



# NJ Walks and Bikes

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Newsletter

Encouraging alternative transportation in New Jersey

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### News in Brief

[Hudson River Front Walkway](#)

[Pedestrian Countdown Signals](#)

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### Did you know?

Just 3 hours of bicycling per week can reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke by 50%.

Source: CDC

### [NJ Walks and Bikes Newsletter—Issue 1](#)

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## This Issue's Spotlight... Pedestrian Safety Enforcement Workshops



The concept of a pilot Pedestrian Safety Enforcement (PSE) workshop specifically geared to pedestrian safety for law enforcement personnel, fills a perceived need. This particular workshop and its format have been tested and offered in dozens of locations both nationally and internationally to high acclaim.

[More Details](#)

### Watchung Lake Park Sidewalk Loop

The Watchung Lake Park has most recently added a one-mile sidewalk loop surrounding the park area, which has generated an increased interest in and usage of the park and a renewed vitality among area residents. Now, people go to the park not just to play baseball, or to enjoy the playground equipment or to sled in winter, but also, to simply walk.

[More Details](#)

Welcome to the second issue of *New Jersey Walks and Bikes*, a newsletter for anyone interested in bicycle and pedestrian issues.

[More Details](#)

### Trail Plans— Community Recreation and More



New Jersey residents enjoy a diverse network of trails for recreation and transportation. Trail creation and management, whether for a single trail or an entire network, benefits from organized, inclusive planning. A trails plan can essentially be a master plan that identifies possible trail opportunities.

[More Details](#)

### Walkable Downtowns



Creating a walkable downtown is a great asset to the health, growth and sustainability of a city or town. In a state where residents are largely dependent upon the auto, the ability to walk outdoors on the classic town Main Street is a pleasant change from the constant stop and go traffic and artificial environments of New Jersey's suburbs and malls.

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**NJ Walks and Bikes - Issue 2, December 2007**

A Project of the NJ Department of Transportation

Funded by the Federal Highway Administration

Produced at the Alan M. Voorhees

Transportation Center at Rutgers University

### Check it Out!

Check out the [NJ Bike/Ped Resource Center](#) for the latest planning, policy, and design research, as well as links to other great resources

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## Welcome



Welcome to this second issue of *New Jersey Walks and Bikes*, a newsletter for anyone interested in bicycle and pedestrian issues. In this issue, we spotlight several interesting stories, including the Pedestrian Safety Enforcement Workshop, which is an effort to educate and inform law enforcement personnel on ways to improve pedestrian safety on our roadways. The newsletter also highlights different approaches to creating pedestrian friendly communities. For example, the article "Watchung Lake Park Sidewalk Loop: If You Build It, They Will Come", illustrates the transformation of a recreation park into a walkable park with a new one-mile concrete sidewalk loop. Further examples of renewed vitality from pedestrian friendly projects like Watchung Lake Park can also be read about in the article, "Walkable Downtowns". This piece describes strategies for creating a Walkable Downtown environment and examines South Bound Brook's success in developing a pedestrian friendly downtown. In this addition we also highlight, "Trail Plans – Community Recreation and More", which details the diverse network of trails that New Jersey residents can take advantage of for recreation and transportation. Finally, the "News in Brief" section highlights pedestrian countdown signals, as well as the pedestrian waterfront walkway along the Hudson River,

with its beautiful view of the New York City skyline. The "Hudson River Front Walkway" article profiles this 18.5 mile walkway, its present construction status and the support this impressive pedestrian accessibility project is generating.

I hope you enjoy this second issue of the newsletter and we invite your feedback. If you have a story idea you would like to share for a future issue, please fill out our survey which you can find at the top of the home page. As always, thank you for your interest and support in making New Jersey a safe walkable and bikeable state!

—Sheree Davis

NJ Department of Transportation  
Bicycle and Pedestrian Program  
Coordinator

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## Pedestrian Safety Enforcement Workshops: Working Together For Positive Change



### Background

Pedestrian safety is an issue that is illustrated by statistics (NJ 2003-2005: 460 pedestrian fatalities, 17,400 injuries) which are the quantifiable, sorrowful product of behavior. Unfortunately, in NJ, the statistics show that being a pedestrian can be dangerous. The lack of deference towards pedestrians can be observed at almost any crosswalk in NJ, so it is the exception when a motorist will yield to a pedestrian, despite laws that give the pedestrian the right-of-way in crosswalks. Changing motorist and pedestrian behavior to improve safety has been the subject of discussion and policy initiatives from state agencies to community task forces.

