from the Republican legislature.

And then she tried to raise the gasoline tax in connection with Open Space, and there's a whole story about that, how that all blew up. And so that didn't happen. And at the end of her term, we get Jim McGreevey. (Laughs)

And McGreevey, I was here and that was an area, a project that I worked on extensively with John.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Which was the Blue Ribbon Commission; we worked together hand-and-glove, as a team, with some other consultants to the Blue Ribbon Commission. And that was a very challenging thing. That was during McGreevey's years. It was a real opportunity to explore and explain what the transportation financing picture was and what the needs were. And the Commission, Lou Gambaccini served on that Commission.

The Commission came out with a recommendation that the gasoline tax be raised by twelve-and-a-half cents, which would be almost a doubling. And Governor McGreevey acted as if he was going to support it.

And then his, this was in about; I think it was about a year before his thinking about his re-election, which would have been in 2005. And so in 2004, he suddenly announced that he was opposed to it and he wasn't going to support the gas tax increase. And that was a fateful moment in transportation finance.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: A fateful moment. And so the work that we did in the Blue Ribbon Commission went for naught, except that it educated some people about what ought to happen in New Jersey. But nobody really has been able to do anything with it.

And Governor Christie, who said he was going to do something about it, is now not doing what he said he was going to do, and that is restoring pay-as-you-go as an important promise. He did that to a very limited degree one year and then the remaining two years since, he has had zero amounts coming from a pay-as-you-go source to the Transportation Trust Fund.

So its. . . It saddens me to think about all of the time and effort that I put into all of these things.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: And it all started here, at the Voorhees Transportation Center, and we really were saying important things during those years. You know, at the end of the Whitman administration to led, some of the revelations that we had were really at the core of the idea of having a Blue Ribbon Commission.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So I think we affected public policy to that degree. But you can't steer it all the way home, if you don't have the power.

Nick: Right.

Martin: And Governor McGreevey decided to do things as he wished, and he was looking at his. . . He never ran for re-election, as history showed but. . . Because he resigned, but it was, it really was a very unhappy development and a real watershed moment.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: In that opportunity where you had all of these high-powered people saying "This is what you ought to do." And then I think we had Al Koepp, the former Head of PSE&G, the President of NJIT, we had Ray Pacino from the Laborer's Union. It was a strong group of people, with Lou Gambaccini, and of course Commissioner Jack Lettiere. But it wasn't, wasn't going to last, as long as the Governor backed off.

Nick: Did you feel like you had the legislature on your side as well, for that?

Martin: Some people in the legislature, but it really, it really required gubernatorial leadership to convince the legislature to make it safe for them. Who knows what would have happened.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But unfortunately the Governor backed off and that has really. . . Now, I think, I mean at this point I think that transportation finance is in the worst shape that it's ever been.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: In this modern era, since the Transportation Trust Fund was established.

Nick: Uh hum. Uh hum.

Martin: And we're going to have, in the second Christie, Chris Christie administration, it's going to be an extremely difficult part of the policies that I have to deal with. But it could, you know he'll deal with it in his unique way. (Laughs)

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: And we'll see where we come out at the end of 2017.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But so the transportation finance became a major part of my work, and I really enjoyed it. I worked closely with the RPA on a subsequent study where we tried to convince Governor Corzine to pick up the mantle that had been dropped by Governor McGreevey, and that was in 2005 and 2006.

And I was on a team that was funded by the Fund for New Jersey. I think, actually, Mark Murphy who is now here in the Bloustein School, with the LNJ Program. Mark Murphy was the Head of the Fund for New Jersey and he funded us, and we produced a very fine report. The RPA staff was exceedingly good and I played a secondary role, but I was very active. And what we tried to do was make the case for a number of reforms, including all of the things that I've been talking about.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And one other one was for transparency of transportation finance, which is very un-transparent today. And what happened was is that Governor Corzine didn't really accept what we were doing, because his view. . .

And Lou Gambaccini and I spoke to him, his view was when he took over in 2006, the state budget was in very poor shape. And he felt he needed to do, he needed to raise taxes. But he felt he had political capital to raise one tax, not two taxes. He chose to raise the sales tax to 7%, which it is today, as a means of plugging a budget hole in the general budget.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And he told Lou and me that he didn't feel he could also raise the gasoline tax. He then embarked, he got the sales tax. He then embarked on a monumental effort to securitize the revenue of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority and the Garden State Parkway.

