

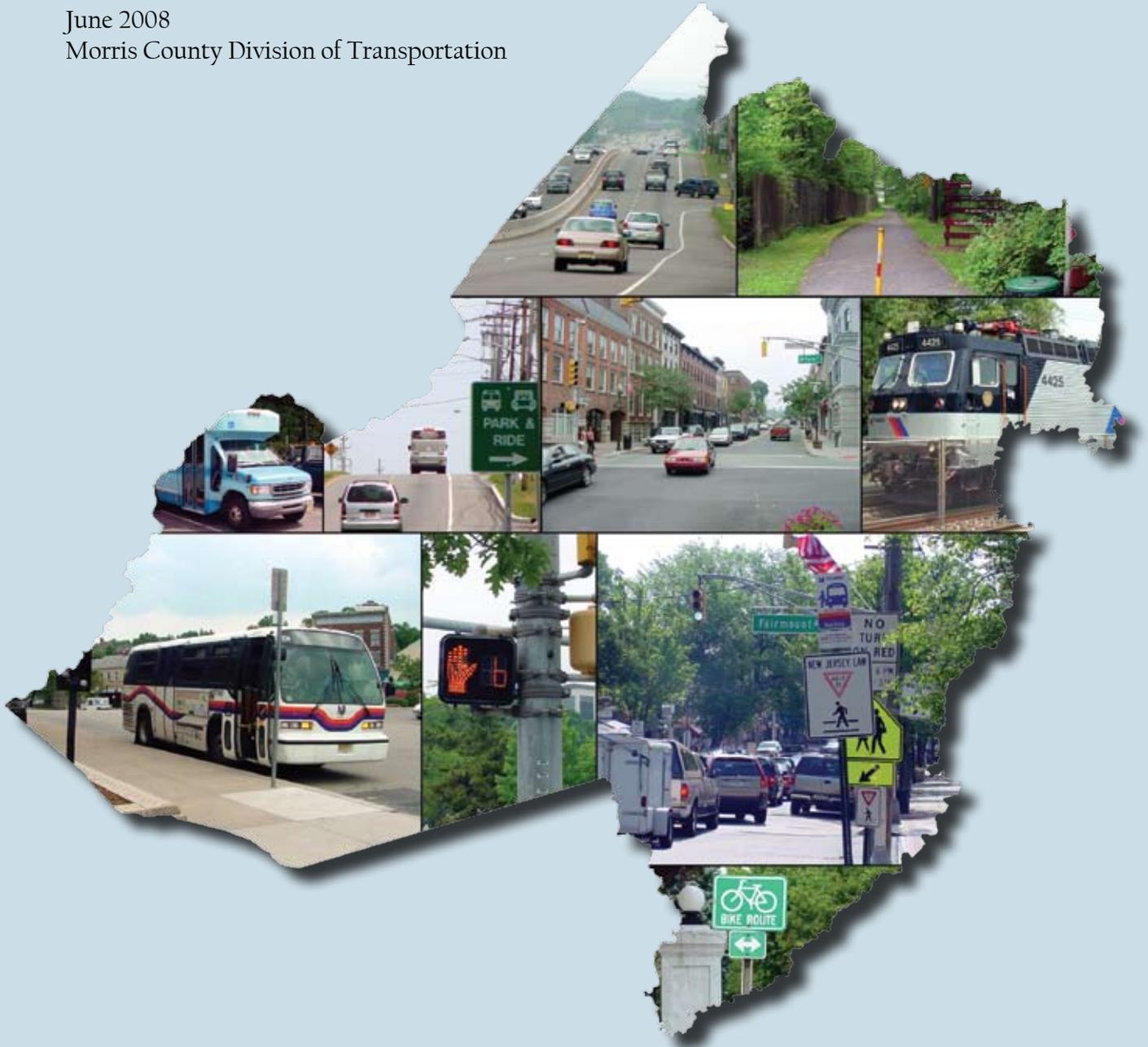
# Bulletin #8

“All Aboard Public Transportation!”