A commonly held tenet is that the pedestrian environment can be modified by altering three key variables which affect that environment – specifically, Engineering and Planning; Education; and Enforcement, all of which are often referred to as the “3E’s”.

The “E” that is best understood and most often relied upon to help improve the pedestrian environment is the Engineering and Planning response. After all, changing the physical environment by improving or providing better facilities, such as sidewalks, striped crosswalks and lighting changes the pedestrian environment and has a tangible

and perceptible result. However, changing the physical environment, although important, is not the only variable that must be addressed to improve our pedestrian environment. Rather, it is also the variables that deal with altering behavior (i.e. Education and Enforcement) that are equally important to address.

Specifically, in the case of Enforcement, there are not many training opportunities offered that specifically deal with pedestrian safety. For this reason, the concept of a pilot Pedestrian Safety Enforcement (PSE) workshop, specifically geared to pedestrian safety for law enforcement personnel, filled a perceived need. This particular workshop and its format have been tested and offered in dozens of locations both nationally and internationally to high acclaim.

The NJ pilot was jointly sponsored by the New Jersey Division of Highway and Traffic Safety (NJDHTS), the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), the New Jersey Police Traffic Officer Association (NJPTOA), and the New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center (NJBPRC). For the New Jersey workshop, held at Rutgers University’s Voorhees Transportation Center on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2007 and led by Dr. Ron Van Houten and Louis

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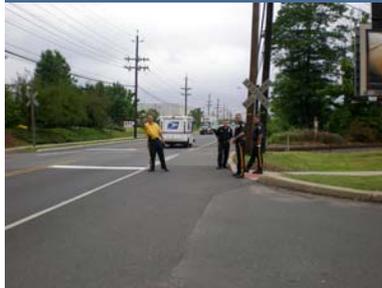
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## Bicycle and Pedestrian Newsletter

Encouraging alternative transportation in New Jersey

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Mallefant of the Center for Education and Research in Safety, 26 officers from 14 different police departments participated.

#### What is a Pedestrian Safety Enforcement Workshop?

A PSE workshop is divided into two phases: educational and operational. Overall, a PSE workshop educates enforcement personnel on pedestrian safety issues/concerns and the contributing factors related to these issues/concerns and potential responses to them; reviews how the law addresses pedestrian crossings and the related duties of motorists and pedestrians; and lastly, outlines simple but functional enforcement operations that can be conducted by the police to improve pedestrian safety.

Among the most important objectives for the educational portion of the PSE workshop is for enforcement personnel to understand "why are we doing this" and the need for enforcement. The "why" of it can be summed up with four simple points: (1) rules that are not enforced are often ignored; (2) enforcement gives credibility to engineering and education efforts; (3) enforcement increases compliance and awareness; and (4) following the rules increases safety.

PSE operations, designed to change behavior, are carried out by enforcement officials on a schedule over several months. They usually start with more intensive operations carried out for the first two weeks and then ramp down to less frequent operations. Generally, warnings are initially issued, but as operations progress violations with penalties are substituted. Studies have shown dramatic increases in "yielding behavior" over the course of operations that last for an extended period of time as well as the "generalized" behavior modification of increased yielding in surrounding areas that are not the actual sites of operations (<http://tinyurl.com/3csgk6>).

Operations are often accompanied by a media blitz to educate the community at large about the program and the fact that operations will be carried out. Secondary benefits to the operations are that motorists who are stopped afford officers the opportunity to assess seatbelt, speeding, and other safety violations.

#### The New Jersey Workshop

##### Education:

During the educational part of the New Jersey pilot workshop, the extent of the pedestrian safety problem is discussed and is illustrated by both national and state

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statistics. Key factors contributing to the problem are reviewed; including driver related causes such as failure to yield to pedestrians, excessive speeds, and driver inattention as well as pedestrian related causes such as darting out, crossing against the traffic signal, inattention, and alcohol use. Participants are briefed on countermeasures that can improve pedestrian safety including engineering, education and enforcement techniques. Of critical importance to this segment of the workshop is the review and discussion of the relevant NJ statutes that govern motor vehicle/pedestrian interaction (Title 39 – Motor Vehicles and Traffic Regulations), which helps to increase participant understanding and familiarity with the enforceable legal duties and rights of pedestrians and motorists. Please follow this link

<http://tinyurl.com/363htr> to review the educational Power Point presentation used in the workshop.

