

## CHAPTER 4 – TRANSPORTATION MODES

### The Automobile

The automobile is by far the most prevalent form of transportation utilized in Hunterdon County. Figure 4.1 illustrates that Hunterdon County is above State percentages for vehicles per household. It is estimated that on average ten trips per day are generated by the typical Hunterdon County household, only four of which are for work purposes. We use cars to shop, run errands and transport our children to their many activities. New single-family homes in the County typically have a three-car garage, an indicator of how reliant we have become on automobiles. Hunterdon County has more cars per household than New Jersey overall. According to the 2000 Census, 82% of all residents in the County drive alone. Adult residents in the County drive an average of 27 miles per day. These statistics support the belief that the state as a whole and Hunterdon County in particular, is extremely reliant on the automobile.

**Figure 4.1** *Vehicles per Owner-Occupied Housing Unit, 2000 US Census*

Number of Vehicles	New Jersey	Hunterdon County
No Vehicles	4.9%	2.0%
1	28.7%	18.2%
2	46.5%	51.4%
3	14.6%	20.5%
4	4.1%	5.6%
5	1.3%	2.4%
Vehicles per Household	1.9	2.2

Automobile dependence can be linked to the land use patterns that characterize most of the County. The majority of Hunterdon’s residents live on large lots that are not within walking distance to jobs, community facilities or retail services. Current zoning strictly segregates residential and nonresidential uses, precluding the construction of compact, mixed-use communities similar to the County’s historic towns and villages. Furthermore, residential streets often end with cul-de-sacs, resulting in a lack of roadway and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and commercial centers.

Empirical studies show that development location, development density, and diversity of local services impact automobile trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). See Figure 4.2 for a review of studies on the relationship of travel modes and land use densities.

**Figure 4.2 Summary of Studies concerning Urban Form, Travel, Energy Consumption and Accessibility**

	<b>Distance Travelled</b>	<b>Modal Split</b>	<b>Energy Consumption</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>
<b>Location</b>	<p>Location of new housing development outside existing urban areas increases distances travelled (Headicar, Curtis 1995)</p> <p>Location close to strategic transport networks increases travel (Headicar, 1997)</p> <p>free-standing development increases travel (Headicar, 1997)</p>	<p>location close to transport networks influences modal split , rail or road (Headicar 1997)</p>	<p>location is an important determinant of energy consumption and car dependency ( Banister et al 1997)</p>	<p>development close to existing urban areas reduces self-containment and thus access to non-car owners (Headicar 1997)</p>
<b>Density of development</b>	<p>total distance travelled varies with density - ' 20% variation in distance travelled results from changing densities' (Banister 1997)</p>	<p>car use in large cities increases at a greater rate if densities are low (Newman and Kenworthy 1989)</p> <p>as densities increase modal split moves towards greater use of rail and bus (Wood et al 1994)</p> <p>relationship between density and car use is not linear but the relationship between density and public transport provision is linear ( Owens 1991)</p> <p>as density increases average trip length, the use of the car and distance travelled reduces ( Banister 1996, Fouchier 1997)</p>	<p>increasing densities reduces energy consumption by transport (Newman and Kenworthy 1989)</p> <p>density is the most important physical variable in determining transport energy consumption (Banister et al 1997)</p>	
<b>Provision of local services and facilities</b>	<p>diversity of services and facilities in close proximity reduces distances travelled (Banister 1996)</p> <p>people prepared to travel further for higher order services and facilities (Banister 1996)</p> <p>local provision reduces trip length and thus total distance travelled ( Farthing et al 1996, Winter et al 1995)</p>	<p>diversity of services and facilities in close proximity alters modal split (Banister 1996)</p> <p>local provision does not determine modal choice, personal and household characteristics are the determinants (Farthing et al 1996)</p>	<p>energy consumption may reduce with local provision as trip lengths reduce and modal split may alter ( to be researched by the URBASSS Project)</p>	<p>accessibility increases with local provision ( to be researched by the URBASSS Project)</p>

Source: The Bartlett School of Planning, <http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/URBASSS/URBASSSexecutivesum.htm>)

## Commuting Patterns

Hunterdon roads are congested the most during morning and afternoon commuting hours. Conventional traffic engineering evaluates volumes of traffic during these “peak hours,” usually 7:00 to 8:00 AM and 5:00 to 6:00 PM. In Hunterdon County, the peak time periods used to evaluate congestion during commuting hours show that more than 60% of County residents leave for work between 6:30 and 8:30 AM.

While increasing population is a major component of peak period traffic, commuters passing through the County from Pennsylvania and other regions of the state are a significant contributing factor. Traffic volumes on roads leading to I-78, such as State Route 31 and County Route 517, have some of the highest rates of traffic growth in the County, and much of this traffic is coming from Warren and Morris Counties. As congestion increases on major commuter routes, County and local roads are increasingly utilized as alternative routes. In the meantime, these roads are experiencing greater volumes of traffic due to new residential development. Figure 4.3 illustrates commuter work destinations and Figure 4.4 shows the average travel time to work by commuters in Hunterdon County.