*Improving access and mobility for Morris County residents through public transportation*

June 2008

Morris County Division of Transportation



The Morris County Division of Transportation, in coordination with the Morris County Planning Board, is developing the Circulation Element of the Morris County Master Plan. A series of ten transportation bulletins, which will be released individually, is currently under development to reflect major countywide and regional transportation issues that affect our daily lives. In addition to the bulletins, a technical document is being developed. This document will reflect detailed county projects, demographics, issues, and projections. It is anticipated that these broad-based bulletins, which will have a large distribution, will create an exchange of ideas, therefore becoming an important part of the plan's development.

#### PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

*Bulletin #1: It's Not Cool to Drive to School – An Examination of School Related Congestion (June 2006)*

*Bulletin #2: Putting the Brakes on Congestion! – Will it only get worse? (February 2007)*

*Bulletin #3: Not Another Accident! – Improving roadway safety and enhancing emergency response. (March 2007)*

*Bulletin #4: Exercise Your Right to Bike or Walk!! – How can we enhance the bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Morris County? (July 2007)*

*Bulletin #5: Get a move on freight, before it's too late! – Managing and supporting efficient freight movement. (September 2007)*

*Bulletin #6: It's a Bird, It's a Plane... It's Another Plane! – The importance of the aviation industry and its impact on our quality of life (December 2007)*

*Bulletin #7: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of a parking space – How can we meet current and future transit parking demand? (February 2008)*

Bulletin #8 discusses the need for more public transportation options and opportunities in the region. During the county's municipal outreach to elected officials, planners, engineers, and residents, more public transportation was identified as important to maintaining and improving the mobility of Morris County residents. The demand for public transportation for traveling within Morris County and to areas beyond its borders continues to grow. The discussion in this bulletin focuses on continuing public transportation expansion and innovation in order to provide a comprehensive and sustainable transportation network.

This bulletin, as well as the previous bulletins mentioned above, can also be found on the Morris County Division of Transportation's (MCDOT) website at [www.MorrisDOT.org](http://www.MorrisDOT.org). Questions may be directed to Deena Cybulski of the MCDOT at [mcdot@co.morris.nj.us](mailto:mcdot@co.morris.nj.us) or by using the contact information provided below.

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# All Aboard Public Transportation!

Improving access and mobility for Morris County residents through public transportation



omy \$7.38 billion (Texas Transportation Institute, 2007 *Urban Mobility Report*, 2007). According to the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's (NJTPA) Regional Transportation Plan, delay from road congestion is forecasted to "increase by 15% in already congested urban areas, but upwards of 200% in rural areas where

current congestion is low." Traffic will continue to hurt our economy if policies are not changed to meet this challenge.

Roadway capacity, whether because of fiscal or physical constraints, will not significantly increase. Adding road capacity tends not to reduce congestion, but rather encourages more driving, quickly filling up a new lane or street. Also, improving the existing road network through operational treatments, such as freeway incident management, street signal coordination, and street access management are not as effective at reducing congestion as public transportation. In 2005, investing in public transportation saved 216 million hours of delay and \$4.18 billion dollars versus 41 million hours and \$782 million saved through operational treatments in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area (Texas Transportation Institute, 2007 *Urban Mobility Report*, 2007).

Public transportation not only reduces congestion, but improves transportation options and accessibility for everyone, particularly to major urban centers. Over 80% of Northern New Jersey residents who work in the Manhattan Central Business District commute by transit (NJTPA, *Regional Transportation Plan*, 2005). Typically, it is easier and less expensive to take a train, bus, or ferry to New York City rather than drive, pay tolls, find a parking spot, and maneuver through traffic.

Using public transportation, in comparison to automobile use, has been shown to have a

The benefits of public transportation are wide-ranging. Public Transportation provides mobility, access, and options for everyone regardless of their education, socioeconomic background, or physical ability. It has further positive effects on the region by reducing traffic congestion and improving energy efficiency, increasing people's physical and mental health, and providing economic benefits to communities. Continued public transportation expansion and innovation in New Jersey and Morris County are necessary to provide a comprehensive and sustainable transportation network.