Nick: Oh, wow.

Martin: Which became, had been consolidated during Governor McGreevey's years. And he went around the state saying that he could solve, by doing that, he could solve the Transportation Trust Fund problems and the enormous pension problems that the state was facing. It was way behind in its pension funding.

And he floated this idea of a very, very sizable increase in tolls and some form of privatization of the New Jersey Turnpike apparatus. And he went around and he gave presentations and made public, had public, large public gatherings and was very, very poorly received by people, particularly in Middlesex and Monmouth and Ocean County.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And I have my own theory about why he lost in 2009, but the whole idea crashed-and-burned. The Trust Fund, he turned to just simply bonding out the Trust Fund so that in 2010 there wouldn't be any capacity to raise capital anymore from the Trust Fund revenue. And he ran for election, did not win. That election gave us Chris Christie as the Governor. And he lost Middlesex and Monmouth Counties and Ocean County very badly.

Nick: Wow.

Martin: Which is, I think, the counties that would have been most affected by these toll increases because the people there really rely on these roads for their daily bread. And so I think that it turned out to be another political misjudgment, and I think it helped to cost him his Governorship.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: I don't know why he. . . I mean I know why he did that. I had conversations with him. I knew he was. . . He's had his own problems since with MF Global.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: But he was just absolutely fascinated with securitization.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: And like securitization of mortgages. . . (Laughs)

Nick: Yeah. Yeah.

Martin: All part of the same piece, and he was extremely fascinated with it. It might have been somewhat successful in terms of the bond market. But the problem was is that really would have punished particular classes of citizens in New Jersey.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And he got, he got the political punch-back that that proposal warranted.

Nick: Where as potentially a gas tax increase would be across-the-board.

Martin: Shared by. . . I've always been very, very wary of these proposals to rely so heavily on raising the tolls on just the toll roads.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Because they, they really cater and are used by a relatively small fraction of New Jerseyans. And there's whole populations in the state that hardly ever use those roads, if ever. And it seems to; it always has seemed to me to be geographically inequitable.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: That New Jersey should rely so heavily on those. I didn't speak out during that, Governor Corzine's proposal. I neither spoke out in favor of it or against it. I privately was not for it.

And by principle, the principle reason was that it was going to raise tolls dramatically and it was going to be just on one, a couple of classes of people and everybody else in the state would have had no role to play in financing transportation, when they all participate.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And, and the gasoline tax is a real leveler. It's a real level. It's not the "perfect tax" but it's a very easy one to administer and it's relatively, it's somewhat regressive, but it certainly is, still encompasses, the tax itself encompasses a relatively small part of people's expenditures.

Nick: Uh hum, uh hum.

Martin: So anyways, we are where we are and I'm very concerned today about the direction. Because Governor Christie had said that he was going to restore pay-as-you-go and reduce bonding and he did, he set out, in one year, he had a certain formula. And I have, and he published a table which showed how it was going to evolve into a pay-as-you-go, largely pay-as-you-go program, with ever-reducing demand for bonded indebtedness.

And this is now coming out of the general fund, because there's no revenue stream specifically designed, so it's adding to the general fund debt each year. But he has deviated from that dramatically and now for two. . . For the last two years, he has stopped reutilizing funds that he had available for pay-as-you-go capital and is continuing, you know, ratchet up the bonding.

There was one thing he did this year that ameliorated that a little bit, but only a little bit.

Nick: Where do they continue to bond from? You said that the bonding. . ?

Martin: They bond from. . .

Nick: General revenue?

Martin: Well from general revenues, right. Ironically it's still coming out of the Transportation Trust Fund, so it doesn't have the full-faith-and-credit of the State of New Jersey. There's no dedicated revenue stream. But the bond market is still buying this stuff.

Nick: Wow. (Laughs)

Martin: But at somewhat of a premium, I believe.

Nick: Right. Yeah.

Martin: Because of that. So you know just adding to the general fund obligations, year-after-year.

Nick: Because the gas tax revenues are capped?

Martin: They are capped and they are still. . . They've got to pay old debt, well I think into the next decade, well into the next decade.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And they're not going to be available.