**Figure 4.3: 2006 US Census**

<b>Commuting patterns: Workers who live in these counties and who work within Hunterdon and Counties in the Region.</b>					
	<b>Hunterdon</b>	<b>Morris</b>	<b>Mercer</b>	<b>Somerset</b>	<b>Middlesex</b>
<b>Hunterdon</b>	<b>25761</b> <b>41.3%</b>	<b>3656</b> <b>5.9%</b>	<b>3492</b> <b>5.6%</b>	<b>12,983</b> <b>20.8%</b>	<b>4133</b> <b>6.6%</b>
<b>Warren</b>	<b>5326</b>	<b>9273</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>3653</b>	<b>1366</b>
<b>Bucks &amp; Northampton, PA</b>	<b>5986</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>20973</b>	<b>4680</b>	<b>4592</b>

**Figure 4.4: 2006 US Census**

<b>Travel Time to Work By Number of Commuters in Hunterdon County, 2000</b>			
0 – 4 minutes	1,854	30 – 34 minutes	6,822
5 – 9 minutes	4,609	35 – 39 minutes	2,916
10 - 14 minutes	5,686	40 – 44 minutes	3,864
15 - 19 minutes	5,499	45 – 59 minutes	8,773
20 – 24 minutes	5,987	60 – 89 minutes	6,509
25 – 29 minutes	3,702	90 or more minutes	2,473

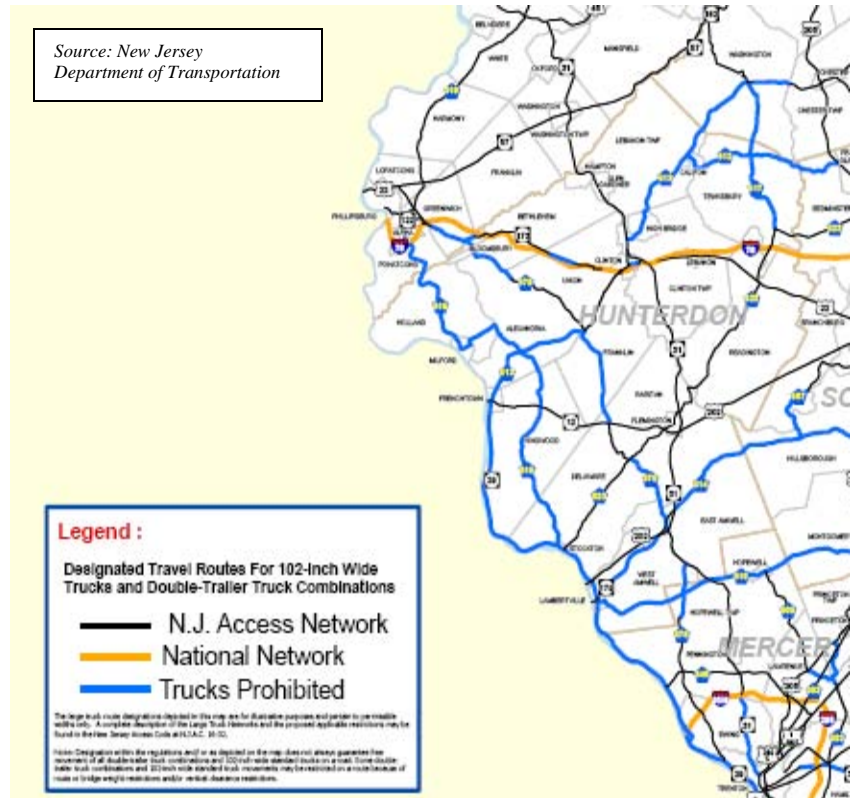
## Trucks

Truck traffic has become a major concern to County residents over the past decade. With the growth of containerized shipping at the Ports of Newark and Elizabeth, the volume of truck traffic along Interstate 78 has increased significantly. A recently developed multimodal transportation center in the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania, which transfers cargo containers from trains to trucks, will increase truck traffic on the Interstate even more. Further adding to traffic congestion and safety concerns, the highway hosts an increasing amount of

commuter and holiday traffic traveling east from Pennsylvania and western New Jersey to the New York City Metropolitan area. of equal concern to County residents are increases in the number of trucks on state, County and local roads. Much of this growth in truck traffic can be attributed to development in the County, where an expanding population has generated a demand for new retail services. In addition, residential development itself is accountable for much of the truck traffic we experience daily. It is estimated that each newly constructed home generates over 200 truck trips during the course of construction.

Of greater concern, however, is truck traffic that has neither an origin nor a destination in the County. This traffic may be traveling through the County in order to avoid Turnpike tolls or greater congestion on more direct routes. With the completion of I-287 in northern New Jersey in the mid-1990's, there was a dramatic increase in truck traffic on Route 31 in the County as truckers found an alternative route around suburban areas to the east.

County Roads that have been experiencing increased truck traffic from the bypassing of Routes 31 and 22/78 include Routes 513, 523, 625 and 635.



Recently, new NJDOT Truck Routing rules were established for large trucks (double-trailer truck combinations and 102 inch wide standard trucks). These rules require large trucks to utilize the National Network unless seeking food, fuel, rest, repairs, or to reach a terminal by the direct route, which entails the shortest travel distance. Upon completing each trip, the large truck should return to the National Network in a manner consistent with reaching its next terminal. Trips off of the National Network or the New Jersey Access Network onto all other local unrestricted roadways in the County should only be for the purpose of accessing a terminal on those roadways by the shortest distance. These rules should help reduce the volume of trucks using the County road system to reach destinations outside of the County.

