

MEETING MINUTES
Morris County Board of Transportation Meeting
Tuesday, April 21, 2026
Web-Ex Virtual Meeting

In Attendance:

Board Members	Additional Attendees	Staff
Kathryn DeFillippo	Ted Ritter	Christopher Vitz
Ronald Francioli		John Hayes
Chairperson Len Resto		
Manuela Schuster		
Jigar Shah		
Commissioner Stephen Shaw		

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. Six voting members were present during roll call.

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

V. Approval of Minutes from January 13, 2026 Meeting: As seven members were not present for a quorum, the approval of the minutes was tabled for the next meeting.

VII. Reports:

A. Freight Activities

Rail Freight Assistance Program Applications: Mr. Hayes provided an update on Morris County's applications for two rail bridge projects submitted to NJDOT's FY 2026 Rail Freight Assistance Program (RFAP).

The County applied for funding for the design of a new Chester Branch Rail Bridge over Berkshire Valley Road (Bridge 14C42.37) in Roxbury that would provide sufficient clearance, a minimum of 14' 3", for trucks to safely pass under the bridge. There is long history of trucks striking the bridge. The County completed \$150k in repairs during the summer of 2025. The County's annual railroad bridge inspection program has given the bridge a low sufficiency rating indicating that it needs to be replaced. It was studied under NJTPA's Freight Concept Development Program. However, NJDOT did not award the RFAP grant. Options will be reviewed, and the County will get back to the Board on next steps. Chairperson Resto asked about the status of the bridge abutments. Mr. Hayes said the problems are with the bridge superstructure and damage from truck impacts. The age of the bridge is also becoming an issue. The sufficiency rating is below 50, which means that the existing structure cannot be raised, it

has to be replaced. Christopher Vitz added that the bridge was originally built over the Morris Canal, which was replaced with the road. The road is lower than the surrounding land. Typically, the road would be lowered to address the clearance issue, however in this situation there would be a flooding issue. The steel on the bridge was originally installed around 1910 when the bridge was constructed. The steel has degraded from truck hits and use.

The County also applied for funding to rehabilitate bridge 14D30.78 which is a 76-foot-long bridge located along the Dover and Rockway Railroad in Rockway Borough, north of East Main Street (CR 644). The NJDOT awarded a RFAP grant for this bridge. The grant will cover sand blasting, painting, and repairing some of the corroded steel structure and abutments. The County started on some of the needed repairs that could not wait, funded with the County budget. The rail ties on the bridge were replaced in February, however the project was paused due to the snow. The rail ties on both approaches will be replaced and a retaining wall will be repaired. The RFAP grant is \$318,000. The grant agreements are typically executed in the summer. The rehabilitation plans are being developed now with the goal to bid the project later this year. Mr. Vitz said this bridge was also originally constructed over the Morris Canal.

Rehabilitation of Bridge 14D30.56: Mr. Hayes reported that the County has a NJDOT Rail Freight Assistance Program grant to fund the rehabilitation of Dover and Rockway Railroad bridge 14D30.56 in Rockaway Borough. The grant was awarded in 2025. The 200-foot-long bridge crosses the Rockway River. The rehabilitation plans are nearly done. The project involves replacing ties, sandblasting and painting, and repairing the steel structure, abutments, and piers. The consultant has submitted a permit application to NJDEP because some of the repair work activity will be in the Rockaway River.

Dover & Rockaway Railroad Realignment: Mr. Hayes reported on the plan to remove a portion of Dover & Rockaway Railroad from downtown Dover, which the town would like to replace with 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 working on completing the survey work. As they were finishing the survey work, they discovered an NJDEP Riparian/wetland mitigation area on a property that is critical to the proposed rail alignment, owned by JCP&L. It looks like remediation work on the property was recently completed. This is the second potential location that this has happened with. The County is reviewing the NJDEP permit for this property and will discuss it with our consultant this Friday. The project is on hold.

Mr. Hayes mentioned the Annual Railroad Bridge Inspection Program required by the FRA. Sometimes inspectors find small issues that can be addressed by the County, but they also identify larger issues that require rehabilitation. An outside consultant is hired to do the inspections. A Request for Proposals was advertised

to inspect 18 rail bridges and 1 culvert. Consultant proposals were due March 17 and are currently being reviewed.

Kathryn DeFillippo inquired if the County had applied for two or three NJDOT grants, and how many were approved. She asked if the County would reapply for the rejected bridge, or if it would be paid for through some other way. Mr. Hayes stated that reapplying would need to be discussed in the future. Ms. DeFillippo asked for more information about the RFAP grant program. Mr. Hayes described that NJDOT's RFAP program has an annual solicitation with applications due in October and the grant agreements, if awarded, are typically executed in the summer of the following year. The grant program has an annual total of \$25 million that NJDOT allocates to the public and private sector.

B. Route 24 & Columbia Turnpike Interchange Project:

Christopher Vitz, County Engineer, reported on the status of the design of the Route 24 & Columbia Turnpike Interchange Project. The consultant has completed traffic counts in the study area. Traffic volumes are close to or back up to the levels they were before COVID-19. Traffic patterns are slightly different now that there is more residential development along Park Avenue and fewer businesses than when the concept development study was completed. AM and PM peak periods have become longer. The consultant has begun to review existing conditions. There is concern about the grade of the proposed ramp from Route 24 to Park Avenue. Using the current concept, the grade of the ramp as it approaches Park Avenue would have a 9% slope, which is pretty steep. The consultant is investigating how to mitigate the grade. The design team is also reviewing how the ramp will affect the office parking lots to determine if and where parking spaces can be relocated. The consultant will work with the County to set up a meeting with the municipalities, probably to be held in June or July. There will be a public information meeting later in the year. Chairperson Resto inquired when the project will be completed. Mr. Vitz stated that construction will probably start in 5 years.