Nick: Wow.

Martin: It's not a good scene.

Nick: (Laughs) No.

Martin: So that was one of the things that I really have worked on here. Let me give some more thought to other, other initiatives. I mentioned transit-oriented development is something that really captured my attention.

I was a member of the Board of Editorial Direction of the, of the Transit-Friendly Development Newsletter. And I worked with Jan and then, Jan and Stephanie and then Stephanie after Jan left to go to the MTA. And I am very proud of the fact that the product, I did a lot of editing of the articles during its early years; say the first five or six years.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: In various capacities, either as the Director here or as a senior fellow or as a consultant. And I, I really took pride in that newsletter. It's now evolving into something more, to the minute, but it's still, it's important. And if you look around New Jersey, particularly in certain areas of New Jersey, like the one that I live in, transit-oriented development is booming.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: It has really come of age, and there are many, many projects that either have been built and are occupied or are under construction or are being planned. And one of the things that Jan and I did that I had particular interest in, and took a lot of my energy, was documenting and you'll understand why I'm so proud of it. It was documenting transit-oriented development along the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: When I was the head of that project, I worked with a couple of people, Jeff Zupan who is well known, formerly Head of New Jersey Transit, and the senior analyst/planner at RPA. And a young man by the name of, this goes back into the '90's, a young man by the name of Eric Rothman, who I had come to know.

He was then an undergraduate at Princeton or was about to go to graduate school. Eric has had a very distinguished career, since he's now the head of a consulting firm, HRA Advisors, and I keep in touch with him.

But Jeff and Eric, with my help, we published a paper in, somewhere around 1992 that forecast that the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line was going to draw transit-oriented development. And that it was going to be a very, very big reason for the success of the line, and that it was going to shape the growth along the Hudson River waterfront. And I get the chance to ride that line fairly often now, and I can tell you every time I do, I think of that article.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: I think of the incredible amount of investment that is occurring and did occur already along the line. Stations within walking distance, I mean buildings within walking distance of the stations, still a tremendous amount that can still occur. And now with the economy beginning to pick up, you're beginning to pick up and you're beginning to see it again.

And so Jan and I had the pleasure of, back maybe it's about four or five years ago, had the pleasure of documenting some of the growth. We picked five selected stations and we documented, we described what the line did and how it affected land and showed how, in these five areas, it was either prospective development or, at the time, or tremendously constructed development.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Of course right after that we hit the terrible recession, so it must have been around; we did the work probably around 2007. Because in 2008 we had the terrible housing recession and real estate recession and things did slow down. But they are perking up again; the first place that they are coming back is in Hudson County and Hudson County along the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line, and it's great to see.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So we did, we did an article for the Center for. . . Let's see, I forget the name of it now. The National Center for Transit-Oriented Development, that's cited sufficiently. But and then we wrote another article, paid for by New Jersey Transit, which we published here. And we're very, and that was more extensive, that was the bigger article. But Jan and I really put a lot of effort into that. And Stephanie has continued to do some research in that area.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So could we take a little break?

Nick: Sure, no problem.

[Interview Part 4 ends, 51 minutes]

[Interview Part 5 begins]

Nick: So we left off and we're talking; we covered some of your work with, on TOD.

Martin: TOD, right and the finance.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: We talked about Pitt and VTC.

Nick: Right.

Martin: What I want to talk about is another thing that. . . One of the things that happened during, a transformative thing that happened during the early stages of the Voorhees Transportation Center was the, the tragedy of 9-11.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And what that gave us was an opportunity, we had a friendly sponsor in Brent Barnes, who was then at Department, in the planning function at the New Jersey Department of Transportation. And we started a series of papers about how the transportation patterns of the region changed in response to 9-11. Because 9-11 knocked out the PATH system and that was, to Lower Manhattan, and that an unbelievably important disruption that occurred.

And so we documented the effects of 9-11 on the bridges and tunnels first. Then we did one on the effect on PATH and how PATH, you know it shifted. Its ridership shifted around, and of course, dropped dramatically with the closure of the World Trade Center for a pretty long time, about two years. And then for a lesser time, the Exchange Place Station in Jersey City, which had flooded.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And but we, so we did that. And then the topper of those three was a study of how New Jersey Transit's operations had been affected, because there was a dramatic upswing in travel to Penn Station as a result of the loss of the World Trade Center. People, many people chose to go to Penn Station and then take the New York City subway down to where they worked in Lower parts of Manhattan and that was a very, very significant thing.