## **Aviation**

### **Airports**

There are three general aviation airports located in Hunterdon County: Alexandria Field, Sky Manor and Solberg-Hunterdon airport. General aviation airports are those facilities that do not serve regularly scheduled commercial operations. All three are privately owned, public use airports, which have been in existence for decades, contributing greatly to the County's economy. These airports provide tremendous value to our County by allowing people to learn about aviation and to also become licensed pilots. These licensed pilots go onto further training and some will eventually become commercial airline pilots. These general use airports also provide maintenance to aircraft owners. Many maintenance mechanics start off in their field by working for smaller airports and eventually can gain enough experience to work for major airlines. It is clear that as demand is at or near capacity at the nearby airports in Essex County, Morristown and Teterboro; the smaller general use airports will need to pick up some of this demand.

Alexandria Field opened in 1944 and was started by William Melvin Fritsche. His original concept was for an airport to train people to become pilots. He was also interested in the use of airports for those individuals who traveled at their leisure. This airport is still run by his family today. They still provide training to people interested in becoming pilots but have also incorporated the concept of an airpark into their master plan for the airport. Residents close to Alexandria field have the ability to taxi a private plane from their home and take off on the airports runway. Alexandria field also provides summer camps for young children interested in learning about aviation and the science that goes into becoming a pilot.

Sky Manor airport is another small-scale airfield that is connected to surrounding properties, providing opportunities for airplanes to be taxied onto airport property directly from private homes. Sky Manor is

known for its small restaurant. Pilots often will fly in, grab a bite to eat and fly out. Sky Manor also serves as a launching pad for hot air balloons which dot the pastoral landscape of Hunterdon County.

Solberg-Hunterdon Airport in Readington Township is a designated reliever airport. Reliever airports serve aircraft outside of the congested airspace of Newark, Kennedy and Philadelphia Airports, providing local access to the national transportation system. In the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems, 1990-1999, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) considered the Solberg-Hunterdon Airport a necessary component of the national air space system. As part of the NJ state airport system plan, Solberg airport was deemed a priority general airport and because of this designation, the state of NJ recommended Solberg airport is developed to the maximum extent feasible based on local development, financial, environmental, ownership and community considerations. A master plan for the airport was prepared, using federal funding, which outlined ways to modernize the facility.



Solberg airport hosts the N.J. Festival of Ballooning every summer. This is a three-day event that features music, food and hot air balloons. People from all over the region come to enjoy this spectacular event. In 2008 the festival hopes to draw some 175,000 people to the airport. Economic impact studies done for this event indicate the festival draws an estimated 8 million dollars annually.

**Economic impacts of Hunterdon County Airports**

The following economic data is provided by the NJDOT, Division of Aeronautics. Employment measures the number of full-time equivalent jobs related to aviation activity. Payroll measures the total annual wages and benefits paid to all workers whose salaries are directly or indirectly attributable to aviation activity. Output measures the value of all goods and services related to general aviation in New Jersey.

	<i>Total Employment</i>	<i>Total Payroll</i>	<i>Total Output</i>
<b>Solberg Airport</b>	96	\$3,117,300	\$7,631,700
<b>Sky Manor Airport</b>	87	\$2,886,900	\$5,946,600
<b>Alexandria Airport</b>	59	\$1,424,700	\$4,010,300

The financial impacts provided by these airports across the state are enormous. For the entire state of New Jersey airports provide over 18,048 jobs. They contribute over \$624 million in payroll wages. It is estimated that the total economic output from these general aviation airports for the state is \$1.7 billion.

## **Multi-Modal Transportation**

### **Public Transportation**

Although the County has experienced significant job growth over the last two decades, according to the 2000 Census, a majority of residents commute to jobs outside Hunterdon (58.9%). More than 82% of residents travel to work alone with an average commute time of 33.5 minutes. There are several reasons for the extremely low percentage of residents who use public transit for commuting purposes (1.7%). The only intra-County public transportation is primarily designed to serve the County's elderly and provide transportation for the disadvantaged populations. The inter-county service available from Hunterdon County primarily connects to Newark and New York City. As a result, neither of these services meets the needs of County commuters who are travelling to jobs along the interstate corridors to the east.

### ***The LINK***

The Hunterdon County Department of Human Services (DHS), on behalf of the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders, operates a consolidated County transportation system known as "The LINK". This service has been operating throughout the County since its inception in 1984. Services have been altered over the years in response to the changing needs of the County, under the supervision of the



Hunterdon County Transportation Advisory Committee (HCTAC), a broad-based group representing the various agencies and groups in the county.

The current LINK service is a blend of fixed route, flexible route, and demand response services. DHS outsources road operations and dispatch services for the provision of the scheduling and dispatching functions of the coordinated system. These services are operated from the DHS building in Flemington. The LINK system operates thirteen (13) routes and collectors, Cross County Service and Shuffle services, all of which operate on staggered schedules between the general hours of 7:00 am and 6:00 pm on weekdays with some service offered on Wednesday and Friday evenings from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm. The Flemington Shuffle also operates an extended evening service Monday through Friday from 6:00 pm to 11:00 pm, as well as Saturday service in the Flemington Area from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm.

