

APPENDIX E

COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Major Bridge and Highway Projects

While Mass Transit improvements offer the greatest potential benefit to users of the circulation network, essential repairs and improvements to the existing roadway system (See Exhibit 20) are an essential and more immediately realizable element of the efforts to improve mobility in the County. In line with that fact, the following are those NJDOT or Sussex County projects which are deemed to have regional impact (See Exhibit 21).

As discussed in previous sections, the rural nature of Sussex County, along with the relatively low population densities of most areas of the County, make reliance on the automobile almost a necessity. As a result of this, the repair, maintenance and upgrade of the County's bridge and highway system is very important. There are a number of major and minor bridge and highway projects, on both the State and County highway system, that will help meet the objectives of keeping the system in a state of good repair, increasing safety, and reducing congestion in the County.

One of the most important strategies and highest priorities for the County is preserving the existing highway and bridge system. This includes repairing and maintaining roads and bridges in the County through projects such as resurfacing roads with poor pavement conditions, done on a regular cycle and rehabilitating or replacing bridges that have a low sufficiency rating or are weight posted. Projects such as this help the County to maintain its existing infrastructure and provide for the safe and efficient travel of residents and non-residents alike on the County highway system.

Improving major State highway corridors in the County is also important. There are three main State highway corridors in the County used by commuters and by tourists and recreation travelers. The latter includes both those travelers heading to the many recreation opportunities in Sussex County as well as those destined to the Pocono-Pike County region for recreation and/or weekend homes. This leads to a seven day a week congestion situation at many of the Hot-Spot locations on the main highway corridors in the County. This occurs during both morning and evening peak periods during the week and at various times on the weekends.

The main State highway corridors in the County are:

- US Route 206 which runs from Pennsylvania at the Delaware River Crossing in Montague to the center of the County where it intersects with Route 15 at Ross' Corner in Frankford Township where it then turns to the southwest through Hampton Township into the Town of Newton - around the square in the center of town and south through Andover Township and Borough and into Byram Township where it exits the County through Stanhope Borough.

EXHIBIT 20

**ROAD NETWORK AND
AIRPORTS**

EXHIBIT 21

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- State Route 23, which also starts at the northern end of the County in Montague Township at the New York State border. The highway continues in a southeasterly direction where it crosses into Wantage Township in the vicinity of High Point Monument and State Park. From there, Route 23 enters Sussex Borough, travels through the center of the borough and re-enters Wantage. When Route 23 exits the southern part of Wantage, it briefly cuts across Hardyston Township before it enters Hamburg Borough. The highway continues through the center of the Borough where it intersects Route 94 in the center of Hamburg. From there it continues south into the Borough of Franklin where it intersects with County Route 517. Route 23 then re-enters Hardyston Township, travels over Beaver Lake Mountain, and continues in a southeasterly direction to the Stockholm section of the Township where it widens to four lanes and intersects with County Route 515 near the border with Morris County.
- State Route 15 begins in the center of Sussex County at Ross' Corner. This is the intersection of Route 206 and County Route 565 in Frankford Township. Route 15 then enters Lafayette Township and travels through the Lafayette Village area and intersects with Route 94 in two separate locations. From here, Route 15 continues in a southeasterly direction into Sparta Township, where it widens to a four-lane limited access highway at the NYS&W Railroad crossing and the intersection with State Route 181. The highway continues through Sparta with a full interchange located at the County Route 517 By-pass and farther south at the Blue Heron Road interchange, before it exits the County into Jefferson Township in Morris County.