#### Operations

The advantage of the PSE operations phase is that it is both simple to set up and run but is also very effective. In the case of the New Jersey pilot workshop, operations were conducted over several hours instead of over several months. The basics of a given PSE operation are as follows: (1) identify the crosswalks that will serve as the site of the operation.

In the case of the New Jersey workshop, two locations were chosen in New Brunswick – an unsignalized crosswalk off of Livingston Avenue and one off of Jersey Avenue. (2) Set up orange safety traffic cones at the side of the road a prescribed distance from the crosswalk. The cones represent the point where a motorist has ample time to stop or yield to a pedestrian who enters the crosswalk, while the motorist is beyond the cone (away from the intersection). The required distance is a conservative estimate, based on a given roadway's speed limit, and provides ample stopping distance for the vehicle. (3) assign teams of officers to fill three roles. The first role is that of the "decoy pedestrian", whose duty is to cross the roadway in the crosswalk when other pedestrians are not present, so that the other members of the team can determine whether or not motorists are "yielding" to the pedestrian according to the law. The other roles are the "spotter" and the "flagger": the spotter is located on the sidewalk where he/she can see the cones, who radios failure to yield violations to the flaggers, who are the officers who then "flag" the violators down and usher them to the side of the road in a designated area.

Motorists who are pulled over are informed they have been stopped

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because they failed to yield to a pedestrian in a crosswalk. These motorists are given a warning flyer, which includes information on pedestrian safety statistics and explains the law on motorist duties toward pedestrians. Officers can also use this time to educate violators on penalties that can be assessed for a given violation and to share community specific pedestrian safety issues or incidents that have occurred.

#### Evaluation of New Jersey Pilot:

Over the course of approximately three hours of operations at the New Jersey PSE workshop, there were 126 warnings issued at the Livingston Avenue site and 105 issued at the Jersey Avenue site. Participating officers were universally shocked at the level to which motorists did not yield to pedestrians, even when the pedestrians were officers in uniform or were visually impaired pedestrians being escorted across the street with a walking cane! Overall, the operations illustrated the extent to which motorists are unaware of the law or dismissive of it. Every officer in attendance agreed that the operations were both simple and effective to implement and expressed interest in conducting similar initiatives in their respective communities. Universally, participating officers agreed that the greatest obstacle to carrying out operations is the availability of funding.

#### **The Next Steps for New Jersey**

The pilot offering of the workshop has encouraged NJDOT, NJDHTS, and enforcement personnel to evaluate whether or not other PSE Training Workshops would be desirable in New Jersey. The first hand experience of enforcement officers with the program and the overwhelmingly positive response to the need for, desirability of, and benefits of the workshops have prompted DHTS, NJDOT, and NJBPRC to again partner in offering workshops in 2008, with input from NJPTOA. DHTS has also agreed that PSE operations carried out by enforcement are eligible activities for the DHTS Safety Grants.

In addition, DHTS and NJDOT are working with NJBPRC to identify several pilot sites where operations can be carried out over an extended period of time and evaluated. Operations will be carried out by enforcement and evaluated by NJBPRC for their effectiveness in modifying driver yield behavior. Enforcement officers, who carry out the operations, as well as representatives from community government, will be interviewed about their perceptions of PSE operations and their associated benefits.

Stay tuned for news on this exciting program and for more information or updates, please submit a request via e-mail to [rwalia@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:rwalia@rci.rutgers.edu)

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### Watchung Lake Park Sidewalk Loop: If you Build It, They Will Come



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Nestled in the center of the suburban community of Watchung, NJ located in Somerset County, lies the Watchung Lake Park, a recreation area that affords locals a pleasant venue to gather to enjoy the facility's playground, lake, sledding hill and adjacent baseball field. The Watchung Lake Park has most recently added a one-mile sidewalk loop surrounding the park area, which has generated an increased interest in and usage of the park and a renewed vitality among area residents. Now, people go to the park not just to play baseball, or to enjoy the playground equipment or to sled in winter, but also, to simply walk.

#### Project History

The Borough of Watchung is approximately 6 square miles, with 5,613 residents (2000 Census). According to Borough Clerk Administrator Laureen Fellin, the idea for the Watchung Lake Park redevelopment project first occurred in 1991, with the Borough's recognition that the Watchung Lake dam needed attention and should be dredged and rebuilt. At that time, the town determined that beautifying the overall lake environment and surrounding park would have a positive impact on the community and should be pursued in conjunction with the dam redevelopment efforts.

