

*Walkable Community Workshop Summary*  
*Washington Township, Morris County*

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# Walkable Community Workshop

held: December 11, 2007

**Washington Township,  
Morris County**



submitted to:  
**North Jersey  
Transportation  
Planning Authority**

submitted by:  
**County of Morris  
Department of Planning,  
Development & Technology  
Division of Transportation**

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## **I Purpose of the Workshop**

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) coordinated with each county in the NJTPA region in addition to the City of Newark and Jersey City to conduct a series of half-day workshops. The workshops were first conducted in the fall of 2006, and were offered once again in the fall of 2007 to those interested in participating. The workshops are designed to educate and instruct advocates, residents, and professionals to identify barriers to walking and improve pedestrian safety in each of the communities.

Each workshop consisted of four parts: 1) an initial briefing by local stakeholders; 2) a presentation by NJTPA representatives on best practices of walkable communities; 3) a guided walking audit of a study area identified by the local host; and 4) small group sessions from which recommendations for improvements are made. The outcome of each workshop is to identify and prioritize specific improvements that will increase safety and accessibility for pedestrians. The workshops serve as a catalyst for local communities and county representatives to implement the improvements among themselves or develop problem statements to seek funding through NJTPA for planning and construction of the recommendations. An agenda is included as Appendix A.

Each county nominates a municipality and then coordinates with local representatives to develop an invitation list of a broad range of stakeholders including local leaders, planners and engineers, interested business owners, and residents. A listing of workshop participants is included as Appendix D.

## **II Workshop Methodology**

Each workshop begins with an initial briefing by a local representative stakeholder, such as the mayor, police chief, county planner, or representatives from the department of public works—among other groups. During this briefing the workshop facilitator is alerted to existing pedestrian safety hazards, locations of walkable destinations (libraries, schools, municipal buildings, shopping, employment centers, and parks), existing plans for infrastructure improvements, and any other considerations relevant to the outcome of the workshop. The workshop facilitators also get a chance to ask questions of the local representatives during this informal briefing. The briefing may include a walk of the study area (time and weather permitting) or it may be conducted with aid of an aerial map of the township and walking audit area.

Approximately one hour of the workshop is devoted to a PowerPoint presentation of the elements of the walkable community. The presentation begins with an overview of typical barriers to walking. Also discussed are the reasons people commonly cite for not walking. Those reasons form the basis of the second part of the presentation in which best practices of walkable communities are described. The practices range from the easy and inexpensive to implement, to the longer-range solutions, to the novel ideas that can add character to a neighborhood. The final portion of the presentation is dedicated to implementation strategies. Presented are: public health rationale for increasing physical activity, the economic benefits to the individual and the community for becoming more walkable, and the relationship between walkability and improved quality-of-life. Each presentation is customized to reflect local conditions and concerns.



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A guided walking audit follows the presentation. The walk follows a route designated by local officials and varies from an individual intersection to a one-mile-long corridor or more where each participant observes and records their ideas. The purpose of the audit is to apply the concepts and solutions discussed during the earlier presentation to observe specific problem spots, as well as to point out features that are pedestrian friendly. The facilitator stops at various points along the route and asks the group to make observations, and to suggest remedies. Attention is paid to the ease of crossing the road, the quality of the walking experience, driver behavior, and connectivity between destinations—among other indicators.



The third part of the workshop is devoted to a 30-minute group mapping exercise. The participants divide into small groups and gather around street maps of the study area. The groups note the location of specific problems and develop solutions. The groups are encouraged not to be constrained in the scope of their suggestions or to worry about jurisdiction or cost of improvements. The groups are instructed to think beyond infrastructure improvements, and encouraged to consider comprehensive approaches, such as a program that encourages more children to walk to school.



Finally, each group is asked to present its recommendations to the group at large. This is an interactive portion of the workshop and other participants are encouraged to comment on the suggestions presented. Once the groups have presented, the facilitator moves the participants to identify a consensus of what are the highest priority improvements of those discussed. Lastly, these priorities are recorded and each participant is challenged to offer what she/he will do to advance these initiatives.