Some of the major improvements that have been completed on these highways that have had a significant impact on improving both the flow and safety of traffic include: the recently completed intersection project at Ross' Corner. This project, planned for many years, has provided a major reduction in congestion in this heavily traveled corridor and has also helped reduced the number of accidents at this location; improvements to Route 206 in the Branchville area including the intersections with County Routes 630 and 519, recently completed, have helped to improve both the flow and safety of traffic in this area; the improvements to Route 206 through Newton and Hampton Township, including the addition of the center turn lane, have significantly improved traffic flow and increased safety in this congested area; the improvement of the intersections of Route 206 and County Routes 618 and 611 as well as Stickles Pond Road in Andover Township has been a major safety improvement in this busy intersection area; the improvements to Route 183 in Stanhope Borough have provided numerous benefits; the improvement of and installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of County Route 517 and Route 23 in Hamburg Borough has significantly improved safety at this location and the soon to be completed Route 15 and Houses Corner Road intersection improvement and the NYS&W Railroad grade separation a long awaited, \$12 million project will be a very significant safety improvement for one of the most dangerous intersections in the County as well as an improvement for traffic flow in the congested Route 15 Corridor.

Some of the major County highway and bridge projects that have been constructed in recent years that have improved the County highway system include: the replacement of two

bridges on County Route 653 (Clove Road) in Montague Township; the improvement of the intersection of County Routes 565 and 667 in Vernon Township which has improved safety; the realignment of County Route 517 in Franklin Borough has increased safety as well as a realignment of CR 517 in Vernon Township in the vicinity of Carol Drive. In addition, there has been well over 4 million dollars worth of federally funded re-paving and upgrading of various County roads that has improved the County's highway system over the last few years.

The above mentioned bridge and highway improvement projects highlight some of the major work that has recently been completed throughout the County that benefits the traveling public. However, there are a number of major projects in the County, that still need to be constructed. Most of these projects are located on the major highway corridors described earlier. They will also provide for the improved movement of goods and services in and out of the County. Finally and probably most importantly, these strategic improvements will enable the County to grow and develop in a smart and orderly manner, while still protecting the environment and quality of life for which the County is noted. These improvements will improve traffic flow and safety so that the planned growth that will take place in the County, as well as the growth that takes place outside of the County - which we have no control over - but still has a significant impact on Sussex County's highway system, will not choke the County with congestion. The last point about the impact growth that takes place around Sussex County in particular in Pennsylvania, has on the County's highway system, cannot be emphasized enough. Many of the major highways in the County, such as Routes 15 and 206, serve in almost an interstate capacity as many people traveling to destinations in the Poconos - whether residential or recreational, pass through Sussex County. As a result of this, these planned improvements are necessary to not only improve travel for Sussex residents, but for many people from outside of the County as well.

The following are the major state highway projects that are in the NJTPA and NJDOT FY 2004-2006 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Sussex County for the next five years. These projects that are in the regional TIP, which identifies federally funded projects, are in one of three phases; Final Design, Right of Way (ROW) Acquisition, or Construction. These projects have completed the NJDOT Project Development process and are programmed for federal funding. The TIP projects in Sussex County include:

- Route 206 - Cat Swamp Mountain Improvement - Project DBNUM: 9-001 - This project, which is intended primarily to address safety issues on this difficult section of highway will provide for operational and safety improvements by widening the roadway, extension of the northbound climbing lane, reconstruction of the curves and improving sight distance. This project, which was originally requested by Byram Township, as a result of a number of serious accidents including fatalities, is scheduled for construction in FY 2004 - 5 for a total cost of about 8.5 million.
- Replacement of Bridge K-07 on County Route 605 over the Lackawanna Cut-Off Project DBNUM:L001 - This project which is located on the heavily traveled County Route 605 (Sparta-Stanhope Road) at the border of Hopatcong, Stanhope and Byram, is intended to improve safety at this crossing of the Lackawanna Cut-Off rail line. The existing bridge is a one-lane; right angle structure that is functionally obsolete. This project will include a new bridge - build to current standards on a new alignment, to replace the existing one lane bridge - which will be left in place for bicycle and pedestrian use. The new bridge will be

constructed to look similar to the old structure for historical purposes. This project is scheduled for final design and ROW acquisition in FY-2004 and 2005 with construction proposed for 2007 for a total cost of about 7.5 million dollars.