C. Road & Bridge Projects:

Mr. Hayes reported on the annual traffic count program that takes 30 counts in the spring and 30 in the fall. He stated that the spring count was awarded on March 30. He also brought up that NJTPA is funding a Trail Crossings Pilot project to design safety improvements at 54 trail crossings in Morris County. The Division of Engineering & Transportation will be working with NJTPA, the County Park Commission, and a consultant team on this project. NJTPA is currently working on awarding the contract. A meeting is scheduled with NJTPA to see if their Local Safety Program can be used to fund projects identified in Morris County's Safety Action Plan.

Regarding the possibility of examining a dedicated right turn lane from East Hanover Avenue westbound onto US 202, Mr. Hayes stated that Mr. Vitz and the Development Review Committee reviewed the site plan for the Acme property. The project is a re-occupancy site plan with minimal site changes. As a result,

they were unable to acquire a right-of-way through the normal site plan review process. The County would have to acquire the right-of-way from the Acme property and a gas station. The County's Supervising Traffic Engineer contacted NJDOT to ask if any traffic studies or turning movement counts were completed when the intersection was retimed. The County has not heard back from NJDOT yet.

Mr. Hayes also reported that Mr. Vitz reached out to Hanover Township's engineer about the status of the NJ 10 and Jefferson Road intersection project, but he has not heard back yet. Mr. Hayes asked Mr. Francioli if he could contact his Township engineer to follow up.

Mr. Vitz shared an image of a damaged stone arch bridge on Pottersville Road in Chester Township. A combination of ice damage and plowing damage during the winter caused the abutment to fail. Emergency repairs had to be carried out via an emergency contract and the work was completed in about three weeks. The County has around 30 to 40 stone arch bridges, and maintaining and repairing them can be labor intensive.

Mr. Vitz shared updates on other several other projects, beginning with the Beach Street Bridge in Rockaway Borough, which will be advertised on May 7. Next was the Indian Falls Road Bridge in Mount Olive with bids due on April 23. The last update was on the Whippany Road and Ford Hill Road intersection in Hanover Township. This is currently an unsignalized intersection that the County will signalize. Whippany Road is four lanes wide and is one of the heavier traveled County roads. In recent years, traffic signal construction is impacted by an extended time to acquire the signal equipment. The materials have a long lead times; they can take 12-18 months from date of order. The construction contract has been awarded but physical work at the intersection starts on the delivery date. Mr. Vitz concluded that it could be up to a year before shovels are in the ground.

Chairperson Resto mentioned how Morris County has done a fantastic job of patching potholes on Shunpike Road.

VIII. Old Business:

Chairperson Resto reported that the state legislature has passed legislation on e-bikes. He felt it was good progress but noted that there is still work to be done. The legislation states that a person must be at least 15 years old to operate an e-bike. A person must schedule an appointment with MVC to receive an e-bike permit, pass a knowledge and vision test, schedule a road test, and practice operating the e-bike unsupervised for 45 days. A registration appointment and e-bike insurance are now necessary, and one must be 18 or older to get insurance, meaning that for those under 18 the insurance must be under the name of the parents. At the registration appointment one must provide ID, proof of ownership, and manufacturer certificate of origin. Speeds are limited to 20 mph, however Chairperson Resto noted that the direction or operation is not specified, nor are sidewalks mentioned. He plans to reach out to his state legislators to say that this is a good start but there needs to be more specifics.

IX. New Business:

Ted Ritter took a moment to praise the diligence of Morris County staff and their familiarity with NJTPA programs, stating that it has helped the County be so successful in applying for and receiving funds.

Mr. Ritter mentioned that the NJTPA has published a new guidebook called "From Streets to Stadiums" in advance of the world cup this summer. It will show towns how they can take advantage of soccer related special events and programs. This could even lead to permanent changes and improvements, i.e. closed streets for public events that could remain in place in the future. This has been successfully observed in other towns with other events across the NJTPA region. The guidebook has a focus on creative placemaking. The guidebook is available on the NJTPA website, which has also been upgraded. Mr. Ritter encouraged members to reach out if they have trouble navigating the new website design.

Manuela Schuster inquired about the Go-Go Grandparent initiative and if it was still in operation, and also asked about bus ridership counts for Morris County. She asked if the ridership recovered from the pandemic. Chairperson Resto mentioned the low ridership on the 873 Bus, and posited that the issue might be the 90-minute headways.

Ms. Schuster also brought up Millbrook Avenue in Randolph and its potentially dangerous intersection with Fords Road. There is a 25 mph speed limit sign, but very nearby there is a 40 mph speed limit sign. She asked if there is a way to slow the cars down earlier. Mr. Vitz mentioned that this section of the road is not under the County's jurisdiction. Mr. Vitz will check with the Randolph Township engineer as this section is the town's responsibility. Chairperson Resto brought up a similar issue with North Passaic Avenue where the signs change from 30 mph to 45 mph to 35 mph to 30 mph and instead of observing these varying speed limits drivers just drive fast.

X: Public Comments: None

XI. The Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 2:00 pm.

XII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:43 p.m.