### **III FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **A. Summary of Existing Conditions**

##### **1. Local Insights**

Washington Township is one of the few municipalities in Morris County where agricultural traditions continue to define the environment. The Long Valley Village was the center of a Moravian community, and today includes some excellent examples of architecture from the late 18th century and early 19th century. The heart of the Moravian settlement is now the Long Valley Historical District, and is included in the National Register of Historic Places.

The community has been able to preserve historic elements such as the scale, density, and architectural integrity of the buildings which has helped to maintain and contribute to the walkability of the corridor. However, over time, pedestrian accessibility has eroded and been overlooked. In spite of this the township has identified their top priority as creating an environment more conducive to walking by

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providing continuous sidewalks, improving crossing locations, and enhancing the overall pedestrian environment that will connect the area known as Long Valley Village, which functions as this community's Main Street, with major destination points throughout.

Several projects are currently underway that will enhance the potential for increased pedestrian activity including: Morris County Parks trailhead improvements at intersection of Columbia Trail & Schooley's Mountain Road; a housing development off Fairview Avenue; community center west of the middle school; and the recent restoration of the village's historic inn reopening as a restaurant.

The roads in the Long Valley Village area are characteristic of rural roads, with one travel lane in each direction, varying shoulder widths, and sporadic presence of curbing or sidewalks. The existing sidewalks are located along one side of the roadway and are either overgrown or being encroached upon by adjacent businesses and residents. They are also in need of repair. Crosswalks are infrequent, and those that exist are faded and worn away.

The township has a growing population where between the years 1980-2000 there was an increase of 54.3% from 11,402 to 17,592. However, density remains less than 1,000 people per square mile.

On Tuesday, December 11, 2007 a Walkable Community Workshop was held in Washington Township (Morris County) from 9:00 am until 12:30 pm. Ron Tindall from NJTPA was the workshop facilitator along with Denise Chaplick from the Morris County Division of Transportation who assisted with the walking audit, and Gail Werner of Washington Township who served as the local host for this event.

The Long Valley Village area was the focus of the workshop. This area encompasses the signalized intersection of East Mill Road and West Mill Road (CR-513) at Schooley's Mountain Road/Fairmount Road (CR-517). The workshop limits extend out for approximately ¼ mile in each direction to the major destination points located within an easy walking distance from the village. These include the Columbia Trail crossing, Zion Lutheran Church and nursery school, and municipal complex to the north, shopping centers to the east, Valley Shepherd Creamery and residential areas to the south, and the Long Valley Middle School and proposed community center to the west.

Washington Township Committee representative Ken Short provided an initial briefing outlining development projects and other improvements around the Township and in the vicinity of the workshop location.



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### **2. Needs/Issues/Opportunities**

Some of the obstacles inhibiting pedestrian safety and access within the study area include inconsistent sidewalks that end abruptly, adjacent land uses encroaching into pedestrian way, limited crossing areas, lack of curb ramps, delayed pedestrian signals, access management issues, and wide intersections with fast turning traffic. All of which restrict the corridors potential for pedestrian activity.

The walking audit began at the Washington Township Municipal Complex and proceeded south along a Schooley's Mountain Road to the intersection of East/West Mill Road. The group walked for approximately ¼ mile in each direction along East Mill, Fairmount Road, East Mill, and then back along Schooley's Mountain Road returning to the municipal complex.

The group made numerous stops along the walking route. Particular attention was paid to the following locations:

- Crossing of Columbia Trail at Schooley's Mountain Road.
- Intersection of Schooley's Mountain Road and Fairview Avenue
- Intersection of East/West Mill Road and Schooley's Mountain Road/Fairmount Road.
- Connectivity along East and West Mill Road.
- Condition of existing sidewalks

The findings of the walking audit are as follows.

