

MEETING MINUTES
Morris County Board of Transportation Meeting
Tuesday, October 14, 2025
Web-Ex Virtual Meeting

In Attendance:

Board Members	Additional Attendees	Staff
Kathryn DeFillippo	Dan Callas	Christopher Vitz
Carlos Duarte	Ted Ritter	John Hayes
Ronald Francioli		Kevin Stephens
Jack Holland		
Darren Large		
Ilene Dorf Manahan		
Frank Reilly		
Chairperson Len Resto		
Manuela Schuster		
Jigar Shah		
Commissioner Stephen Shaw		
Joe Wells		

I. Call to Order: Chairperson Len Resto called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call: John Hayes read the roll call. Eight voting members were present during roll call.

III. Welcome and Introductions: Chairperson Resto welcomed everyone in attendance for the Board of Transportation Meeting.

IV. Approval of Minutes from July 15, 2025 Meeting: Approval of the minutes was moved by Kathryn DeFillippo, seconded by Manuela Schuster, and unanimously approved.

V. Reports:

A. Safety Action Plan:

Mr. Hayes reported that Morris County's Local Safety Action was completed and adopted by the County Commissioners on September 24. The plan and its appendices are posted on the [County website](#). Mr. Hayes provided some background on the development of the Plan. Adoption of the plan allows Morris County and its municipalities to be eligible for Federal Safe Streets and Roads For All grant funding. The project started in 2024. The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) funded and managed the development of local safety action plans for eight counties in the NJTPA region. The goal of the plan is to eliminate fatal and serious injury crashes on county and

municipal roads by 2050. This time horizon matches the same goal set by NJTPA.

The plan identifies 4 emphasis areas that were selected based on the characteristics of these crashes. They are aggressive driving, intersections, distracted or drowsy driving, and crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists. The plan identifies strategies and recommendations to address these emphasis areas, as well as priority intersections and corridors across the county based on where these crashes are occurring. The recommendations would all require further study and municipal coordination prior to implementation, and depending on the recommendation, would be the responsibility of various levels of government and agencies to implement. NJDOT has their Strategic Highway Safety Plan, so this plan largely leaves state roads and highways out. NJDOT is currently developing a new road safety plan.

Going forward, the plan will be reviewed further to see how it can help develop the County's work program. The County will continue to use crash data, like the data presented in the plan, to identify project locations for grant applications and safety projects.

Chairperson Resto asked if the information reported about the Safety Action Plan is available on the website. Mr. Hayes confirmed and will email the Board the website link.

Chairperson Resto reported that Madison is advancing an electric bike ordinance and asked if that was part of the safety action plan. Mr. Hayes responded that the recommendations in action plan focus on infrastructure, with some recommendations on education and enforcement. The plan does not really recommend any ordinances or laws. Chairperson Resto said the laws need to happen at the state level to be uniform between jurisdictions, and perhaps the Board of Transportation could recommend something to the state.

B. Route 24 & Columbia Turnpike Interchange Project:

Christopher Vitz, County Engineer, reported that Morris County awarded the design contract for Preliminary Engineering to Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI). It is a two-year contract for preliminary design that includes NJDEP permitting, base survey, and traffic counts. The kickoff meeting was held on August 11 with GPI, NJTPA, NJDOT, State Historic Preservation Office, and NJDEP. The NJDEP is requiring slightly different environmental work than anticipated, so it may lengthen the duration of that work, but preliminary engineering is still expected to be completed within the two-year time frame.

Traffic count collection started the week of October 6 and should be completed in two weeks. The consultant has a computer model of the intersection and the data that was collected during concept development. GPI will compare the current traffic data with previous data collected almost five years ago to see how traffic conditions have changed. The survey work and base mapping have also begun. There are two properties that will need to be acquired where the new ramp will be constructed, so the project team will review zoning and the impact on parking in the neighboring office complexes. The County expects to start to see data from

the consultant in early 2026. The first public meeting and Local Officials Briefing should be held early next year once the base data and mapping have been completed. Preliminary engineering should take two years, and the final design phase will take two years as well.