In response to the Borough's request for project support,

Somerset County became involved and suggested the inclusion of a sidewalk loop in the park redevelopment plan. The County then developed a sidewalk plan concept that was revised and approved by the Borough. Former Borough Council member H. Gren Bunker, who served as Chair of the Watchung Lake Committee, spearheaded the eliciting of public input for the project. Mr. Bunker helped advertise the town's interest in redeveloping the lake area via local newspapers and convened and facilitated meetings with residents on the project. According to Ms. Fellin, Borough residents overwhelmingly supported the park revitalization efforts. Ultimately, the county paid for the sidewalk construction and the Borough obtained the necessary easements from residents living along the lake, which generated no costs.

#### The Sidewalk Loop

The concrete sidewalk loop itself is one-mile in distance and is nearly contiguous, except for a brief segment located near one of the two parking facilities surrounding the park. There are also some shorter, internal paths within the loop made of Bomanite concrete, which is ornamental concrete patterned in this instance, to give the look and feel of a natural stone path. Along the sidewalk and in the

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## Watchung Lake Park Sidewalk Loop: If you Build It, They Will Come

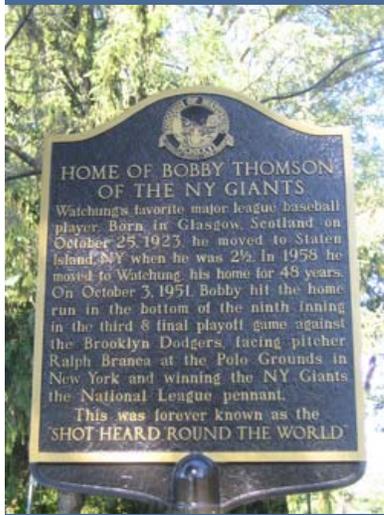


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interior of the park are two gazebos, 23 benches and 19 “memorial” trees, all of which were paid for via private donations from residents.

One of the most popular features of the loop is a placard honoring longtime Watchung resident, civic activist and famed NY Giants baseball legend, Robert “Bobby” Thomson, who is well-known for hitting the home run – known simply as the “shot heard round the world” – that won the 1951 National League pennant for the Giants in a playoff with the Brooklyn Dodgers. The suggestion to honor Mr. Thomson with a placard at the Watchung Lake Park was initiated by two members of the Borough’s Historical Committee. Today, many walkers on the loop circuit can be seen pausing in their journeys to read the placard dedication.

Although no formal pedestrian counts along the sidewalk loop have been undertaken, it is well acknowledged by both Borough officials and residents that the loop is well utilized, days and evenings, weekdays and weekends. It has become a venue for exercise/ recreation, serves to further beautify the town, and has contributed to a healthier, more inviting, and habitable environment for all. As Watchung Mayor Albert Ellis remarked, “We are thrilled with

the success of our lake project. It has become a centerpiece of recreation for our residents and also for many folks from neighboring communities in Somerset County as well as the counties that surround us.”

### ***Making a Connection***

Various thoughts exist about connecting the self-contained sidewalk to other parts of the community. For example, the Borough is currently working with Somerset County on an initiative to enhance the entrance into Watchung, called the Gateway project, and the possible extension of the Sidewalk Loop at Watchung Lake to this area is under consideration. Another potential connection to the Watchung Lake Sidewalk Loop may come with the conversion of a 20-acre parcel of open space land the Borough has acquired that will be designated for recreational purposes. Building a sidewalk between that property and the Watchung Lake sidewalk would afford residents increased opportunities to explore and enjoy their community on foot.

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## Trail Plans – Community Recreation and More



New Jersey residents enjoy a diverse network of trails for recreation and transportation. There are as many different types of trails as there are trail users:

**Multi-use paths** attract both walkers and cyclists. The trail surface may be paved with asphalt or composed of crushed stone or gravel. Included are long distance rail trails, which follow abandoned railroad corridors, and canal towpath trails along with a multitude of short paths in state, county, and local parks. Paved paths typically accommodate wheelchair users and in-line skaters, while some unpaved paths are open to equestrians and motorized all-terrain vehicles.

**On-road bicycle routes** are designed to take cyclists through scenic areas or to notable destinations. Often cyclists use maps, directions, and signs to follow the route. Two notable examples are the Cumberland County Bicycle Route that has signage marking the route and the High Point to Cape May route, which has no signs but is described on a cue sheet.