#### **Issue Area: Safety**

*Ensuring safety is the primary consideration for walkable communities.*

*Crossings must be safe and well-marked. Motor vehicles must travel at appropriate speeds.*

- Gaps in the sidewalk network, as well as damaged, obstructed, and ill maintained existing sidewalks force pedestrians to walk in the roadway.
- Lack of mid-block crossing along Schooley's Mountain Road at Columbia Trail crossing.
- Conflicts exists between pedestrians and vehicular traffic at the intersection of East/West Mill Road & Schooley's Mountain Road/Fairmount Road due to the skewed alignment of the intersection, wide turning radii, lack of sidewalks, open access, and faded crosswalks.
- Pedestrians have to wait longer than desired for the pedestrian signal to activate, causing them to cross against the light.
- Speed Limits. Establish consistent speed limits throughout core village area of town, preferable 25mph, which is a compatible vehicular travel speed for walkable communities and school zones.



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### Issue Area: Comfort

*Aesthetics are an important determinant in the decision whether to walk. A well-designed pedestrian space encourages more walking.*

- Lighting. High overhead lighting does not illuminate the sidewalk area.
- Sidewalks along the corridor are sporadic, with various gaps in connectivity as well as width.
- Maintenance of sidewalk surface. Crumbling curbs and sidewalks were noticed in several locations.
- Sidewalks are not clear of obstruction including parking, landscaping, and encroachment from adjacent businesses.
- Sidewalks are not maintained, leaves and other debris block access.
- Streetscape is inconsistent.

### Issue Area: Convenience

*Good routes and short distances between destinations encourage trips on foot and by bicycle.*

- Existing sidewalk network does not provide access to major destination points along the corridor. Sidewalks are located along one side of roadway.
- Wayfinding. A few good examples of municipal parking signs exist. However a more consistent and visible wayfinding approach is needed to bring cohesion throughout the downtown area.
- Bicycle parking facilities. Present at the bike shop along West Mill Road. Additional facilities are needed at the trail crossing, school, and shopping centers.
- Quality of bus stops/transit stops. No shelters at the designated transit stops were observed. Stops were generally difficult to locate.
- Benches. Benches are present in front of the municipal parking lot, but sporadically throughout the rest of the corridor.
- Public restrooms and water fountains. Absent.



### Issue Area: Access & Design

*The pedestrian space must reflect the various levels of mobility. Proper design benefits all users, and allows all to participate in the community.*

- Are crossings compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act? No. Curb ramps with truncated domes are not present. Sidewalks are not consistently present, and walking surface is cracked, heaving, and obstructed in several locations.
- Alignment of crosswalks and curb ramps. Curb ramps generally were not present, and crosswalks were faded.
- Access management. The northwest quadrant of the study intersection has open access and does not properly accommodate pedestrians. This is an area of conflict between parking, access, and pedestrians.



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### **B. Summary of Priority Recommendations & Next Steps**

Of all the ideas and recommendations discussed, the Washington Township Stakeholders agreed that the following six (6) should have the highest priority. A complete listing of recommendations, comments and feedback received can be found in Appendix B.

1. **Sidewalks along West Mill Road.** Providing consistent sidewalks along West Mill Road will increase accessibility and minimize conflicts along the corridor for pedestrians walking to and from surrounding destinations such as the proposed community center and existing middle school to the west and shopping center to the east of the village area. The sidewalks should be made of brick to maintain consistency with previous sidewalk installations and to preserve the historic character of the area.
  
2. **Pedestrian safety and accessibility at intersection.** Provide pedestrian improvements at the intersection of East/West Mill Road and Schooley's Mountain Road/Fairmount Road that will include:
  - Upgrade existing traffic signals to be brought up to current MUTCD standards for an offset intersection, and incorporate pedestrian countdown signal heads with push button assembly
  - Install high visibility ladder style crosswalks
  - Install curb ramps and sidewalks to provide fully accessible intersection for all quadrants
  - Reduce pedestrian conflicts by decreasing the size of the northwest curb radii, slowing turning traffic, and replacing the faded painted median across Schooley's Mountain Road.
  - Provide advanced warning signs to inform motorists of approaching signalized intersection and pedestrian crossings.
  