And that started a major upsurge; yeah it really contributed to a major upsurge that was occurring in New Jersey Transit operations to Penn Station. And in that time, I believe it was still, the Secaucus Junction Station opened at that time, so we monitored that as well.

And it was a period of great dynamism, and eventually the World Trade Center and Exchange Place were re-opened and it's been very interesting to see how everything panned out. I would have loved to continue to do that work, but we only published three of those and then our funding dried up.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But it was a very interesting exercise, and very demanding. And what it did was, the New Jersey piece, the New Jersey Transit piece, showed how Herculean the tasks were to accommodate the added demand on the New Jersey Transit system during that time. And the number of things that were done, by the Jersey Transit to squeeze out more capacity going to Penn Station New York, which has now been maxed out.

But they really paid a lot of attention to accommodating the ridership. New Jersey Transit at that time was led by George Warrington, who is someone that I had known from the time he started working in New Jersey in about 1975. And he was a very dear friend of mine and I had great joy in documenting the somewhat heroic that he had New Jersey Transit do in order to be able to meet the surge in demand with the closure of the PATH system. So that was very informative, I learned a lot overseeing the writing of that.

So another thing that we did in the period of the first five years of the new decade was developing, with George Warrington, a paper, which is called the Northeast Corridor Action Plan, which examined how the corridor was managed and how, what was operating on the Northeast Corridor. And it documented, at least in the area between Trenton and New York City how, with the coming of Midtown Direct the Secaucus Transfer and Montclair, the Montclair-Boonton Line on the Northeast Corridor, New Jersey had become ever more dominant in the operations on the Northeast Corridor, New Jersey Transit.

And even outside of those projects, just growth on the other lines, particularly the Northeast Corridor, was so substantial. And that all ties back to some legacy of 9-11, but also just population growth and the continued improvement of the service and the capacity of the service, up to a point.

And we recommended in that study that there be consideration given to a change in the governance model and management model for the Northeast Corridor, which had been under the control of Amtrak since 1976, which it received the ownership of the Northeast Corridor at that time, and the statutes of the Regional Rail Revitalization Act, now it was a different one, it was the Four-R-Act in 1976.

And it, our recommendations, you know, were quite controversial because we saw that the corridor was really, it was something that served the states that were, that intercity service ran through.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Going from Massachusetts to the District of Columbia and that there really was a greater interest in those states than was reflected in the way in which the corridor was governed. So we kept harping away on the point that the governance should be reconsidered and we came up with a model that was based on the Appalachian Regional Commission, in which the state, the states and the federal government have a partnership.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And Amtrak's role, we recommended not being the governing body of the corridor, but that it be the operator of the corridor, and be under contract to the general purpose

governments or agencies that were interweaving with Amtrak. The problem is that it's not the same story everywhere as in New Jersey. And it really, it may not have had enough meaningfulness in a lot of places.

But the thing that is very curious to me. . . It was also during a period, I might add, very different from today, in which the states, like New Jersey, and George Warrington, in particular, were very energetic and very willing to take on challenges.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And Amtrak under the Bush, the George W. Bush administration was really in a receding, in which it was being starved and in which the President even once put in a budget item that not passed, that Amtrak would receive no money, whatsoever, to support the Northeast Corridor.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So it was a very, disinterested in Northeast Corridor business, which also has all kinds of historical importance to the ARC project and to the Gateway project which is going on today. Because that is, Gateway is only, is a response but it's the response of an administration that really cares about the Northeast Corridor rail service and Amtrak, and is far more aggressive.

When I was working at ARC, I remember very vividly a couple of things. Taking my little dog-and-pony-show down to Philadelphia to meet with George Warrington, who was then working at the Amtrak subsidiary or division that controlled the Northeast Corridor there, they are headquartered in Philadelphia.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And John Bennett, who was his chief planner, and telling them about the ARC project. And I know that I got them to be very interested in the project, because when George left Amtrak and was ultimately his career, he ultimately became the Head of Amtrak and then he left during the Bush administration. And we recruited him to New Jersey, Lou Gambaccini and I recruited him to New Jersey and he became the Head of New Jersey Transit.