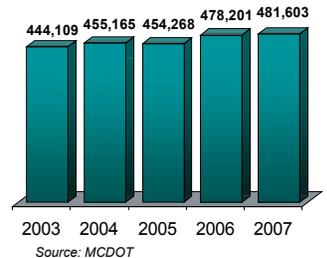
Northern New Jersey's population and economic activity have increased significantly over the past several decades. Much of this growth has occurred in the suburban areas of the region, where development patterns have typically been low density and auto-oriented. More attention was given toward developing the highway system rather than the public transportation network. As a result, the automobile has become the only way to travel to many destinations.

The lack of transportation options affect the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area. The region has some of the most heavily congested roadways in the country. Traffic congestion delayed the average traveler 46 hours and wasted over 240 million additional gallons of gasoline in 2005. The time, which represents lost productivity, and fuel spent in congestion cost the region's econ-

Every tax dollar invested in public transportation generates about \$6 in economic returns.

Source: American Public Transportation Association, 2006

NJ Transit-Morris County Metro Annual Bus Ridership

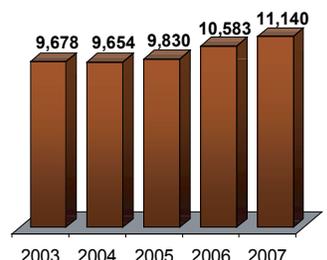


Source: MCDOT

Every year, each driver stuck in traffic wastes on average 47 hours and 30 gallons of fuel—costing \$800 per person annually.

Source: FHWA, 2006

Average Weekday Boardings at Train Stations in Morris County



Source: NJ Transit Annual Rail Passenger Ridership Report, 2007

positive effect on physical and mental health. A cross-sectional study of Morris County residents entitled, *Leaving the Driving to Them* (Evans, Lutin and Wener, 2005), took place from 2002 to 2005 comparing New York bound train commuters versus New York bound auto commuters. The results showed that automobile commuters walked an average of 30% less steps per workday and showed significantly higher levels of stress and a more negative mood. Also, automobile commuters in the study felt that their trip required more effort, and was significantly less predictable than that of train commuters.

Public transportation is also more fuel efficient and environmentally friendly. According to the American Public Transportation Association, public transportation reduced the nation's carbon dioxide emissions by 6.9 million metric tons and another 400,000 metric tons of other greenhouse gases. Based on NJ Transit calculations, New Jersey alone avoided an estimated 1.16 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions in 2006 through reduced automobile use. Additionally, for every passenger mile traveled, public transportation uses about one half of the fuel consumed by cars, and about a third of that used by sports utility and light trucks.

Although the majority of people in Morris County drive alone to work, an increasing number use public transportation. According to the U.S. Census 2005 American Community Survey, 4.4% (10,495) of workers age 16 and over use public transportation to commute. Public transportation usage to work increased by 3.7% since 2000 and 31.5% from 1990. Some perceive public transportation as primarily serving low income workers; in reality, it benefits all people, regardless of income. In Morris County, approximately 56% of public

transportation riders in the county have annual individual incomes of \$75,000 or more. Yet commuting to work is just a part of the larger public transit picture; transit is used for school, medical visits, shopping, and many other purposes.

Morris County residents have a number of public transportation options available including:

- \* NJ Transit Montclair-Boonton and Morris & Essex Rail Lines
- \* Morris County Metro Bus System
- \* NJ Transit WHEELS Mini Buses
- \* NJ Transit, Lakeland, and Community Coach Bus Service
- \* Colonial Coach and Parsippany Transit
- \* Morris Area Paratransit Service (MAPS)
- \* 33 municipalities taking part in 25 dial-a-ride programs
- \* RIDEPROVIDE, a program of TransOptions, is a non-profit membership service for seniors. Some restrictions apply ([www.transoptions.org](http://www.transoptions.org)).

NJDOT, NJ Transit, and Port Authority of New York and New Jersey are improving services, meeting increasing demand, and connecting to underserved areas in the region. One of the most ambitious projects is the gargantuan Access to the Region's Core (ARC), which would expand passenger rail capacity to Mid-town Manhattan. ARC would expand New York's Penn Station and construct two new tracks in one new tunnel beneath the Hudson River, improving service for thousands of commuters traveling to New York.