3. **Mid-block crossing at Schooley's Mountain Road & Columbia Trail.** Provide a mid-block crosswalk, advanced warning signs, and traffic calming (if warranted) along Schooley's Mountain Road where the Columbia Trail, a multi-use trail, intersects.
  - Provide high visibility ladder style crosswalk to enhance visibility of crossing
  - Consider traffic calming devices such as curb extensions or raised crosswalk to further emphasize the priority of the mid block crossing. This type of treatment can also assist in reducing speeds. Any raised treatment concept should be coordinated closely with the emergency services personnel.
  - Trail head improvements should clearly define a separate entrance and exit point for the parking area from the mid-block crossing.





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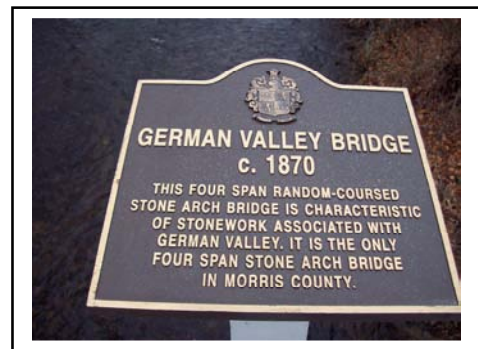
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4. **Streetscape Program.** A comprehensive streetscape program should be developed to include landscaping, lighting, street furnishings, bike parking, and wayfinding signs. The program should provide visitors with convenient amenities, useful information, and clear direction to nearby destinations.



5. **Heritage Awareness Program.** In order to bring more awareness to and recognition of the extensive historic and cultural heritage that exists within the Long Valley Village, a comprehensive program should be developed that features, educates, and promotes this rich legacy.

- Continue to acquire, restore, and revitalize architecture
- Develop media campaigns to promote and attract residents and visitors to local recreational, historical, cultural, and environmental resources.



6. **Pedestrian access to primary destinations.**

Complete gaps in sidewalk network by providing sidewalks in the following locations:

- Fairmount Road
  - Widen existing sidewalk along west side
  - Widen and extend existing sidewalk along east side to Valley Shepherd Creamery
- East Mill Road
  - Champion proposed project to install sidewalks along south side from Fairmount Road to east to shopping center
  - Investigate feasibility of installing sidewalks along north side from Schooley's Mountain Road east to shopping center
- Schooley's Mountain Road
  - Extend sidewalks to municipal complex along west side
  - Provide high visibility crosswalks at intersection of Fairview Avenue
  - Provide mid-block crossing at Columbia Trail crossing
- West Mill Road
  - Champion proposed project to install sidewalks along south side from Fairmount Road to proposed community center south of Middle School.



Washington Township's current sidewalk ordinance requires sidewalk maintenance only in commercial areas. Prior to the implementation of additional sidewalks, the township should modify their sidewalk ordinance to identify all property owners as being responsible for the removal of snow and maintenance of sidewalks.

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Note: The walkable community workshop was conducted over a half-day period and did not involve in-depth evaluation or engineering analysis of existing conditions. Accurate survey data/mapping, additional field evaluation and/or engineering analysis may be required prior to advancing the above recommendations.

<b>PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
<b>Project / Location</b>	<b>Safety Benefit</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Government Agency Responsible</b>
<b>Sidewalks along West Mill Road</b>	Improves consistency and safety of network by providing accessibility between primary destinations	Medium	Washington Township
<b>Pedestrian safety and accessibility at intersection</b>	Reduces pedestrian exposure, and improve accessibility and visibility	Medium	Morris County
<b>Mid-block crossing at Schooley's Mountain Road &amp; Columbia Trail</b>	Reduces pedestrian exposure, and improve accessibility and visibility	Medium to Long	Washington Township & Morris County
<b>Streetscape Program</b>	Improves available amenities, aesthetics and information by providing a unified environment	Short, Medium & Long	Washington Township
<b>Heritage Awareness Program</b>	Enhances pedestrian network by retaining a walkable scale	Short, Medium & Long	Washington Township
<b>Pedestrian access to primary destinations</b>	Improves consistency and safety of network by providing accessibility between primary destinations	Medium to Long	Washington Township

Timeframe:

Short = < One Year

Medium = One to Two Years

Long = > Two Years

#### **IV POST WORKSHOP UPDATE**

Upon completing the workshop, Morris County and Washington Township representatives continued coordination efforts to discuss options for advancing the priorities identified as a result of the workshop. The team identified a potential funding source and agreed to prepare and submit an application for NJTPA's FY2009 Local Safety Program & High Risk Rural Roads Program.

