

Increased congestion in the Route 57 Corridor has prompted new interest in transit and park-and-ride as an alternative to automobile travel. In recent years, residents of Warren County have shown strong support for the creation of additional transit service. According to a 2004 countywide survey, 60 percent of residents believe that more transportation choices are needed. These choices include new intra-county shuttle bus service, additional park-and-ride lots, and through commuter rail service to Hoboken and New York City.

Despite the expressed sentiment, the 2004 outreach survey also indicated opposition to increased densities around prospective transit centers due to concerns including the impact on school enrollment and finances. Owing to this, the Warren County Strategic Plan concludes that rather than new transit service, regional connections with park and ride accessibility are likely to have the greatest impact on addressing congestion and promoting alternate travel modes, as residents living in dispersed locations within the county would be able to access existing stations via private automobile.

## SHUTTLE BUS SERVICES

Transit dependant groups including students, the elderly, and low-to-moderate income workers in the Route 57 Corridor have few alternatives to automobile travel. Outside of Phillipsburg and Hackettstown (where NJ TRANSIT operates three “Wheels” bus routes), transit service is infrequent or unavailable, with only one route—the Route 57 Shuttle—providing intra-county service (via Washington Borough) to a number of



retail, commercial, and institutional locations. New commercial development in the outskirts of Phillipsburg, Washington, and Hackettstown is expected to increase

According to a 2004 countywide survey, 95% of Warren County residents drive to work; nearly 42 percent of these trips are bound for locations outside the county.

Source: Warren County Strategic Plan

the demand for intra-county transit (specifically, shuttle services that connect low-to-moderate income residents with critical job centers). The Warren County Department of Human Services, which operates the Route 57 Shuttle in addition to on-demand paratransit for residents with special needs, has recently explored the possibility of introducing a “Mid-County Bus” route between Washington Borough, Phillipsburg, and Belvidere via Route 57 and Route 31. The County recommends shuttle service to employment centers outside the Corridor (e.g. Morris County and the Lehigh Valley) to help meet the travel needs of target groups who live in the Corridor but work elsewhere.

## PARK-AND-RIDE AND COMMUTER BUS SERVICE TO NEW YORK

New park-and-ride lots served by higher frequency commuter bus service to New York City—a cost-efficient alternative to passenger rail—are likely to have the greatest impact on



transit ridership in the Route 57 Corridor. Currently, Martz Trailways and Trans-Bridge Lines serve the Corridor with commuter bus service to New York. Martz Trailways buses serve Hackettstown (at the Jigger Shop on Main Street) five times daily, with an additional Monday-Friday inbound run. Trans-Bridge Lines buses serve Greenwich Township (at Phillipsburg Mall on US-22, halfway between Route 57 and I-78) with 28 Monday-Friday runs, and 11 Saturday-Sunday-Holiday



This “shared-use” park-and-ride facility, located at the Pathmark Shopping Center on Route 9 in Old Bridge Township (Middlesex County), is served by frequent bus service to New York. Here, underutilized parking for the shopping center has been set aside for commuters.

runs. The *Warren County Strategic Growth Plan* (April 2004) recommends additional park-and-ride facilities at two locations in the Corridor: the A&P Shopping Center Lot on Route 31 in Washington Township (currently not served by direct transit to New York) and an expanded lot on Route 22 in Greenwich Township. Both park-and-ride facilities would make productive use of existing underutilized surface lots.



Washington Borough was once served by frequent passenger trains to Hoboken (operated by the Lackawanna Railroad). The station was demolished in 1982. However, the line is still active and used by Norfolk Southern freight.

## NJ TRANSIT COMMUTER RAIL

Some interest has been expressed in reactivating passenger rail service between Hackettstown and Phillipsburg on the Washington Secondary Line, which closely follows the Route 57 Corridor. The Washington Secondary is an active single-track Class I freight railroad owned by Norfolk Southern that runs via Port Murray, Washington Borough, New Village and Stewartsville. In Hackettstown, the Washington Secondary Line connects with NJ TRANSIT’s Montclair-Boonton Line and Morristown Line, which offer limited weekday service to Hoboken Terminal (from Dover, service is much more frequent, with Midtown Direct trains to New York-Penn Station). The Washington Secondary Line is one of three “candidate projects” located in Warren County (the other two are the Lackawanna Cutoff, located about 10 miles north of the Route 57 Corridor, and Raritan Valley Line extension to Phillipsburg, located mainly in Hunterdon County south of the Corridor). Stations along these reactivated commuter rail lines would likely consist of traditional park-and-ride lots, with most users accessing the stations via private automobile. Transit-oriented development, which would increase housing densities to at least 10 units per acre around stations in designated centers, has been opposed due to concerns over impacts on school finances. Each of the “candidate” rail projects currently lack funding commitments from NJ TRANSIT.

## PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS AT TRANSIT FACILITIES

Bus and rail stations that are located within walking distance of job centers, shopping, and dense residential areas require pedestrian connections that are attractive, convenient, and safe. Factors such as walkway/sidewalk availability, tree cover, lighting, protection at arterial crossings (e.g. well-marked crosswalks, pedestrian countdown signals, and median refuge islands), and signage all impact the desirability of transit as an alternative to automobile travel. Funding for pedestrian improvements around transit stations in urbanized areas (such as greater Phillipsburg and Hackettstown) is available through the Federal Transit Administration’s Transit Enhancements program. Funding is also available through State-level programs, including NJDOT’s Centers of Place and Transit Village programs. For all present and future bus service in the corridor, it is recommended that provisions be made for designated bus stops and pedestrian accommodations at bus stops. Typical locations would include job sites, retail and schools.

## RESOURCES

### TransOptions

[http://www.transoptions.org/County/Waren\\_area.html](http://www.transoptions.org/County/Waren_area.html)

### Warren County Department of Human Services, Transportation Services

<http://www.co.warren.nj.us/humanservices/admin/transportation.html>

### Warren County Smart Growth Plan – Transportation Technical Study, Warren County Planning Department

[http://www.co.warren.nj.us/transportation\\_study.html](http://www.co.warren.nj.us/transportation_study.html)

### Warren County Smart Growth Plan, Transportation Technical Study, Warren County Planning Department

<http://www.co.warren.nj.us/planning/transportation.html>

### Warren County Strategic Growth Plan, Warren County Planning Department

[http://www.co.warren.nj.us/planning/county\\_strategic\\_growth\\_plan.html](http://www.co.warren.nj.us/planning/county_strategic_growth_plan.html)

## TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Many New Jersey communities are exploring the possibility of Transit-Oriented Development—dense settlements clustered near rail or bus stations which are specifically designed to take advantage of these services. In outlying areas such as the Route 57 corridor, a more limited approach known as Transit-Supportive Infill Development may be appropriate.

Transit-Supportive Infill Development provides for increased density in established neighborhoods and village centers. It helps to support the future expansion of transit service by providing clusters of potential riders who can be conveniently served at a central pickup point. Along Route 57, this type of rider market could potentially attract express bus providers serving northern New Jersey and New York. Instead of having to drive to a park-and-ride lot, residents of these communities could walk or bicycle to the bus depot. Densities would typically range from 10 units per acre upward and neighborhoods could include mixed uses such as shopping, local services and parks.

In addition to supporting future transit service expansion, infill of existing neighborhoods with either residential or mixed use development is also one of the land conservation strategies identified in the Route 57 Corridor Plan.