### ***NJ Transit***

New Jersey Transit operates rail service into and out of Hunterdon County along its Raritan Valley Line. Service operates between Newark Penn Station and High Bridge as well as numerous points in between. From Newark Penn Station, connections can be made to New York City and other NJ Transit rail lines, PATH service, Amtrak and local bus and subway service in Newark. Four stations along the Raritan Valley Line are located in Hunterdon County. They are: High Bridge, Annandale (Clinton Twp), Lebanon Borough, and Whitehouse (Readington Twp). Average daily boarding at the four stops is about 200. Five trains, going inbound to Newark, serve all four stations Monday through Friday.



### ***Trans Bridge Lines***

Trans Bridge Lines operates local bus service into Hunterdon County from Pennsylvania to Newark Airport and New York. Trans-Bridge Lines have transit stops are located along the I-78 corridor and in Union Township, Clinton, Lambertville, Frenchtown and Flemington. Although frequent service is provided during commuting hours, service is limited during the rest of the day and for reverse commutes (trips during rush hour with destinations in Hunterdon County).

### **Park and Ride**

Park and ride lots are public transport stations that serve bus and rail passengers, as well as those who carpool or vanpool. Parking at all Hunterdon County Park & Rides is free. However, space is limited and is on a first-come basis. In addition to the modest-sized lots at the four Raritan Valley Line rail stations, commuter lots are found in Clinton Township, Flemington, Union Township, Kingwood Township and Tewksbury Township.



### ***Hunterdon County Park & Rides:***

#### **Annandale Square Park/Ride**

- Beaver Ave. at Old Allerton Road, Clinton Twp.
- TransBridge bus service to Wall St.

**Clinton Township Point Park/Ride** - I-78, Rt. 31 & 22 (Center St.), Clinton Twp. - TransBridge, NJ Transit Wheels, Carpool/Vanpool

#### **Flemington Park/Ride**

- Rt. 12 Liberty Village, Flemington Boro
- TransBridge bus service

#### **Hunterdon Hills Playhouse Park/Ride**

- Rt. 173, Union Twp.
- TransBridge bus service
- Permit (free) required at Hunterdon Hills.

#### **Kingwood Township Park/Ride**

- Intersection of SR 12 & CR 519
- Bank parking lot
- TransBridge, Carpool/Vanpool

#### **Oldwick Park/Ride**

- I-78 & Oldwick Road (Dead end street), Tewksbury
- Carpool/Vanpool only



**Clinton Pointe Park & Ride**

In Clinton Township, the demand for parking spaces at two existing park-and-ride lots exceeds the number available. Through the NJTPA I-78 Corridor study, the New Jersey Department of Transportation and New Jersey Transit are considering alternative approaches to address park-and-ride needs that facilitate greater transit usage, while decreasing traffic congestion on the I-78 Corridor. The NJTPA I-78 Corridor study will be discussed in Chapter 7.

### ***HART Commuter Information Services***

HART Commuter Information Services is the Transportation Management Association (TMA) serving Hunterdon County. HART is funded by the NJ Department of Transportation (NJDOT), NJ TRANSIT and other funding sources to provide information and support to commuters traveling to and within Hunterdon County. HART's mission is to educate the commuting public on alternatives to single occupancy vehicles, facilitate the creation of carpools and vanpools, support the use of public transportation and advocate for travel demand management. HART currently supports more than 300 carpools traveling to over 65 Hunterdon County worksites.

### *Funding Opportunities*

- *NJ TRANSIT Capital Programs* - A municipality seeking capital improvements to NJ TRANSIT bus and rail transit infrastructure may write a letter to the agency describing the problem area. NJ TRANSIT will assess the problem area and will evaluate possible capital improvements intended to address it.
- *NJ Transit Community Shuttle Program* - NJ TRANSIT's Community Shuttle Program offers a community the opportunity to provide its residents with shuttle service to and from a rail station, major bus corridor or a light rail station, during "peak" periods (6-9 a.m. and 4-7 p.m.). The program is a competitive process, open to any municipality or County. NJ TRANSIT uses federal funds to purchase 20-passenger minibuses that are leased, at no cost, to municipalities/counties for use.
- *NJ Transit Local and Community Transportation Programs* - The Local Programs and Minibus Support Unit administers the state casino revenue funds passed through to counties, as well as the federal Transit Administration's Section 5310 (Capital Assistance for Senior and Disabled Transportation programs) and Section 5311 (Assistance for non-urban transportation programs) funds. Out of these funds, 85% is available to the counties through NJ TRANSIT for capital, operating, and administrative expenses for the provision of locally coordinated para-transit services.
- *Transit Village Program* - Program is designed to assist municipalities who have been formally designated as Transit Villages by the Commissioner of Transportation and the inter-agency Transit Village Task Force.

### *Survey Responses on Public Transportation*

Access to public transportation is relatively limited in Hunterdon County.

However, according to survey responses, the public transportation that is available is important to municipalities.

Approximately 70% of respondents noted that the availability of the TransBridge Bus was "Very" or "Somewhat" important to their community. Though offering very limited service in Hunterdon, the New Jersey Transit Raritan Valley Line rail service was ranked as "Very" or "Somewhat" important by nearly half (46%) of respondents.