Ron Francioli thanked Mr. Vitz for his report and asked if it is at least four years until construction. Mr. Vitz confirmed that is correct.

Mr. Francioli noted that Florham Park has adopted an ordinance regarding e-bikes, and Hanover just introduced the same ordinance. Mr. Francioli asked if Madison had already adopted the ordinance. Chairperson Resto said that Madison will introduce the ordinance tomorrow, its first reading, and thanked him for the information about the ordinances in the two towns.

Ilene Dorf Manahan asked for clarification on where the new interchange ramp will be constructed. Mr. Vitz used the concept plan map to describe how the proposed ramp from NJ 24 Eastbound will connect to Park Avenue at a new signalized intersection. A concrete island on Columbia Turnpike Westbound will eliminate the weave/merging of traffic coming from NJ 24 Eastbound onto Columbia Turnpike Westbound seeking to turn left onto Park Avenue.

Chairperson Resto asked about the accident statistics at the interchange in the past year. Mr. Vitz replied that the consultant team will review that, but he noted that crashes continue to be high nationwide, distracted driving seems to be a strong contributing factor.

C. Road & Bridge Projects:

Mr. Vitz reported that the paving program was winding down for 2025 as temperatures will be getting too cold for paving this time of year. Projects that have started will continue into November, and then in December the focus will switch to preparing projects for bidding next year. The County will have paved between 25 to 30 miles this year.

Chairperson Resto asked if Shunpike Road between Green Village Road and Noe Avenue will be repaved. Mr. Hayes replied that he had asked the County's paving engineer about that road and shared the Chairperson's message about the conditions. Shunpike Road is not yet on the paving list, however the engineer had heard concerns that pavement conditions were deteriorating.

Mr. Vitz stated that there will be about nine bridge projects that will start construction in the spring of 2026. The bridges are of various sizes and are spread out all over the County. Three of four bridges are already under contract. There were two emergency repairs in the past few months involving corrugated metal drain pipes under roads that were installed between the 1940's to 1960's. The bottom of the corrugated metal pipes rot as they age causing roadways to settle above the pipes. The County will develop a plan to identify and replace these pipes before more road issues emerge.

D. Freight Activities:

Kevin Stephens reported that the County submitted applications for two rail bridge projects to NJDOT's FY 2026 Rail Freight Assistance Program.

1. Design of the Chester Branch Rail Bridge over Berkshire Valley Road: The purpose of the project is to eliminate the height restriction that the Chester Branch Rail Bridge creates on Berkshire Valley Road (CR 642) in Roxbury Township. The bridge is too low to allow trucks to safely pass which has resulted in many truck crashes causing damage to the bridge, road closures, and disruptions of service to five railroad customers. The preferred alternative is to build a new bridge with a clearance of at least 14' 3" prevent further impacts. The County was awarded a grant of \$558,432 from the FY 2024 Rail Freight Assistance Program to design this bridge. This amount was based on the cost estimate developed during concept development. However, the winning consultant's cost proposal was about \$2.4 million. The County decided to reject all proposals, withdraw from the FY 2024 grant program, adjust the cost estimate, and reapply for a larger grant amount for design.
2. Rehabilitation of Rail Bridge 14D30.78: The County's railroad bridge inspection determined that bridge 14D30.78 located at mile post 30.78 along the Dover & Rockaway Railroad in Rockaway Borough needs rehabilitation. There are four railroad customers located north of the bridge. The ties on the bridge deck and on the approaches have rotted and need to be replaced. The abutments and retaining walls need repairs. The bridge superstructure needs to be sandblasted and painted as well. The estimated rehabilitation cost is \$525,000. A grant application was submitted for construction; the County hired a consultant to prepare the bid package.

Dover & Rockaway Railroad Realignment: Mr. Hayes reported on the plan to remove a portion of Dover & Rockaway Railroad from downtown Dover and the town would like to create a shared use path/greenway along the Rockaway River. Currently, the County railroad connects to NJ Transit west of Dover in Wharton. To allow the removal of the rail, the connection would be moved east of downtown Dover.