**Hiking trails** are typically only open to users on foot. The trail surface may be composed of dirt, sand, or rock. Hiking trail networks exist all across the state within local, county, and state parks. Notable long-distance hiking trails in New Jersey include the Appalachian Trail in Warren and Sussex counties and the Batona

Trail in the Pine Barrens of Burlington County.

**Water trails** are inland water bodies that are promoted for recreational use by boats, canoes and kayaks. Maps and guides provide information on natural/scenic features and launch sites, parking, camping, and restrooms. Examples include the Rancocas Creek Canoe Trail in Burlington County and the Sedge Island Canoe and Kayak Water Trail in Island Beach State Park.

### Trails Plans

Trail creation and management, whether for a single trail or an entire network, benefits from organized, inclusive planning. Trails Plans are varied in scope. Some plans are simply focused on a single trail or corridor, while others may be looking to develop an entire network to serve the needs of municipality, county or state.

A trails plan can essentially be a master plan that identifies possible trail opportunities. As with a municipal Master Plan, it should be used as a reference document so that decision makers such as local officials, land managers, developers, planners and engineers can incorporate the trails into any land development or open space plans.

Depending on the nature of a project, a trails planning effort may

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## Trail Plans – Community Recreation and More



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look to locate possible trail corridors first. Other times, particularly when many routing options are available, it may be more important to identify users and critical destinations. Often it is a combination of both processes simultaneously that determine where a trail is needed and where it could go. The Colorado State Trails Plan explains this methodology the best: "the heart of a trails plan is nothing more than some lines on a map. Everything else is support for why you drew the lines, or help for those who will try to turn the lines into trails."

Trails plans can have a number of other objectives:

- Describe existing trails, trail users, and trail needs
- Provide opportunities for public involvement
- Define how the trail/network should be designed and managed
- Identify land acquisition needs
- Encourage coordination among towns, counties, and state and federal agencies
- Promote Recommended Actions for agencies and groups involved in trails
- Identify funding sources for planning, design, construction, maintenance, mapping, and promotion of trails
- Describe how the trail or trail network should be promoted

### NJ State Trails Plan

New Jersey has a statewide trails plan for the State Trails System. The latest update for this plan was completed in 1996, and has the following four specific goals:

- 1) Provide a vision of what a State Trails System should be in the future;
- 2) Identify trails and trail systems eligible for the State Trails System or routes that can be developed into trails to expand the system in the future;
- 3) Identify new issues affecting trails that have arisen since 1982, and plan for these issues in the use, development and management of trails in the State Trails System; and
- 4) Set goals for implementation of the State Trails Plan.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), in a cooperative effort, are currently developing an update to the State Trails Plan. The draft Vision and Action Plan is expected to be released for public comment by the end of the year. More information about the Vision and Action Plan can be found at [www.njtrailsplan.org](http://www.njtrailsplan.org).

### Other Notable Trail Planning Efforts

**East Coast Greenway** – The East Coast Greenway (ECG) is envisioned one day to be a 3,000 mile traffic-free

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path linking East Coast cities from Maine to Florida. NJDOT sponsored a planning study to identify a feasible route through the urbanized northern part of the ECG corridor in New Jersey, from New Brunswick to New York City. According to the 2004 ECG Northern New Jersey Route Location Study, "the proposed route has been identified on the basis of many kinds of research. The preliminary choices were based on ECG's route evaluation criteria. Then field investigations, a review of currently proposed trail projects, and Geographic Information System mapping contributed toward the selection of a primary route. Interviews and meetings with county and local stakeholders were key in gaining the local knowledge needed to define an alignment and build consensus for the Greenway. The study analyzed the conditions along the route to determine which segments already exist, which segments are under development, and which segments need to be built to provide a continuous route. Finally, the study developed short, medium and long-term timelines for implementing the recommended route to establish a framework for funding needs and route completion."

Completion of the planning study, and association of the trail with a multi-state vision, is already starting to institutionalize the route within state and local government. The ECG route has been cited as the impetus for providing bicycle access across highways and

bridges and for advancing stalled local trail proposals.

#### Randolph Township Trail Network

The trail network in Randolph Township, Morris County, had its origins in the late 1970's and early 1980's when the Township was looking to create a facility for its high school cross-country running team. It did not take long for the Township to realize the value of linking all of its parks, open spaces and schools with trails. Fortunately for Randolph, the trails plan had champions on the Township Council and working in town hall who understood the value and potential of the plan. Working with both land preservation groups and developers, the Township has been able to secure critical links between trail segments, which has resulted in a fairly comprehensive trail network. Ninety percent of design and construction costs have been funded through state grants and developer contributions.