The vast majority of respondents reported that public transportation in Hunterdon County is used by residents primarily as a mode of commuting to work (73%), followed by "Personal Appointments (32%) and Recreation (14%).

In terms of perceived destinations, New York City was viewed as the primary destination (54%), followed by Hunterdon County (22%) and Newark (16%). However, one third (32%) noted that they were "Not Sure" of the destination of public transit users in their community.

Access to stations, parking constraints and service destinations were all cited by close to half of respondents (46-48%) as perceived obstacles to residents using public transportation.

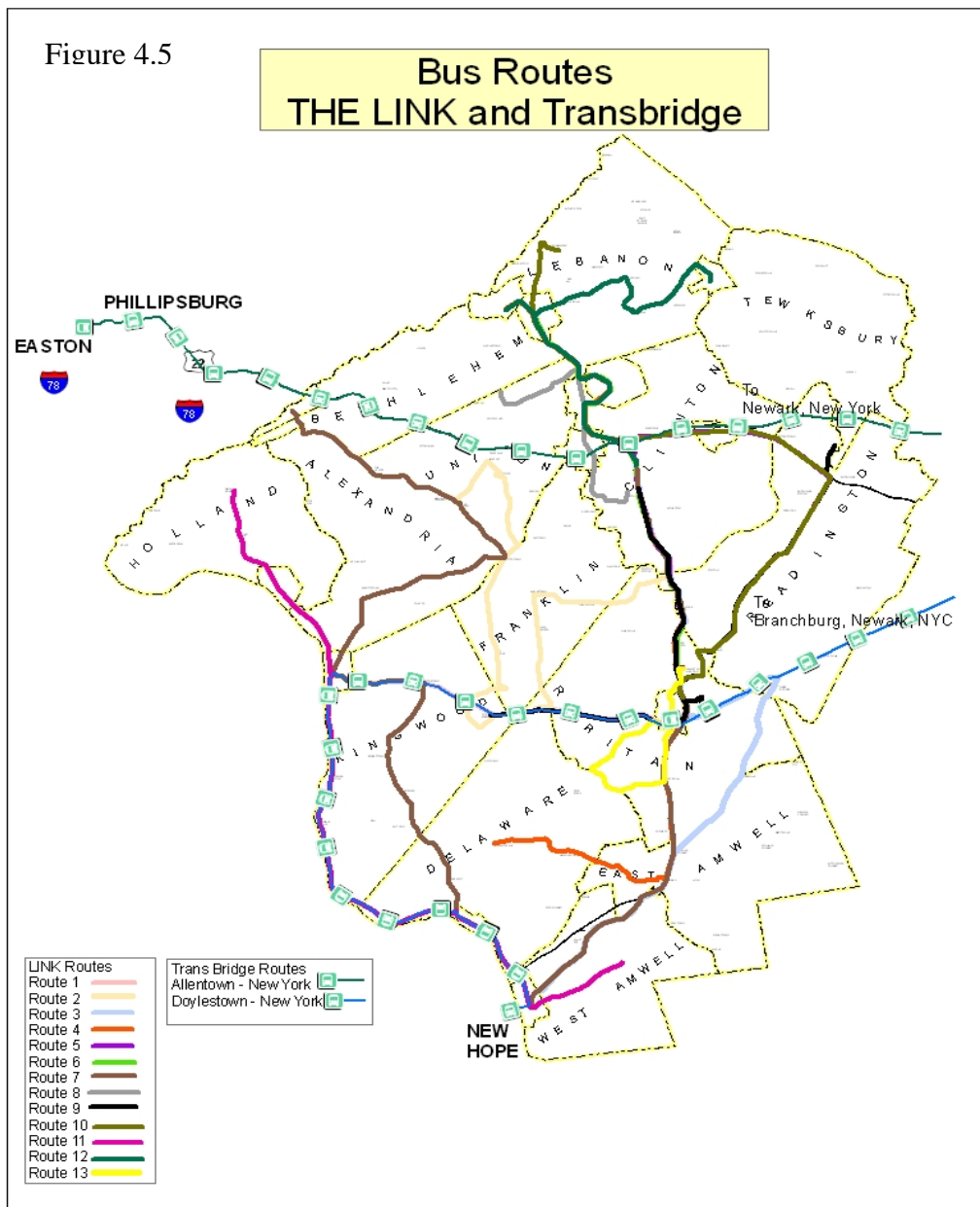
### *Public meeting comments*

The public response to the problems with public transportation in Hunterdon was very detailed. The consensus from the public was for NJ Transit to provide better service in Hunterdon County. Faster service, express trains and Saturday service to New York City is a need for the residents. Many residents use the rails but are unable to go or return from New York City during evening hours. NJ Transit currently has four (4) rail stations and the residents would like to see new stations in Flemington and Hampton Borough.

Many complaints were voiced regarding the issues with Park & Rides in the County. There are currently six (6) park and rides which are always filled to capacity. The public suggested that shared parking at churches or other places would alleviate parking congestion and brownfield sites are a great location for new parking facilities. New park and ride sites were suggested in Alpha and Phillipsburg, PA.