The County's consultant is designing a connection that would start from an existing siding located east of Dover Train Station; the new rail would run adjacent to NJ Transit's existing rail, cross under South Salem Street Bridge, cross the Rockaway River, and connect to the Dover & Rockaway Railroad near Sammis Avenue. Design is funded in part through NJDOT's Rail Freight Assistance Program. Rail Service would be required to continue to serve an existing customer in Dover, C&M metals, but the rail west of that customer could be removed, allowing for nine public and one private railroad crossings to be removed.

Since the last Board meeting, the field survey and mapping except for NJ Transit's right of way have been completed. The team is preparing an application to get a permit to access NJ Transit's property. They will be starting the

hydrology analysis which will look at water flow to ensure the new bridge and rail can handle flood waters without increasing flooding elsewhere.

East Hanover Avenue Bridge Catenary Rail Clearance Project: Mr. Hayes announced that there is a public meeting tonight for the East Hanover Avenue Bridge Catenary Rail Clearance Project.

NJTPA selected the East Hanover Avenue Bridge along NJ Transit's Morristown line as part of the Freight Concept Development Program. This study builds off past studies Morris County and the NJTPA have completed. The study is looking at the catenary wires suspended under the bridge, as well as the wires along the Morristown rail line between Denville and the Whippany Rail Line in Morristown. These wires are too low to allow for Plate F rail cars to pass beneath the bridge, and potentially at other locations along the corridor such as under NJ 10 bridge at the Morris Plains/Parsippany border. Plate F are the standard size, shorter rail cars are no longer being manufactured and are becoming increasingly difficult to secure for goods movement. Addressing these clearance issues would allow Plate F rail cars to reach Morristown & Erie's Whippany Line railroad, bringing economic benefit to the region, and encourage more freight by rail rather than trucks.

Although this is NJ Transit's infrastructure, Morris County is the local sponsor, and the County will provide assistance throughout concept development, where possible. The project team has surveyed the two bridges and are collecting environmental data and catenary data from NJ Transit. The first public meeting will be tonight at 6:30-8pm. The presentation will be recorded and posted on the project website. The completion date of the report and identification of the preferred alternative is June 2027.

Jack Holland asked about the timeline for the Design of the Chester Branch Rail Bridge over Berkshire Valley Road project. Mr. Stephens replied that the NJDOT typically sends out grant award notifications in the spring. Design would probably take two years to complete. Mr. Hayes added that funding for construction has not yet been secured. The construction cost estimate will be provided during design. Construction is intended to be the least disruptive as possible for railroad customers. Discussions with the railroad operator and customers will occur to minimize service impacts.

Commissioner Stephen Shaw asked for clarification on how the Chester Branch Rail Bridge will be raised. Mr. Hayes stated that the project involved the replacement of the entire bridge. The goal is to have rail service suspended for a maximum of two weeks. The bridge would be prefabricated and staged ahead of time to minimize rail service disruption.

VI. Old Business:

Chairperson Resto referenced Ron Francioli's question from the last Board meeting about traffic at the intersection of Hanover Avenue at Route 202, and asked if Mr. Hayes had heard back from NJDOT about the retiming request. Mr. Hayes responded that the County will follow up with NJDOT about the request.

Chairperson Resto also asked about a question that a member of the public, Jan Aguilos, had asked at the last Board meeting regarding the possibility of placing a stop sign or traffic signal at the intersection of W Main Street and Mount Pleasant Avenue in Rockaway Borough. Mr. Hayes responded that the County recommended that Mr. Aguilos contact the municipality to gain their support to investigate the location. He also reported that a road safety audit was recently conducted with NJTPA in Rockaway Borough that included that intersection.