He took the bid and really said "This is the project that New Jersey Transit needs to pursue." And but the problem was that Amtrak was barely even; you know it wasn't able to listen or do anything about it, and largely was uncooperative. No I wouldn't say "uncooperative," but they were not proactive in their support of the project. And that turned out to be a fatal flaw later on when we had the turn of events in 2010, with Governor Christie.

But now Amtrak, the point I'm starting to make is that Amtrak is now farthest and just to have things come full-circle is that they really know that there needs to be a new model for managing the Northeast Corridor that gives the states a bigger role, financially and otherwise. And I would love to see that play out, and the ideas that George Warrington and I had, back in the early part of the last decade, get dusted off and that we maybe have a truncated form of that.

We always knew that if it didn't work, if didn't play in Delaware or Maryland or Massachusetts, that it was going to be a very hard play, even in New York, because of the fact that Metro North owned a portion of the Northeast Corridor, from New Haven to New Rochelle. That it was going to be difficult to get support from other states. But if something could even be devised between either Philadelphia and New York or between even Trenton and Morrisville and New York, it could bring long-term stability and a very beneficial sharing of responsibilities.

I don't know if the Christie administration is ready for that. I don't know if Amtrak is ready for it. But there are. . . I was just reading an article where Joe Boardman testified before Congress that a new model needed to be had. Joe Boardman, when he was head of FRA, and I talked about that new model.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And I also spoke to the Deputy Secretary of Transportation at that time and he was very interested in the idea. And then lo and behold, he was removed from his position within a month. (Laughs)

Nick: Oh.

Martin: For the reasons I related.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: But it's just those kinds of things. I think I really could have had an impact on him. I really got him interested in the ARC project, I got him interested in. . . I talked to Boardman extensively about the model. And who knows, now Joe Boardman is the Head of Amtrak, but he's still searching for a model.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And it may be on the shelf here in the Voorhees Transportation Center, or at least the idea of it. So that's a subject that never leaves me. I just went to a briefing on it. I follow the Gateway project very closely.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: I'm active today as a Trustee on the Raritan Valley Rail Coalition, which was the principle supporter within New Jersey of the ARC project and has, you know, obviously suffered a terrible setback and is trying to recover and gain its focus on the Gateway project I was out at a briefing the other day on that subject.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And trying to figure out how we can help move that project. But so those are some of the things that really captured a great deal of my attention during the time that I was the Head of the Voorhees Transportation Center. And I was the head of the research part, a confusing set of things that happened.

Reid Ewing was here for a while and he was the head for several years, I was just in charge of the transportation research, a portion of the transportation research. And then Reid left and then I became the Head of the whole thing for about three years.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And I think that the organization thrived during that period of time. Then I stepped back and became a senior, senior fellow because I was, my years were adding up. And I didn't really want to work terribly hard, I wanted to go down to about three days a week, and that was not compatible with being the head of the organization anymore.

Nick: Right.

Martin: So along came Dan Chatman to be on the faculty and first he was our Research Director, working with Jon. And then he ultimately was the Head of the Voorhees Transportation Center and then he left. Then I was, by that point, I was ready to depart.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And in the meantime, I was building up my own consulting practice. You know, so that it fits my lifestyle.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And I'll tell you about that in a minute. But before that, I just want to mention a couple of other things that are important.

Nick: Sure.

Martin: During, one of the things I was involved in, which I felt good about, up to a point, was the Transportation Coordinating Committee, which during the administration of President McCormick and Phil Furmanski got a lot of their support initially. And what we tried to do, although I can't say that it had lasting impact, was to bring all of the people that were doing transportation activities, research activities, and other service-related activities in the Rutgers family together, on at least a twice-a-year basis to hear speakers from government and we had a variety of people like that come and talk to us.

And to talk about what we were doing and how we could help each other. And you know, the Bloustein School was an important part of that Transportation Coordinating Council.

[Interview Part 5 ends, 18 minutes]

[Interview Part 6 begins]

Martin: Paul Larrousse was very active in the Transportation Coordinating Council and we tried. . . We tried, the principal players that we tried to coordinate were the engineering personnel at Rutgers and the Voorhees Transportation and the Bloustein School. And we had moderate success. But it began to lose steam towards the end of, when Phil Furmanski left, it basically stopped being. And my role kind of diminished to zero.