Complaints were also raised regarding bus service in Hunterdon County. The current bus service providers are TransBridge and The LINK. Many residents complained that TransBridge is too expensive to ride at \$400 monthly and also that more stops are needed within the County. The overall complaint regarding the LINK is the length of travel time. The public suggested the buses should travel in the third lane on Route 22. Both bus providers need to have service to Trenton, NJ.

The Figure 4.5 was displayed at the public information meetings; it was prepared by the Hunterdon County Planning staff using the County Division of GIS data.



## **Non-Motorized Transportation**

### **Bicycles**

Hunterdon County has become a popular destination for biking enthusiasts. Traditionally, bicycling has not been a primary mode of transportation. Opportunities exist for all types of bicyclists, including both recreational and commuter cyclists. State and County roads present challenges for the avid rider, meandering local roads offer an unsurpassed visual experience for the recreational cyclist and the D&R Canal State Park offers a popular riding trail that is suitable for families with small children.

With the increased popularity of recreational bicycling in the past decade, conflicts between bicycles and cars have been increasing on all types of roads in the County. On narrow country roads that lack shoulders, many drivers become frustrated with cyclists who have no alternative to riding in the cartway. Parents are reluctant to allow children to ride to school and sports activities, fearing for their safety. Properly designed bikeways can ensure a safe cycling environment, allowing parents to become more comfortable with their children on both off-road and on-road bikeways, which in turn, could reduce the number of daily household car trips. Incorporating a public education program will also help to ensure the safety of bicyclists.

### **Bicycle Facility Types**

There are four basic facility types for bicyclists:

- *Shared Roadway* – A road or highway where both motorists and cyclists are sharing the road with no provision for special facilities
- *Signed Shared Roadway* – A shared road where bicycle travel is encouraged through bike route signs.
- *Bike Lane* - Bike lanes are established with appropriate pavement markings and signing along streets in corridors where there is significant bicycle demand. Bike lanes are intended to delineate the right of way assigned to bicyclists and motorists and to provide for more predictable movements by each. Essentially, a bike lane is an area delineated, but not separated, from the travel lane on a roadway. Bike lanes can be formed through restriping roads and signage if appropriate pavement width exists. It is important that preventative maintenance and other measures are taken to maintain this street facility. Bicycle safe drainage inlets, smooth pavement surfaces and traffic signals responsive to bicyclists are recommended. Regular maintenance should be a top priority, since bicyclists are unable to use lanes with potholes, debris, or broken glass. Bike lanes should be a minimum of four feet wide. If motor vehicle speeds exceed 35 mph, if the percentage of trucks, buses, and recreational vehicles is high or if static obstructions exist at the right side, then additional width is desirable.
- *Shared Use Path*: A bicycle path is different from a bike lane because it is physically separated from the roadway. Generally, paths should be used to serve corridors not served by streets and highways or where wide utility or former railroad right-of-way exists, permitting such facilities to be constructed away from the influence of parallel streets. Shared use paths offer opportunities not provided by the road system

In 1997, the Hunterdon County Planning Board prepared the *County Road Bicycle Facility Assessment*, which identified roads and activity centers that could be linked together by a network of bicycle routes. It established criteria by which road segments should be analyzed before seeking funding for bikeway construction. In 2001 the County Planning Board adopted the *Hunterdon County Bicycle and Pedestrian Element* of the County Master Plan to buttress funding requests for County bikeways. See Figure 4.6 for a map of the proposed bike routes and Appendix F for a detailed description of all proposed routes.

#### *Funding Opportunities*

*NJDOT Bikeways Program* – This program awards grants to municipalities to help increase the number of bicycle trips and improve bicycle safety in the state of New Jersey. NJDOT provides funds for local projects that will result in the creation of new, independent bicycle facilities. NJDOT encourages municipalities to apply for funding for bikeways that are physically separated from vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier.

*NJDOT Locally Initiated Bicycle Projects* – This program provides funds for municipalities and counties for the construction of bicycle projects. These could include roadway improvements, which enable a roadway or street to safely accommodate bicycle traffic, or designated bikeways (signed bike routes, bike lanes or multi-use trails).

*National Highway System* - Monies through this federal program can be used by a state, County or municipality for bicycle and pedestrian projects which are on land directly adjacent to any road of the 155,000 mile national highway or interstate system.

See Appendix E for a list of all funding programs, including Pedestrian mobility and safety.

#### *Survey Results*

Thirty percent (30%) of survey respondents reported that bicycling is a common mode of transportation within their communities. More than half, 51%, report that it is “Not” common and even more (72%) do not have bicycle facilities within their municipality.