This application is anticipated to rank highly given a portion of the corridor is classified as a High Risk Rural Road, and the township identified the needs through participating in NJTPA's Walkable Community Workshop. This effort and others demonstrates the townships ability to collaborate in regional partnerships, advance safety priorities, and successfully obtain state and regional funding to implement projects.

## **APPENDICES**

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**Appendix A**

**AGENDA**

**Morris County Department of Planning  
Presents a  
Walkable Community Workshop for  
Washington Township  
December 11, 2007**

<b>Agenda Activity</b>	<b>Time Allotted</b>
1. Introduction by Morris County & welcome by Mayor Walsh	10 min. - 9:00-9:10
2. Elements of a Walkable Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Barriers, benefits and real world examples</li><li>• Site Introduction and Review</li></ul>	60 min. - 9:10-10:10
3. Walking Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In field assessments</li></ul>	60 min. - 10:10-11:10
4. Design Solutions (Breakout Sessions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small team working groups</li></ul>	30 min. - 11:10 - 11:40
5. Presentation of Recommendations	30 min. - 11:40-12:10
6. Priorities, Action Plan and Funding	15 min. - 12:10 - 12:25
7. Next Steps, Questions and Wrap up	5 min. - 12:25-12:30
8. Adjourn	12:30

*This Walkable Community Workshop is a program sponsored by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority of Newark, NJ*

*For information on this and other regional transportation programs, visit the NJTPA website at: [njtpa.org](http://njtpa.org)*

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### **Appendix B**

#### **Breakout Group Comments & Feedback**

##### **Group #1**

- Sidewalks along East & West Mill Road
  - Sidewalks along south side of West Mill Road, from the intersection of Fairmount to Long Valley Middle School
  - Sidewalks should extend beyond school to proposed community center
- Pedestrian scale lighting that is historic in nature
- Mid-block crosswalk across Schooley's Mountain Road at Columbia Trail to include striping and wayfinding signs.
  - Include wayfinding signs, shelters, and information kiosks
- Sidewalks along both sides on Schooley's Mountain Road to municipal building bike tracks at shopping areas.
- Widened sidewalk along west side of Fairmount and extend existing sidewalk along east side of Fairmount to sheep farm.
- Sidewalks where gaps exist along East Mill Rd. in front of MUA Building
- Mid-block crosswalk at Long Valley Village
- Welcome sign at entry points
- Replace old pedestrian bridge across stream

##### **Group #2**

- Sidewalks and crosswalks along and across East & West Mill Road
  - Important to encourage healthy and active lifestyles, and establish the heart of town as a destination
- Slow traffic – improve safety for all users
- Bring more awareness to the historic heritage and resources that exist within the township

##### **Group 3**

- Sidewalks along East & West Mill Road, Schooley's Mountain Road, Fairmount, and between shopping centers
- Crosswalks at intersection of:
  - Mill & Schooley's Mountain Road
  - Schooley's Mountain Road and Fairmount
  - Schooley's Mountain Road and Columbia Trail crossing
- Improve pedestrian signals
- Provide left turn arrows
- Enforce maintenance of existing sidewalks
  - Update ordinance

#### **Other Area Projects & Major Planning Considerations:**

- Washington Township is currently preparing a Downtown Revitalization Plan that includes the area evaluated as part of this workshop. The plan will identify improvements to attract and retain business development into the area. Many of the ideas in this plan are expected to support walkable community principles.
- Washington Township has been coordinating with the Morris County Dept. of Engineering and County Parks Dept. to advance the mid-block crossing along Schooley's Mountain Road at

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Columbia Trail. Further review and coordination with NJDOT is required.

