

Reconstruction of New Jersey Route 18

# THE ARCHWAY TO RENEWAL

New Brunswick, N.J.



## The Route 18 Corridor

The proposals for a freeway bypassing New Brunswick began in 1962, when the New Jersey State Highway Department made plans to construct a new freeway through New Brunswick, from Route 1, to U.S. Route 22 in Bound Brook. There was significant controversy over the abandoned Delaware and Raritan Canal heading through New Brunswick, since plans for the freeway would supplant the former canal and its 13th lock, abandoned in 1932. Environmentalists and historic preservationists opposed the freeway while companies like Johnson & Johnson supported the highway as part of the redevelopment of New Brunswick. In 1977, the newly formed New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) received a federal grant to construct the Route 18 Freeway from New Street in New Brunswick, across the Raritan and terminating at Middlesex County Route 512 Spur; construction was completed in 1983. In 2005, construction began on a revamped Route 18 Freeway, including a collector/distributor roadway. The revitalized Boyd Park and Raritan River waterfront can be seen on the right. Although this project directly targeted transportation infrastructure investment, the enhancement to parkland was just as critical to its success. Through the design of more than five miles of multi-use pathways and pedestrian bridges, bicycle and pedestrian travel is supported and Boyd Park is reconnected to the city. The construction of the Boyd Park amphitheater and promenade support and improve its existing active uses and improve the passive recreational enjoyment of this urban open space. Barrier-free designs and modern lighting provide a safe and inviting entranceway into Boyd Park and complement the scenic vista of the Raritan River.