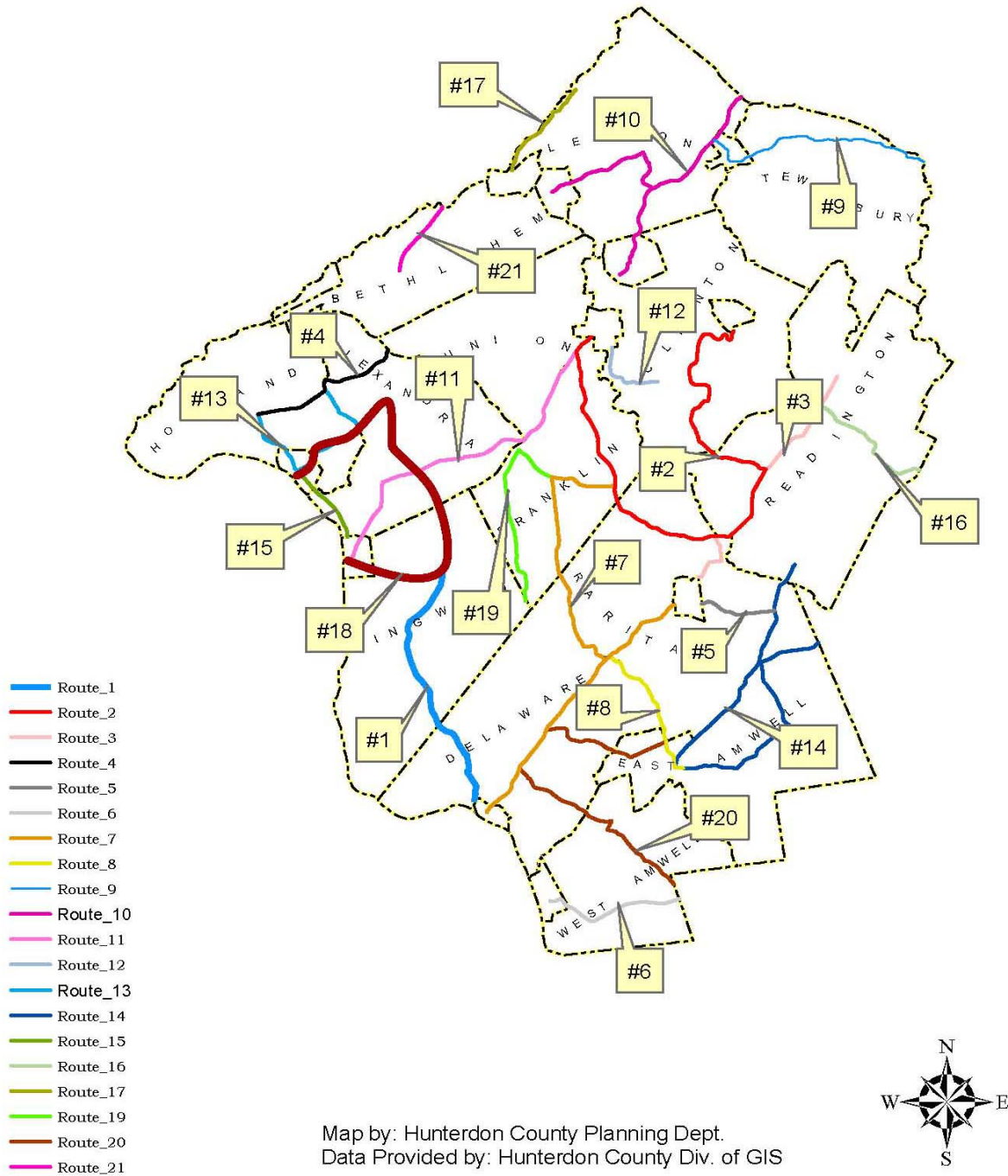
Respondents described the current environment on County and local roads as generally “Poor” with “Inadequate road widths/shoulders” and a “Lack of designated bike lanes”.

Both “Motorist awareness” and “Bicyclist Awareness” were noted as “Poor” on both County and local roads.

Suggestions for improving the bicycling environment within Hunterdon County included: “More multi use paths” (59%); “Increased motorist awareness/share the road” (57%); “More designated bicycle lanes” (51%) and “Increased bicyclist awareness/share the road” (43%).

Figure 4.6: Proposed Bicycle Routes by Number

# Proposed Bicycle Routes by Number



### *Public Meetings Summary*

Despite the apparent interest in the utilization of County roads for bicycling routes which would connect activity centers to one another, it was evident that concerns regarding safety and accommodation exist among the public.

The necessity to educate cyclists to better ‘share the road’ was expressed. Cyclists were described as having a tendency to form ‘Pack Groups’, riding in clusters of ten to fifteen in order to protect themselves as well as establish their right-of-way on County roads. This type of riding was described as a cause of traffic congestion and increasing the potential of automobile and cyclist conflict. County Road 617 was specifically cited as an area where cyclists do not ride in single file and essentially monopolize the road. The attendees expressed the need for ‘share the road’ signage and ‘campaigns’ to promote the safe and fair use of bicycles on County roads.

An area of concern that was identified pertaining to bicycle safety and accommodation was the shoulders along County roads. Route 513 in Clinton was cited as an area notorious for the existence of shoulder debris. A lack of shoulder maintenance and sweeping was cited along all County routes. It was mentioned that bike lanes were created on Cloverhill Road, and were not utilized due to infrequent sweeping.

The attendees not only expressed their desire to have the ability to safely bike to activity centers using County roads, but they also voiced the importance of bike lanes and bike paths regarding these structures ability to connect citizens with open space, including existing parks and trails. It was voiced that along State Route 173 great potential existed, where a bike path could be created to connect Clinton Town with the Spruce Run Recreation Area.

Municipalities that are interested in pursuing dedicated bikeways along County roads should contact the Hunterdon County Planning Board for more information about opportunities for County assistance. The County Planning Board is also actively participating in the federally funded Safe Routes to School program and will continue to work with municipalities who are interested in participating in the grant funded program.

