



For Immediate Release:
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Route 1 Congestion Relief Project named finalist in America's Best Transportation Project Competition Online voters and expert judges to choose winners from 12 projects nation-wide

(Trenton) – New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti today announced that the Route 1 Permanent Hard Shoulder Running Project, which uses the shoulder as a travel lane during peak commuting times to relieve congestion and improve safety, has been named a finalist in AASHTO's 2021 America's Transportation Awards Competition.

"We are extremely proud that for the second year in a row, an NJDOT project has been named a national finalist in this competition," Commissioner Gutierrez-Scaccetti said. "This national recognition demonstrates New Jersey's leadership in delivering innovative and cost-effective projects that improve our communities and enhance quality of life for New Jerseyans."

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. Twelve regional winners were selected from 80 nominations to compete for the National Grand Prize, and the People's Choice Award. \$10,000 in cash awards will be given to the winners to donate to a transportation-related charity or scholarship program of their choosing.

The Route 1 Permanent Hard Shoulder Running Project is designated as a small project competing in the Operations Excellence Category. Last year, NJDOT's Route 72 Manahawkin Bay Bridges Project was selected as a national finalist in the medium-sized project, Quality of Life/Community Development category.

An independent panel of transportation industry experts will select the Grand Prize winner, while the general public will decide the People's Choice Award winner through online voting. Online votes will be weighted to each state's population, allowing for greater competition between states with larger and smaller populations.

The winners will be announced at the AASHTO Annual Meeting the week of October 26 - 29, 2021. Online voting begins today and ends at 11:59 p.m. on October 25, 2021.

Cast your vote for NJDOT's Route 1 Permanent Hard Shoulder Running Project at AmericasTransportationAwards.org. Individuals may cast one vote per day per device (so you may vote once per day on each computer, phone, and tablet you have, and are encouraged to vote daily). Vote early and vote often!

About the Route 1 Permanent Hard Shoulder Running Project

Route 1 is a three-lane highway in most sections, except between Independence Way and Raymond Road in South Brunswick, where it is reduced to two lanes. The lane reduction often causes bottlenecks and delays in this area. Allowing cars to use the shoulder as a travel lane on both Route 1 northbound and southbound between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. and from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, eases congestion and improves traffic flow.

After a six-month pilot, NJDOT made the improvements permanent based on the following benefits:

- Having three travel lanes, instead of two, created more space between vehicles, which increased safety
- Commute times were cut by up to 50 percent
- Capacity improved. Before the pilot program, the corridor carried an average of 5,600 cars southbound during the morning rush-hour. During the pilot, the route carried 6,000 vehicles during this same timeframe
- Average vehicle speeds were 31 mph during the pilot compared to 13 mph before
- Vehicles traveling in the shoulder do not prevent first responders from using the lanes
- Less congestion reduces carbon emissions for improved environmental impacts

Operational safety improvements included 14 overhead lane-use signals and four dynamic message signs at the entrances and exits of the roadway in both directions. In addition, 28 cameras were installed to continually monitor the shoulder lanes, and turf pavers were installed to provide for maintenance access without lane closures.

Because of the Route 1 HSR program's success, NJDOT now considers HSR with appropriate ITS, a standard transportation system management and operations strategy when scoping cost-effective congestion management projects in the state.

Motorists are encouraged to check NJDOT's traffic information website www.511nj.org for real-time travel information, and for NJDOT news follow us on Twitter [@NewJerseyDOT](https://twitter.com/NewJerseyDOT) or on the [NJDOT Facebook page](#).

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