- A community center is proposed along West Mill Road, just south of the Middle School.
- Morris County and Washington Township are in the early stages of advancing the Long Valley By-pass project, diverting through traffic (vehicular) away from the workshop study area.
- Washington Township's current sidewalk ordinance requires sidewalk maintenance only in commercial areas. Prior to the implementation of additional sidewalks, the township should modify their sidewalk ordinance to identify all property owners as being responsible for the removal of snow and maintenance of sidewalks.

## **Appendix C**

### **Evaluation Criteria Checklist for Walking Study Area**

#### Safety

##### ***Streets***

Is the Posted speed limit in excess of 35 mph?

Motor vehicle speeds.

Driver yield behavior to pedestrians

Lane widths and road characteristics

##### ***Crossings***

Conditions of Crosswalks

Crosswalk Markings

Other pedestrian-related signage

##### ***Intersections***

Traffic control used

Wide turn radii used

Poor sightlines

Pedestrian signals used?

##### **Comfort**

Lighting (Pedestrian-scale or overhead)

Sidewalk width (appropriate for adjacent uses)

Maintenance of sidewalk surface

Overgrowth of vegetation/trees

Consistency of streetscape

Condition of adjacent properties

Other sidewalk obstructions

Presence of other pedestrians

##### **Convenience**

Wayfinding

Connectivity of street layout

Bicycle parking facilities

Quality of bus stops/transit stops

Bicycle racks on buses

Benches

Public restrooms and water fountains

##### **Access/Design**

Are crossings compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act?

Alignment of crosswalks and curb cuts/curb ramps

Timing of pedestrian phase for traffic lights (adequate crossing time)

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### **Appendix D**

#### **Project Team**

In conjunction with NJTPA, staff members from the Morris County Division of Transportation and Washington Township assisted to complete this event.

If you would like further information regarding this workshop or other related efforts, please contact:

Ron Tindall, NJTPA  
973-639-8416  
[tindall@njtpa.org](mailto:tindall@njtpa.org)  
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Gail Werner, Washington Township  
(908) 876-5941  
[gwerner@wtmorris.net](mailto:gwerner@wtmorris.net)  
<http://www.washtwpmorris.org/>

Other websites that may helpful include:

New Jersey Department of Transportation  
[www.state.nj.us/transportation](http://www.state.nj.us/transportation)

Active Living by Design  
[www.activelivingbydesign.org](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org)

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center  
[www.walkinginfo.org](http://www.walkinginfo.org)



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### **Attendee Listing**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Phone Number/Email</b>
David Collier	Long Valley Middle School	908-876-3434 Ext. 2307 <a href="mailto:Dcollier@WT_SCHOOLS.ORG">Dcollier@WT_SCHOOLS.ORG</a>
Ken Short	Washington Township Committee	
Virginia Kesper	Washington Township Planning	<a href="mailto:vkesper@wtmorris.net">vkesper@wtmorris.net</a>
Leona Harrington	DT. Revitalization L.V. Village Assoc.	<a href="mailto:Leonaharrington@comcast.net">Leonaharrington@comcast.net</a>
Ron Tindall	NJTPA	973-639-8416
Leon Hall	Washington Township Engineer	973-887-2270
Dianne Gallets	Washington Township Administrator	<a href="mailto:dgallets@wtmorris.net">dgallets@wtmorris.net</a>
Caryl Brackenridge	Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission & Downtown Revitalization Committee	<a href="mailto:carylrb@earthlink.net">carylrb@earthlink.net</a>
Michael Bailey	Washington Township Police	<a href="mailto:mbailey@wtpdmorris.org">mbailey@wtpdmorris.org</a>
Chris Steffan	Downtown Committee	<a href="mailto:sleepyhollow3@juno.com">sleepyhollow3@juno.com</a>
David Banisch	Washington Township Planner	<a href="mailto:davidbanisch@banisch.com">davidbanisch@banisch.com</a>
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Vincent Brennan	Rockaway Township Police Dept.	973-983-2934
Denise Chaplick	Morris County Div. of Trans.	<a href="mailto:dchaplick@co.morris.nj.us">dchaplick@co.morris.nj.us</a>
Gail Werner	Washington Township	<a href="mailto:gwerner@wtmorris.net">gwerner@wtmorris.net</a>