### **Pedestrian Mobility**

The availability of pedestrian facilities along County roads is an important issue due to increased emphasis on increased multi-modal opportunities within the County. Although the majority of pedestrian facility creation and expansion



Flemington Walkable Community Workshop –September 2006

opportunities lie along municipal roads, there are still available opportunities for sidewalks, crosswalks at intersections on County roads. A municipal request for installation of sidewalks along County roads or bridges must be recommended and approved by the Office of the County Engineer and the Hunterdon County Planning Board and authorized by the Board of Chosen Freeholders. If authorized, the

ownership and maintenance of the sidewalk must be in accordance with Municipal ordinances. The request must be compatible with an overall pedestrian circulation plan for the area.

Sidewalks are portions of the road right-of-way designed for preferential or exclusive use by pedestrians. Both recreational and non-recreational users utilize sidewalks. Sidewalks are not meant to be used by bicyclists, with the exception of young children. Sidewalks are generally located in fairly urban areas or in areas where residential densities are sufficient to warrant sidewalks. Five feet is the minimum width that allows safe and convenient pedestrian traffic movement. The sidewalk serves as a collector, channeling people from various properties and uses to a dedicated pedestrian facility.

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is a national initiative that aims to encourage and enable children to walk and bicycle to school. The main objectives of the program are:

- To enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school;
- To make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age;
- To facilitate the planning, development and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) launched this \$15 million program in 2006. Any state, municipal government, school district or non-profit organization may apply for SRTS funds. Currently, three County municipalities have applied for the program, however there are many other communities that would benefit from the program.

The Walking School Bus is a national program that encourages groups of children with at least one adult to walk to school and provides walkability guidelines for route planning. HART Commuter Information Services has provided grants for three local elementary schools to promote this program. HART also provides technical assistance to communities and schools seeking to promote bicycling and walking. Both of these programs illustrate simple ways that communities can link school planning to increased mobility for students.

#### *Funding Opportunities*

*NJDOT Locally Initiated Pedestrian Projects* - This program provides funds for municipalities and counties for the construction of pedestrian access and safety improvements. It includes the Safe Routes to School program.



*National Highway System* - Monies through this federal program can be used by a state, County or municipality for bicycle and pedestrian projects which are on land directly adjacent to any road of the 155,000 mile national highway or interstate system.

*Safe Routes to School (SRTS)* – See above.

See Appendix E for a list of all funding programs available for Pedestrian mobility and safety.

### *Survey Results*

A majority of respondents described the availability of sidewalks in their community as “Poor” (43.2%). As a rural County, many municipalities do not currently have sidewalks at all. Among those with sidewalks, 22% reported the physical condition of the sidewalks as “Satisfactory”, followed by “Good” (19%), and “Poor” (16%). “Connectivity” of sidewalks also rated “Poor” (38%), but 19% rated their sidewalks network as “Very Good” or “Good”.

Nearly 60% of respondents reported the condition of “Pedestrian Crossing Signage” in their community as “Satisfactory” or “Poor”, but 19% reported the condition as “Good”. More than a third, 35%, of respondents indicated that the road widths were conducive to pedestrian crossing, but nearly as many, 27%, reported that the road widths were not conducive (Poor) to pedestrian crossing. Motorist speed was cited as the most significant threat to pedestrians (59%).

In terms of suggestions for improving the pedestrian/bicycling environment in Hunterdon County, respondents noted “Motorist Speed” (68%), followed by “Motorist Awareness /Driver Courtesy” (51%) as factors to be improved.

Adequate roadway widths and the presence of shoulders” were cited by 49% of respondents and “Availability of Sidewalks” was noted by 43%. Pedestrian and Bicycle Awareness were also cited as needing significant improvement by 43% and 49% respectively.

### *Public meeting summary*

Problematic areas that impede pedestrian travel were specifically addressed. These areas included state and County, as well as municipal roads. County Route 513, in close proximity to the Pittstown Inn was cited as a safety hazard area for pedestrian crossing. State Route 173 and Center Street in Clinton were also cited as areas that are not conducive to pedestrian crossing and travel. Representatives from Union Township cited that existing roads were not conducive to pedestrian crossing, and moreover, accessing an existing park. A consensus supporting more pedestrian signage was apparent.

A great concern was the safety of pedestrians using shoulders on County roads where sidewalks do not exist. The presence of” infants being ‘strolled’ along the shoulders against high volume traffic and significant motorist speed was cited.

The presence of disconnected sidewalks that do not adequately support pedestrian travel was identified. Attendees from Califon expressed concern regarding the creation and maintenance of sidewalks, and cited the existence of disjointed sidewalks within their Borough. The mayor of Califon voiced concern regarding an inability to create sidewalks where homeowners are unwilling to grant easements for sidewalk development.

A desire was expressed for the creation of sidewalks that will act as connectors between developments throughout the County. The mayor of Flemington responded by stating that sidewalks are a municipal function, and furthermore, a municipal responsibility. Despite this sentiment, the consensus revealed that County involvement and coordination with municipalities would be beneficial in the way of creating adequate sidewalk development. The “Toll Brothers” development in Alexandria Township was cited as a success in the way on accommodating pedestrian traffic and safety by created a ‘walking path’, connecting one of their developments to a school in Alexandria Township.