The Randolph trail network is a work in progress, as the Township continues to pursue easements and funding to expand the network. Despite early concerns expressed by some residents about negative impacts from the trails, the results have been overwhelmingly positive. To encourage the use of the trail network, Randolph Township's Mayor's Wellness Campaign and St. Clare's Health System partnered to create Stroll, Roll or Run, a series of

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### Trail Plans – Community Recreation and More

summer trail events. Randolph Township has also opened its trails to high school cross-country teams from around the region.

#### **Garden State Greenways –**

Garden State Greenways is a user friendly computer mapping tool developed to make it easier for people without specialized skills to use geographic data for making trail planning decisions. Developed by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation with help from NJDEP's Green Acres program and the Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis at Rutgers University, the geographic data presented is specifically tailored to the needs of greenway and trail planners. It provides an interactive statewide map of undeveloped lands (forest, farmland and wetlands hubs) and other potential trail connectors.

#### **Resources**

<http://tinyurl.com/2dcg59>

**New Jersey State Trails Plan Update:**

<http://tinyurl.com/yowogo>

**NJDOT Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Program**

<http://tinyurl.com/24ft6y>

**New Jersey Trail Program:**

<http://tinyurl.com/2b4y7b>

**East Coast Greenway:**

<http://tinyurl.com/ysa5a3>

**Randolph Trail System:**

<http://tinyurl.com/26bt9w>

**Randolph Stroll, Roll, or Run:**

<http://tinyurl.com/yolqe3>

**American Trails:**

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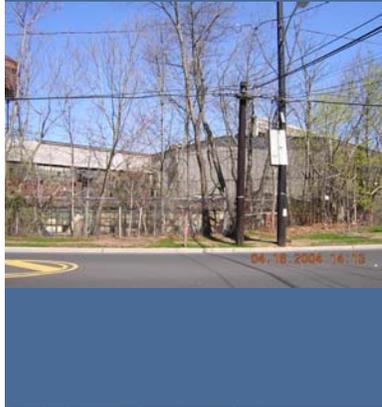
# NJ Walks and Bikes

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Newsletter

Encouraging alternative transportation in New Jersey

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### Walkable Downtowns



Creating a walkable downtown is a great asset to the health, growth and sustainability of a city or town. In a state where residents are largely dependent upon the auto, the ability to walk outdoors down the classic town Main Street is a pleasant change from the constant stop and go traffic and artificial environments of New Jersey's suburbs and malls.

Why is a walkable downtown so beneficial? Designing a downtown that gets people to walk cuts down auto congestion, appeals visually to visitors and residents and shapes a wealthier, safer, healthier and friendlier street environment. The presence of pedestrians on a Main Street encourages a vibrant and safe downtown. A downtown filled with pedestrians/customers is an incentive for business growth and spurs residential investment.

Not only is walking a healthy way to relax and learn more about your community, it is also an inexpensive way for individuals to address their needs for physical activity and concerns about greenhouse gas emissions. Walking is a cheap and easy way to add physical activity, accessible to a broad spectrum of ages and abilities. In addition, people are increasingly looking for a lifestyle that is less dependent on the car, particularly senior citizens.

Now that the benefits of a walkable downtown are understood, what are the elements of a good walkable downtown and how can they be achieved? Sidewalks and

lighting create a safe, understandable and organized way of getting around on foot. The sidewalk and neighboring roadways should be balanced on a scale where the pedestrian is not intimidated by the car. This means that the sidewalk needs to be wide enough to make pedestrians feel safe from street traffic. Street crossings should be boldly marked, with adequate signage and lighting, and with sufficient time to cross intersections. A landscaped median with a pedestrian refuge, raised crosswalks, and curb extensions can make it easier for pedestrians to walk across the street and encourage drivers to slow down. Clearly marked off-street parking that encourages visitors to "park once and walk", signs for drivers and pedestrians, and walkable street connections to residential areas can all contribute to a downtown's walkability. Traffic calming and a rational and sufficient parking system are useful tools for achieving these conditions.