Ms. DeFillippo had some additional items to discuss about e-bikes. She reviewed a few other ordinances in addition to the ordinance Madison is considering and noted that they were all very similar. She raised concerns that the ordinances focus on electric bicycles and not bicycles in general. She recommended that an audible signal should be on every bicycle. She discussed the reckless behavior of some experienced bicyclists on trails who fail to alert other trail users of their approach before they pass them, as well as speeding. She said e-bikes should not be targeted with extra restrictions not applied to non-electric bicycles. Ms. DeFillippo also noted the lack of suitable parking for e-bikes, which do not fit in regular bicycle racks. She also noted that e-bike ridership is increasing and people are riding everywhere, such as on Route 46. Unfortunately there have been two recent bicyclist fatalities in Roxbury; safety is a concern.

Carlos Duarte said he is an avid bicycle rider and makes it a point to follow the rules of the road. He noted that there are both responsible and not responsible e-bicycle riders. He said he thinks the issue is the speed that e-bikes can travel as well as that young children have access to them.

Mr. Francioli said that the e-bike regulations from Florham Park, Hanover, and Madison are focused mostly on the safety aspect of e-bikes. They discuss items such as helmets use, registration requirements, and regulations for riding on roads and sidewalks, as well in parks. He agreed safety was an issue and said there were also two young e-bike riders killed in Lake Hopatcong. He thought it would be good for this discussion to review the ordinances.

Chairperson Resto said he would ask Florham Park and Hanover for their ordinances, and he would pass along Ms. DeFillippo's comments to the mayor of Madison. Ms. Manahan noted that e-scooter speed and usage on sidewalks is also concerning, and she asked if e-scooters are discussed in these ordinances. Commissioner Shaw noted that the County Park Commission sets rules for County Park usage and that municipalities would be responsible for passing these ordinances, and he suspects municipalities are looking at this issue. Ms. Manahan suggested installing signs along the paths about park rules and regulations. Ms. DeFillippo said it is important to teach public safety and the rules of the road to children and adults, especially before using an electric bicycle. She said there will be a lot more people using e-bikes to travel to work. There needs to be planning for all these modes of transportation. Ms. Manahan said she felt it was important that police are involved in education so there is consistency about the safety message. Frank Reilly agreed that education was important and announced that last week was fire prevention week. He is a volunteer firefighter with the Stirling Fire

Department, and they go to all the schools with a 30 to 45-minute presentation. He suggested local police visit schools to discuss e-bikes and provide a pamphlet for children to bring home. Ms. Schuster suggested e-bike sellers could also hand out these pamphlets with every purchase.

VII. New Business: None

VIII: Public Comments:

Ted Ritter, North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, said he is also an avid bicyclist and shares a lot of the concerns discussed. He thought it was effective when the police department came to his school when he was growing up. He agreed that e-bike usage has proliferated, the range is farther, the speeds are faster, and cost has come down making them more accessible. Online videos show how to modify e-bikes to increase their speed over 40 mph. They could be a great addition to the transportation network, it would help with last mile connections and could allow rail commuters an alternative option to reach the train station. However, he noted it is a safety issue when people are not following the rules, along with distracted driving, speeding, and vehicle size. He hopes there can be a solution so e-bikes can be part of the future of transportation in our region.

Mr. Ritter reported that the NJTPA's Board of Trustees adopted the Long Range Transportation Plan, Connecting Communities in early September. The development of the plan included a robust public outreach effort. He thanked the Morris County Board of Transportation members for their involvement, especially in the visioning part of the public outreach effort. He announced that the NJTPA is creating a video that will cover some of the highlights of the plan. The plan is posted online but the NJTPA is also printing hard copies later this fall. He also highlighted NJTPA's Complete Streets Technical Assistance Program. The NJTPA recently opened solicitation for the next round of grant funding. This program supports municipalities by providing free technical assistance to help develop complete streets initiatives in cooperation with Rutgers Voorhees Transportation Center and an organization called Sustainable Jersey. Applications are due November 7.

X. The Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 2:00 pm.

XI. Adjournment: Adjournment of the meeting was moved by Mr. Reilly, seconded by Ms. DeFillippo, and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Minutes prepared by John Hayes, Division of Engineering & Transportation