



**NJDOT  
NEWS**



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## **Two NJDOT projects win 2020 America's Transportation Awards Regional awards qualify projects for national prize**

**(Trenton)** – New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti today announced two NJDOT projects have been named regional winners in the 2020 America's Transportation Awards Competition.

The [America's Transportation Awards](#) competition sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), AAA, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, is a competition in which state DOTs compete in three categories: Quality of Life/Community Development; Best Use of Technology and Innovation; and Operations Excellence. Each category is also designated by project budget size: small (less than \$25 million), medium (\$25 million to \$200 million), and large (greater than \$200 million). Projects are judged within their region. The 12 regional winners will compete for the National Grand Prize, the People's Choice Award, and \$10,000 in cash awards that will be given by the winners to a transportation-related charity or scholarship program of their choosing.

New Jersey received honors for the following Medium Category projects:

- Route 72 Manahawkin Bay Bridges Project Contract 4, which was named best Quality of Life/Community Development
- Route 280, Route 21 Interchange Improvements Project, which was named best Operations Excellence

"These awards recognize the outstanding efforts of the men and women of the New Jersey Department of Transportation and our contractors to deliver projects that create safer roadways and enrich our communities," NJDOT Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti said. "These projects demonstrate how New Jersey is leading the way in delivering transportation projects that improve our infrastructure and enhance the quality of life in our state."

### **Route 72 Manahawkin Bay Bridges Project**

Contract 4, which is being recognized with this award, is part of the \$312 million federally-funded Route 72 Manahawkin Bay Bridges Project that is improving a 3-mile stretch of Route 72 from Marsha Drive in Stafford to Long Beach Boulevard in Ship Bottom.

The project is being advanced through a series of five contracts to improve the Route 72 Causeway, a vital connector between Long Beach Island and Stafford Township. Four out of five contracts are complete. The final contract is expected to begin this fall and be completed in 2022.

The overall project included the construction of a new 2,400 foot-long bridge, completed in 2016, which sits parallel to the Old Causeway Bridge that was reconstructed in Contract 4. In addition to constructing a new parallel bridge and reconstructing the existing bridge, the project also rehabilitated three trestle bridges and included environmental mitigation on Cedar Bonnet Island.

For the \$91 million Contract 4, George Harms Construction Co. used an innovative approach to reconstruct the Old Causeway Bridge that saved time and money, and resulted in reopening the bridge a year early. This contract began in the fall of 2016 and completed in June 2019.

In 2019, Contract 5, the Cedar Bonnet Island Habitat Restoration and Management Plan, received the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Environmental Excellence Award. Under the \$9.6 million federal and state-funded environmental mitigation work, NJDOT and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) created an environmental trail providing the first public access to the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge on Cedar Bonnet Island, and used an innovative approach to help improve Barnegat Bay water quality while meeting DEP Stormwater Management (SWM) Rules.

### **Route 280, Route 21 Interchange Improvements Project**

The \$95 million federally-funded Route 280, Route 21 Interchange Improvements project was a complex, urban interchange reconstruction project in the City of Newark. The project began construction in September 2015. It repaired deteriorating ramp and mainline structures, and built new ramps to provide a fully integrated interchange between I-280 and Route 21.

The project built four new bridges, rehabilitated two additional bridges within the interchange, and upgraded existing infrastructure, such as highway lighting, traffic signals, signing, and landscaping. In order to improve traffic flow, the project also eliminated two direct ramps onto I-280, and constructed shoulders to widen the lanes. The project helped Newark alleviate congestion in the highly trafficked area at the interchange, improved safety, and promoted the economic growth of the city.

The new ramps from Route 21 to I-280 eastbound and westbound, and from Broad Street/State Street to I-280 eastbound were completed and opened to traffic in November 2018, and the entire project was completed in the early 2019.

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