We did get a grant; it was a very ironic thing. But there was a grant program that I really did enjoy administering, that came in earmarked from the federal government; that allowed us to create research grants for researchers of all stripes here at Rutgers. And I was in charge of administering that, working with Paula Devansky and Paul Larrousse and NTI.

And it, we must have given out. . . I never totaled up the money, but it lasted for about five or six years and we got, from several millions of dollars and the, it really invigorated transportation research here. And people enjoyed doing their research and devising subjects and then getting the money for them. And it was a competitive program within the university.

And it was something I did. . . I actually was sitting at CAIT (Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Technology) when I was administering that.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: So I spent some; they participated in underwriting, CAIT, was underwriting my time on that. And it was, it was a worthy thing and it probably will be needed again. You know, I think that things have sort of, the interest in that has diminished, but it probably will have its time again.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But that was something that we did, we thought it was needed. And one of the things that it did do, which is very positive, one of the outcomes, is that there is now a very close working relationship between at least one member of the engineering fraternity, Kaan Ozbay [*ed. note: As of Fall 2013, Kaan Ozbay is at New York University*]. . .

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And the Voorhees Transportation Center. I know he's told me that he's working on a grant that I had helped line him up for, with Voorhees on measuring opportunities for transit-oriented development. And so I'm very pleased to see that. I developed a relationship with Kaan and teamed up with him on a couple of NJDOT grant applications, and we are now well along on both of them.

One is an evaluation of the Rail Freight Assistance Program at DOT, which we believe deserves significant overhaul. And we're close to sharing our views with the upper levels at DOT.

And the second one deals with a very interesting experience. We started to write, we got a grant for an application about improved fare collection techniques at New Jersey Transit. We found out after we got the grant, that they were intending to start an online ticketing program.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: Where people could purchase their tickets online and then the conductors would read the ticket off of an Android or a Smart Phone. And what we were able to do is take the money that was set aside for us to do the; this thing on ticketing and create a role as an evaluator and a helper to New Jersey Transit on its implementation. And we're right in the midst of that right now, with Kaan Ozbay as the lead on both of these projects and I'm helping in them.

Nick: Right.

Martin: So, so that's some of the Rutgers stuff. Right now, I'm also helping Charles Brown on another round of pedestrian/bicycle legislation, so called Vulnerable User Bill which could increase penalties when motorists strike vulnerable users in the road, properly on the road. And then, which is kind of an add-on to the pedestrian safety.

And then there's a Safe Passing Distance concept that we're trying to also advance for bicyclists and four-foot, a three-foot safe passing distance. And right now we're still very much in the middle of doing that work. And I'm under contract to Charles Brown.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: We're working with state legislators on it. So those are some of the things that come out of, previous work. I mean they knew what I did. I was involved on the Penn Safety Statute and a natural was to ask me to help out on this and we're moving forward on it.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: One other theme that I wanted to raise is that one of the things that I wanted to do at the Voorhees Transportation Center was to make sure that when we did our research, when we picked research topics, that we picked topics that were kind of challenging topics that crossed-over, outside of transportation. They had a transportation base, but they weren't uniquely transportation.

And let me give you a for instance. John Carnegie ran an excellent program with a foundation on mobility at any age. It was mobility; it was examining mobility in New Jersey for the elderly.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And some day we're hopeful that that is going to really take off. He's already established a relationship with a group that's now part of the Voorhees Transportation Center that conducts teaching seminars for the elderly about how to use public transit. Because many of the elderly grew up in times when public transit was in terrible decline, during their formative years, and they shied away from it.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And moved away from it. So that's something. But there's more to be done in that area, and he just did one excellent set of seminars. And it really, it's work that's sitting there, ready to be tapped. And we've been trying to get the interest of the American Association of Retired Persons to pick that up.

Along that line, another cross-over area was transportation for the disabled. And he and Andrea Lubin have been, have done extraordinary work in expanding research in that area, in New Jersey. And it's become a little profit center here at the Voorhees Transportation Center, and that's something that started a long time ago. And Jon and I worked on the disabled vision of state government that cares for the disabled. And we were able to get our foot in the door and able to start doing that kind of research. And it was; it's been very productive.