Another significant project is the restoration of commuter service to the Lackawanna Cutoff. This project would provide passenger rail service from as far as Scranton, PA to New York City. No additional train trips would be produced, although more rail cars per train would be added to increase capacity for the areas receiving this new service. This service is projected to average 3,500 daily boardings by 2030 helping to relieve traffic on heavily congested I-80.



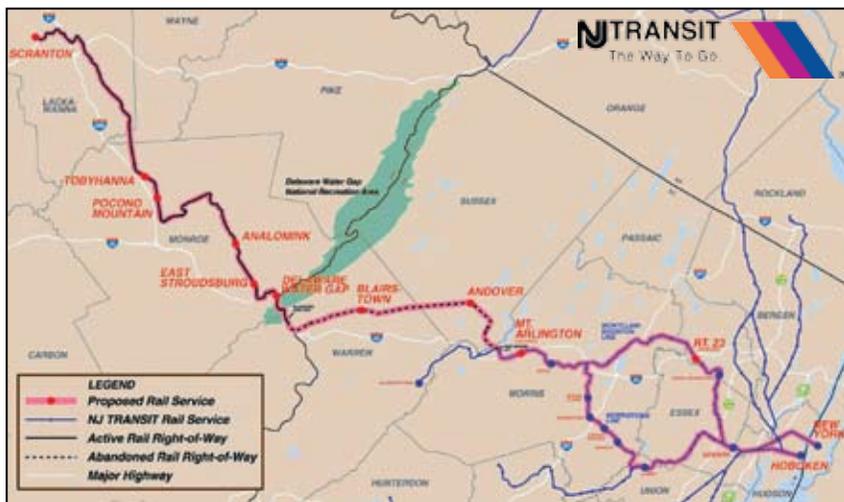
Bus Shelter

A full rail car removes 200 cars from the road and a full bus removes 60 (Maryland Department of Transportation, 1999).



Highway congestion

49% of Americans live within 1/4 mile of a transit stop (Surface Transportation Policy Project, 2002).



Lackawanna Cutoff



Bicycle Carrier on Bus

NJ Transit is also seeking an agreement with New York Susquehanna & Western (NYS&W) to restore commuter rail service along NYS&W's freight rail right-of-way from Hawthorne east to Hackensack. Passenger rail service could be extended northwest to Butler and as far north as Stockholm, relieving the highly congested NJ 23 corridor. While these three projects are independent of each other, they are all necessary to reduce congestion in Morris County while providing greater public transportation service for everyone.

Passenger capacity is currently being increased through NJ Transit's addition of new multi-level rail cars for its system. Replacing 10 single-decker cars with 10 double-decker cars will increase the number of seats by 225. NJ Transit has ordered 279 double-decker rail cars, all of which are expected to be delivered by



Mount Arlington Train Station

mid-2009. These trains provide more space for the individual users, fully handicap accessible restrooms in about half of the cars, and automated public address and destination screens to provide better information. NJ Transit is also constructing new train stations and park-and-ride lots as well as improving existing train stations in Morris County.

The brand new Mount Arlington Train Station, located off I-80, opened on January 21, 2008. The station has 285 parking spaces in its bus-rail park-and-ride lot and is American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. The Wayne/Rt. 23 Transit Center has also recently opened off of NJ 23 near the Willowbrook Mall in Wayne. It offers 1,017 new parking spaces and serves as a dual-use station with passenger rail access to the Montclair-Boonton line and bus service. Morris County residents using the NJ 23 corridor for their commute can benefit from this station. In addition to these new facilities, improvements are being made to Morristown,

Madison, and Dover train stations making them ADA compliant, and in Madison station's case, restoring and protecting its historic character. These upgrades provide significant new and improved access to public transportation.

In addition to improving access and mobility, other strategies can be initiated to enhance the existing service. Like cars, buses are becoming more fuel efficient and environmentally friendly. In 2000, NYC began switching to all diesel buses reducing sulfur emissions by 90%, and in 2005 finished switching all buses from 2-stroke to 4-stroke engines, which are up to 94% cleaner. NYC has the largest hybrid-electric bus fleet in the US with nearly 550 buses.