- Improvements to Route 206 from Acorn Street to Lake Lackawanna Drive in Byram Township - Project DBNUM:407A - This long planned project is intended primarily to help reduce the severe congestion at this location where Route 206 bottlenecks down to two lanes from four and to improve safety. This project will provide for operational improvements including widening the highway to two northbound and two southbound lanes, with left turn accommodations in certain locations. In addition, there will be improvements to the Waterloo (CR 604) - Brookwood Road intersection and the Lake Lackawanna Drive (CR 607) intersection. There will also be drainage improvements made. In addition the County, NJDOT and Byram negotiated for a number of visual and pedestrian improvements which will make this important project compatible with the Township's proposed Town Center development. Total cost is over 15 million dollars.
- The replacement of Bridge number Q-25 on West Mountain Road in Sparta Township - Project DBNUM: L090 - This project is intended to improve safety and replace a weight posted bridge in order to maintain traffic flow on this road which connects Route 94 with CR 517. The existing timber bridge will be replaced and the approaches will be improved. This project is advancing due to a cooperative effort with the County, NJDOT and area residents to address local concerns. This project is scheduled in the TIP for ROW in FY 2004 and construction in FY 2006 for a total cost of about 3.5 million.

The NJDOT project development stage prior to projects being included in the TIP is known as the Project Development Work Program (PDWP). This stage, which contains many of Sussex County's most important highway and bridge projects, has three separate phases. The phases are Concept Development, Feasibility Assessment and Preliminary Design. The following is a brief explanation of these phases.

- Concept Development: This initial PDWP phase is where a regionally (usually by the County) prioritized need undergoes a needs assessment and appropriate strategies are sketched out. Based on data analysis and community outreach, the identification of all problems is made and agreement is reached as to what needs will be addressed.
- Feasibility Assessment: During this phase, project alternatives are evaluated and a preferred alternative is identified. Project feasibility is studied by considering engineering, financial and historic preservation issues. In addition, a community involvement program is undertaken to determine if sufficient public support exists. A probable environmental classification is made at this time.
- Preliminary Design: A more detailed and refined engineering solution is developed and environmental studies are begun to accurately assess the environmental and community impacts. Depending on the magnitude of the project, this also forms the basis of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process that will result in receiving concurrence on the environmental document.

At the conclusion of this project development work, the projects are eligible for the NJTPA TIP project pool and become candidates for inclusion in the NJTPA TIP. The TIP allocates federal funding to actually implement transportation projects including the completion of final design, right-of-way acquisition and construction.

Sussex County Projects

Sussex County has a number of important projects in various stages of the PDWP that are advancing. These projects include:

- The Route 23 Safety improvements in Hardyston Township - Project DBNUM:96039 - Silver Grove Road to Holland Mountain Road - mile posts 26.80 to 31.80. Improvements will include intersection improvements for safer turning movements, improving curves and various other upgrades. This project is scheduled to complete the Preliminary Design phase in FY 2005.
- Route 15 improvements in the Sparta - Lafayette Area - Project DBNUM: 97120 - Concept development was undertaken to model and determine the need for future improvements in this congested section of Route 15. This project is scheduled to continue Feasibility Assessment through FY 2005 and 2006.
- Route 15, Blue Heron Road Park and Ride and Intersection Improvements - Project DBNUM: 97120C - As part of the Route 15 Corridor Improvements, NJDOT is proposing to expand the existing park and ride as well as construct a new ramp from Blue Heron Road to Route 15 northbound and close the existing Ramp Z. This would be a safety improvement that would eliminate the difficult weave condition as well as providing for additional park and ride capacity in this congested corridor.

Projects that have graduated from the NJDOT PDWP and are in various stages of advancement include:

- The Route 23 and 94 Intersection Improvement in Hamburg Borough - Project DBNUM: 8919 - Route 23 Linwood Avenue to Wallkill Avenue and Route 94 - MP 35.51 to 35.71. This very important project, which also has been in the development stages for many years as well as being in the TIP previously, has advanced into the FY 2005 TIP Project Pool. It has also been included in the draft FY 2005 NJDOT Proposed Capital Program, which almost assures that it will be included in the FY 2005 to 2007 TIP.