Jon takes credit, also, during the time that I was the Head of this, became involved in the security area. And he's been doing, it seems like the Homeland Security has been an endless number of grants that he's gotten and that all started during those times. And again, it's another profitable area that really has been quite successful.

So you can look around at a lot of things that, you know, that have long roots here at the Voorhees Transportation Center. And oftentimes it was reaching out to other groups. Again, transit-oriented development is a perfect example of something that isn't really transportation per se.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But it's the cross-over between housing and transportation. Learning about other areas and bringing other people into the picture. And getting New Jersey Transit to be more cognizant of that, or helping them reach various interest groups. We certainly got a very big kick of it, you know that sort of work. So I wanted to just mention that thing.

Nick: Sure. I wanted to ask you a little bit about, reflecting on, back on your career and your interaction with the legislature in New Jersey and the different layers of government in New Jersey. I was wondering if you might comment a little bit on the changes in the way that you've interacted with the legislature, the political environment in New Jersey, over the course of your career?

We talked, in the early portions of this interview, about your . . . About some of the challenges that were overcome in the legislature and how the legislature was able to step up and meet the challenges, particularly with the creation of . . .

Martin: New Jersey Transit.

Nick: New Jersey Transit.

Martin: Right.

Nick: But then in the later years, you know, we've talked more about some of the failures of either getting things even in front of the legislature or just, just the legislature not being . . . ?

Martin: It hasn't been terribly, you know it hasn't been filled with huge numbers of successes.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: What made the passage of the "Stop and Remain Stopped" bill very gratifying was that that was a case where we worked hard, long and had obstacles and somehow overcame them, and the bill got passed. And that was another victory.

And victories are very sweet when you get meaningful things from the legislature.

Nick: (Laughs)

Martin: So that was good. But one of the problems is that, in my view, the amount of knowledge and attention that the legislature gives to the things that I consider to be important in the transportation area, I think that it is, it's inadequate. There is one person in the legislature. . .

Well let me go back to the days of New Jersey, when we started New Jersey Transit. One of the reasons that the New Jersey Transit legislation passed was that we found a champion. He was not, he was a State Senator who didn't have much seniority and he didn't stay that long in the State Legislature.

His name was Frank Herbert. He was elected in the Watergate year.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And I guess he hung around for maybe one more term. And Frank Herbert, who was then from Bergen County, was just absolutely, believed that Lou Gambaccini was phenomenal and he supported the New Jersey Transit statute. We didn't have that kind of support generally, but we did have it from him. And it was; it was absolutely necessary.

We also had, as I've said before, we had extraordinarily, extraordinary gubernatorial support.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Because Brendan Byrne was a very, very hard-nosed and effective Governor.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And he got that bill passed. But and that was, I guess when you're. . . Let's see, how old was I? I was thirty-seven when that bill passed. And it's hard to match that again, in terms of you know triumphant dealings with the legislature.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: It was a great victory. I was not the principal architect of that, but I certainly was a part of it, and enjoyed it immensely. But it's not easy; it's not easy. As I mentioned, the instance with the . . .

Another opportunity that could have happened but didn't, was the Blue Ribbon Commission, that could have produced all kinds of opportunities to advocate that a gas tax increase and a curing of the problems in transportation capital funding in New Jersey. But you know, that Governor pulled the rug out from under us, and we never got that opportunity to do that.

But in dealing with the legislature, I wanted to mention John Wisniewski, who is the Chairman of the Assembly Transportation Committee. He's the one person I can think of today who has been at this for a long time. And pretty well recognizes what the issues, the proper issues of what needs to be done.

But there doesn't seem to be much else, there might be a few other people, you know, that are of lesser authority. But there's nobody that really stands out. And so when push. . . He has advocated various gas tax increases over the years and was put down by his leadership.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Because they didn't find it convenient.

Nick: Do you think that not enough is being done outside of the legislature and Governor's office to cultivate support for these types of initiatives?

Martin: Well. . .

Nick: As opposed to earlier in your career . . .

Martin: I, I. . .

Nick: Where you and Lou and all of these other people were . . .

Martin: When we were there, we were in government.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And then I was here, and I was doing a lot of work here, which helped to lead to the Blue Ribbon Commission. I mean I don't believe, I mean right now, I don't believe that the Voorhees Transportation Center touches the transportation financing issue.