Also, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems are being explored in places around New Jersey, such as Newark and the US 1 corridor. BRT is a system that allows bus vehicles to operate on a right-of-way that is largely separated from other types of traffic, greatly improving the speed and efficiency of service. BRT's can include grade-separated bus-only right-of-ways, giving buses priority on major roadways, bus-dedicated lanes, or use of shoulder by buses during peak hour congestion times. The use of BRT would improve the reliability and convenience of bus travel, making it a more attractive mode of travel.

While the majority of public transit is accessible for all users, there is a demand for more flexible and responsive services that better serve the needs of all travelers. Paratransit is a form of public transportation designed to get senior citizens and the disabled to destinations such as medical facilities, education and employment sites, and shopping. MAPS, operated by Morris County, is the largest service in the county with over 50 vehicles, and provided more than 67,000 rides in 2007. As Morris County's baby boomer generation ages and life expectancy improves, the population over age 65 is expected to significantly increase. Paratransit services will become even more essential as Morris County's elderly population continues to grow.

Investment in public transportation is a necessary and viable alternative to the automobile as our region continues to grow in population, age, and employment. The following proposals are intended to expand and enhance public transportation in Morris County:



Diesel Electric Hybrid Bus



Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)



New Multi-Level Rail Cars





# Proposals



## 1. Improving Public Transportation Service

Making public transportation more reliable and accessible to the population will increase ridership and service connectivity.

### COUNTY ACTIONS

- ▶ Work with NJ Transit to better coordinate bus and train schedules to improve transfers.
- ▶ Encourage NJ Transit to increase off-peak Montclair-Boonton Line service between Dover and NYC during weekdays and add week-end service to the line.
- ▶ Encourage NJ Transit to transition to energy efficient modes of transportation such as electric or hybrid buses.
- ▶ Increase operational efficiency of MAPS through technology and coordination of existing services.

### GENERAL ACTIONS

- ▶ Study the possibilities of Bus Rapid Transit in areas of high congestion. Commuter buses could be allowed to use the shoulder of the highway to circumvent traffic.
- ▶ Continue to expand “Bike Aboard” program to allow bicycles on trains at all times and make NJ Transit’s entire bus fleet bike friendly.
- ▶ Utilize community shuttle services to connect neighborhoods and businesses to rail stations and bus stops.
- ▶ Install bus shelters where practical to give riders a safe and protected location.
- ▶ Explore the feasibility of giving buses signal pre-emption ability on county and state roads. Preemption devices can give a green light or extend the green light for the approaching bus.

## 2. Transit Network Expansion

Expanded transit to underserved areas improves access to major destinations and reduces dependence on the automobile.

### COUNTY ACTIONS

- ▶ Investigate the potential to increase peak period service and expand the service area of Morris County Metro urban routes.
- ▶ Evaluate the possibility of expanding and increasing service for Morris County Metro 4, the only daily rural bus route. Operating from Morristown to Dover, through Mendham and Chester, it has the highest ridership among rural bus routes.
- ▶ Work with NJ Transit and neighboring counties to study potential new inter-county bus routes to improve connections between population and employment centers.
- ▶ Support passenger rail restoration of Lackawanna Cutoff, which will alleviate automobile congestion on I-80.
- ▶ Support NJ Transit’s reactivation of NYS&W Bergen-Passaic railroad passenger service.
- ▶ Identify locations where new park-and-rides could be located to best reduce commuter traffic from highway corridors.
- ▶ Provide technical assistance to municipalities interested in adding community shuttle services.
- ▶ Explore route expansion, possibly into adjacent counties, for Morris On the Move (MOM). Currently, there is one route that runs from Mount Olive to Dover. MOM is funded through the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program. JARC’s goal is to improve access to employment for low-income individuals.

### GENERAL ACTIONS

- ▶ Study feasibility of adding bus or rail transit lines to provide service along or adjacent to north-south highway corridors such as I-287.
- ▶ Determine the need for providing fixed-route bus service to age-restricted communities.
- ▶ Consider the mobility needs of residents in the development of age restricted housing, assisted living, and nursing homes in Morris County.

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