But, beyond those features, it's the creativity in the design of the downtown that can make it an interesting place to be. Attractiveness, sociability, comfort and safety are key words in the design aspects of a walkable downtown. Here are some questions that need to be asked when creating a well designed walkable downtown: Are the buildings easily accessible and visible from a passer-by on the sidewalk? Do the street trees provide

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pleasant overhangs for shade and color to the street? Is there street furniture for people to sit, rest their feet and chat? Are the transit stops clean and comfortable?

If you are interested in creating a walkable downtown in your community please see the resources listed below as a starting point:

1. New Jersey Future, Working for Smarter Growth: More livable places and open spaces: <http://tinyurl.com/2nsyap>
2. Department of Transportation, New Jersey FIT: Future in Transportation, Lively Main Streets: <http://tinyurl.com/38otl4>
3. Principals of the Smart Growth Network, Create Walkable Neighborhoods: <http://tinyurl.com/2u4urs>
4. Transportation Policy Institute at Rutgers University, Creating More Walkable Communities: <http://tinyurl.com/2tul43>
5. New Jersey Community Affairs, Office of Smart Growth, Main Street New Jersey: <http://tinyurl.com/3xtv2o>
6. Project for Public Spaces, Building community, Creating places, Using Common Sense: <http://tinyurl.com/3xpp6n>
7. Michigan Land Use Institute, Going to Town, New Urbanism Arrives in Northwest Michigan: <http://tinyurl.com/3xu9c3>
8. Local Government Commission Center for Livable Communities, The Economic Benefits of Walkable Communities: <http://tinyurl.com/344yqj>
9. Joel Hirschhorn and Paul Souza, *New Community Design to the Rescue; Fulfilling Another American Dream*, National Governor's Association: <http://tinyurl.com/2mouxb>
10. International Downtown Association: <http://tinyurl.com/3dknp5>
11. Victoria Transit Policy Institute, The Value of Downtown: <http://tinyurl.com/3x2umx>

### South Bound Brook Downtown Revitalized: A Walkable Downtown Profile

When South Bound Brook, a Somerset County borough on the Delaware & Raritan Canal and Raritan River, started planning for a redeveloped downtown, its leaders sought to make it walkable. With a population in 2000 of 4,492 residents, the town has a 300 year history, with a historic canal-front location and convenient train access to Newark and New York City from neighboring Bound Brook. Borough officials, led by Mayor Joann Shubert and the Borough Council, sought, through redevelopment, to rediscover and blend two worlds: small town charm in an accessible metropolitan environment.

The goal of improving South Bound Brook's downtown business center

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was to transform a business district that had fallen idle for 20 years into a vibrant place. A keystone of that plan was the remediation of an abandoned asbestos roofing shingle company (60,000 tons of contaminated soil were removed and replaced with 80,000 tons of fill) with the help of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and redevelopment of the 11 acre site, fronting on the Delaware and Raritan Canal and Main Street, into 152 townhouses, attractive to office workers who would like to commute by train from the nearby NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line station in Bound Brook.

Accompanying this massive environmental clean-up and redevelopment project, South Bound Brook's redevelopment strategy also focused on revitalization of its downtown through improvements to facade enhancements, streetscape, and use of its canal asset. At its present near completion stage, there has been substantial change to the visual appearance of the street, and a synergy and compatibility between residential, business, recreation, cultural and social uses within the downtown.

Preliminary planning for the redevelopment of the remediation site and downtown revitalization began in 1998 with ground breaking in 2004. In parallel to the clean-up of the abandoned factory site, the facades of buildings on Main Street were improved. Colin Driver, Redevelopment Coordinator

of South Bound Brook's downtown, estimates that about 50 to 60 percent of the buildings on Main Street have enhanced their facades. The South Bound Brook facade committee worked with local businesses to enhance their downtown buildings' physical appearance with a 50% matching fund from a Somerset County grant.

Not only have the facade changes greatly enhanced the visual appearance of the downtown, the streetscape has benefited as well. The sidewalk has been widened at certain spots to create uniformity. Crosswalks are now visible, and wayfinding signage is on every block to mark public and religious points of interest. Awnings and shade trees give the street color. New street benches, garbage receptacles and bicycle racks have been installed. New decorative white lighting has been added, replacing less appealing yellow lighting used in the past. And traffic or medium islands are used to funnel and slow traffic to the appropriate 25 mph speed limit. Finally, the Borough took advantage of the presence of the historic canal by developing a recreational area near it.