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: I think that would be something I would like to see changed. But it isn't necessarily going to change. But I think that that is a subject of tremendous importance. Everything. .

The older I get, the more I become aware that if you do not have stable financing, you really can't accomplish very much. If you can't look to having the dollars where you need them, you really are just totally stymied.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And I think that we're in a very bad period right now. And I think that no one in the non-profit area is really stepping up. To RPA's credit, after the failure of the Blue Ribbon Commission, they did have that; they got the money from. . . I helped to lobby Mark Murphy at the Fund for New Jersey and RPA got the money. And then we had a great team and we worked at it.

You know, again, we were set back. It was sales tax over gas tax.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And so you know it's an interplay with the Executive and legislature. Now right now, I think that it is absolutely useless to knock on the door of the legislature and ask them to do very much. (Laughs)

I had an experience that I think is instructive. I, I worked with Assemblyman's Wisniewski's staff and with Senator Gordon's staff, Robert Gordon of Bergen County, on a bill to take the Financial Policy Review Board, which was created when Corzine took over and changed some of the laws pertaining to bonding, which allowed him to bond and bond and bond.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: It gave this Financial Policy Review Board, it created it. And it specified certain duties that it had, which were pretty ministerial. But it was the understanding among many people that it was going to provide an independent view of what was going on in transportation funding and that it could advise the legislature, and the public about it.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And it would have been extremely valuable. So worked with these legislators and we created an amendment to the Transportation Policy Review Board section that gave it independence. And they tried, this was last year, I guess it was 2012. They tried and Governor Christie conditionally vetoed it saying that there was already enough information available and we didn't need another body to speak out independently on transportation funding, which was, in my mind, absolutely untrue.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: But the legislature couldn't do anything about it. There was no potential for an override of his conditional veto. Nobody could figure out what to do, because his conditional veto was really a veto.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Because he really didn't leave any of the bill standing, that had any meaning. So that experience tells you something. I would say that right now, the Governor says he doesn't want a gas tax; nobody is going to take him on on that.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And what's going to happen, every year they might cluck their tongues and say "Oh transportation is bonding too much." I mean, you know each year, the Star-Ledger writes about this stuff and the legislature just lets it pass, because it's in their interest not to create waves.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Because it would come back to haunt them. Let me give you a for instance. The reason it would create waves is that what the Governor has done two years in a row, is take the money that he took from the ARC project that came out of the Turnpike, the revenues, it's about \$270 million. And he's taking that money and he is plugging holes in the state budget. The same as last year, he said he was putting it into New Jersey Transit operations, which was like staggering that. Turnpike money was going into . . .

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: No one had any idea that that would ever happen, or that it could happen. But he got. . . Office of Legislative Services Approval that it could happen. So he did it. He did it last year and I believe he's doing it again this year.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: Because that money is not going into the Transportation Trust Fund. They just ramped up the bonding commensurately and taken the money out and siphoned it off into the general fund.

Nick: Hum.

Martin: And so that fills a budget hole. Now the reason that the legislature wouldn't want to tamper with that is because they would then have to turn around and figure out where. . . How are we; where are we going to get the \$270 million to pay this?

Nick: Right.

Martin: If it goes in the capital, it's lost to us, as an operating budget issue.

Nick: Uh hum. Uh hum.

Martin: So it's all part of a piece and you watch what goes on and you just say "Oh God, there goes some good ideas."

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: And they just get massacred.

Nick: Yeah.

Martin: In the pragmatics of the workings of government.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: And so in terms of outside people talking about it, I think it's always good for them to talk about it. And I think that the Voorhees Transportation Center, as I said, would do a public service if they did that, as we did back when Christine Todd Whitman was Governor.

But do I see immediate gratification? No. I see a long road ahead. But there's not even that, that commentary going on right now.

Nick: Uh hum.

Martin: . . . Which is unfortunate. So the public is pretty much lost on the subject, except when the Star-Ledger jabs away at the Governor about it.

Nick: Yeah. Hum.

Martin: So. . . You want to hear. . . ?

Nick: Anything else?

Martin: Well it's noon. I really should probably get going.

Nick: Sure.

[End of interview, 4 hours and 36 minutes]