Colin Driver describes the current style of the Borough's principal artery as a "Rockwell of the American Saturday Evening Post" that brings people in to shop and stroll down Main Street. Businesses have boasted increased sales since the redevelopment. Driver highlights that

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“no Borough money was used” in any of the town’s redevelopment. They “used grants wherever we could”, so as not to charge the residents of South Bound Brook a penny. \$1.5 million came from federal grants, and additional funding came from private investment and the NJDEP (for contamination cleanup). This financial support has created a downtown that brings residents to the center of town to congregate, socialize and shop. Residents of South Bound Brook are very pleased with their town’s enhancements and hope to see its progress grow even further in the future.

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[Home](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#)

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### News in Brief

#### “Hudson River Front Walkway”

The grand view of New York City’s skyline from the New Jersey Hudson River waterfront is inspiring. Beginning in 1966, the Regional Plan Association created a vision to utilize this prime space to provide additional park, recreation and open space for the residents of the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area. Today, Hudson County and Bergen County are in the process of completing a 18.5 mile public walkway from the George Washington Bridge to the Bayonne Bridge. The route will also serve as an alternative “urban walkway” for the East Coast Greenway. Not only will it serve for recreational purposes, it will also provide economic development for neighboring retail and restaurants, enhance the urban landscape, provide environmental and ecological benefits and highlight the history of the waterfront through educational tours.

The Hudson River Front Walkway is still in the process of being completed. Sections of the walkway are owned by the municipalities, the state and by private developers. Some portions of the walkway are complete with pavement, lighting and benches, while others sections are still being planned. Private developers who own waterfront property have an obligation to develop the walkway and make it accessible to the public through New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection permit approval. Interestingly, a majority of the walkway is

being built by the private developer.

The path is supported by the Hudson River Waterfront Conservancy and Hudson County. The Hudson River Waterfront Conservancy brought the proposed hike-bike walkway that was intended for the top of the Palisades, to the river’s edge in 1977. The Conservancy’s beneficial efforts have provided for public access to the waterfront. More information on the Conservancy’s efforts to enhance the Hudson River Front Walkway can be found at, [www.hudsonriverwaterfront.org](http://www.hudsonriverwaterfront.org).

In 2000, Hudson County implemented the Hudson River Front Walkway Implementation Study. The study was initiated by the Smart Growth Planning Grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. It will assist in the completion of the 18.5 mile walkway through the seven Hudson County municipalities that are situated along the Hudson. The Hudson River Front Walkway Implementation Study can be viewed at:

[www.hudsoncountynj.org/planning/hrww.asp](http://www.hudsoncountynj.org/planning/hrww.asp).



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### News in Brief



#### **Pedestrian Countdown Signals**

Pedestrian countdown signals are a popular new technology that display the clearance time to cross a roadway at a signalized crosswalk. The signal displays the number of seconds left until the “Don’t Walk” phase appears and opposing traffic has the green light. Countdown signals are an alternative to traditional “Walk/Don’t Walk” or “flashing hand” pedestrian signal heads.

The purpose of this innovation is to help pedestrians decide, whether it is safe to begin crossing the street, reducing the likelihood that a person is still in the intersection when the opposing traffic receives a green. Signal pedestrian countdown signals have the potential to improve pedestrian safety and mobility at crosswalks, particularly at multi-lane, high-speed roadways.

The City of Berkeley, California completed a 2005 before/after study of countdown signals. The study found improvements in pedestrian crossing patterns when “Walk/Don’t Walk” signal heads were replaced with countdown signal heads. The study, which analyzed 11 intersections in Berkeley, found that countdown signals led to a 5% improvement in the number of people who waited for the next “Walking” phase and avoided the “Flashing Don’t Walk” phase, as well as a 5% reduction in the number of pedestrians caught in the middle of

the street when cars have the right-of-way. These observations suggest that pedestrian countdown signals may help pedestrians make better decisions.

In general, the decision to install a countdown signal at a particular intersection is based on pedestrian crash history, percentage of older pedestrians, tourist pedestrians and school age children who use the crosswalk, as well as roadway speed, width, and number of lanes. In both New Jersey and Florida, countdown signals have become the preferred type of installation on all state Department of Transportation (DOT) projects that require pedestrian signals. In New Jersey, countdown signals are installed on almost all new state DOT pedestrian signal installations, and whenever existing pedestrian signals are replaced due to damage or wear. The District of Columbia has been a pioneer in the use of countdown signals, and is the largest urban area in the U.S. to completely change all of its pedestrian signals to countdown timers.

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