This busy intersection has been one of the most congested locations in the County for many years. This congestion will continue to worsen in the future as additional development and recreation opportunities are realized in the area. This also leads to accidents at this spot due to the starting and stopping, traffic volumes and mix of traffic at this spot. The NJDOT had to re-design this project and send it back to scoping after local concerns were raised by the municipality. This caused significant delays for this much needed project. These issues have been addressed through a cooperative effort with the NJDOT and the municipality as well as impacted property owners which will now enable this project to move forward. It is now

anticipated that this project will be included in the new FY 2005 TIP and will proceed to Final Design.

- The Route 23 Realignment and Papakating Creek Bridge Replacement in Sussex Borough - Project DBNUM: 9044. This project, intended to relieve a serious congestion and safety issue in the middle of Sussex Borough, due to very poor geometry on Route 23 has graduated from the NJDOT PDWP in 2004 and was included in the NJTPA FY 2005 Project Pool. Unfortunately, this important project was not included in the NJDOT FY 2005 Proposed Capital Program due to a lack of funding. This project was one of the 70 to 80 projects in the NJTPA region that was eligible to advance into the TIP, but was not able to due to a lack of funding. This is a good example of a project that would provide a number of benefits including congestion relief and improving safety as well as providing a significant economic benefit for the Borough since this would re-align Route 23 in the Center of Sussex and would provide new economic development opportunities, but is unable to advance due to a lack of funding at both the State and Federal level.

The final major category of bridge and highway projects in the County is known as the NJTPA Local Scoping Program. This is another type of project development process whereby the County takes the lead on the initial development work on a project similar to Concept Development, Feasibility Assessment and Preliminary design and permitting work. Sussex County has been very successful with this program since it was implemented by the NJTPA a number of years ago. This program provides the County with the opportunity to advance important transportation project for the County much more quickly than they would be developed through the regular NJDOT Process, because the County takes the initiative and has an incentive to move the projects along. This program has enabled the County to advance some very important projects through the preliminary design phase of work in order to prepare them for inclusion in the TIP. The County has received a significant amount of funding from the NJTPA for four major projects to proceed through the Local Scoping program. These projects are:

- The County Route 515 improvements - Phases II, III, IV in Vernon Township. This Local Scoping effort will develop a number of improvements for both traffic flow and for safety at this congested section of highway which also has a number of safety issues on the steep section of CR 515 at this location. These improvements will also help support the Vernon Town Center and Loop road that is being developed at this location that the County is working cooperatively with the municipality on. This will also help improve traffic flow for the increased number of people who will visit the Mountain Creek resort development and its numerous amenities that are to be developed and are a significant economic benefit for the County and region.
- Improvements to County Route 653 (Clove Road) in Montague Township. This Local Scoping effort will look at developing potential safety related improvements along with operational improvements for the entire length of this County route in Montague Township. This road serves as a connector between I-84 and Route 23 to the northern end and Route 206 to the south. This road has been the site of a number of serious accidents and has a number of issues that need to be addressed.

- Improvements to County Route 616 (Newton-Sparta Road) from CR 621 to Route 181. Newton-Sparta Road is one of the most heavily traveled highways in Sussex County, connecting two of the largest population and commercial centers in the County. Traffic volumes continue to increase on this heavily traveled highway as do safety concerns. In order to address these issues, the County has undertaken a Local Scoping effort to determine the need for and develop improvements to Newton-Sparta Road such as signal upgrades, traffic signal coordination, left turn lanes, and possible common left turn lanes in commercial areas.
- There will be significant issues associated with improvements to CR 616 such as right-of-way and overall costs. It will be necessary to prioritize and phase these improvements as funding will be limited. This will be determined once the scoping process is complete.
- Sussex County Route 605 Connector - This project was formerly known as the Acorn Street Connector Road because as it would have connected with the Acorn Street jughandle at Route 206. This is no longer the case and the new road will connect farther south on Route 206, closer to Route 183, in order to minimize grades and impact on Acorn Street. This new road is primarily intended to address safety issues by removing a significant amount of traffic that currently moves south on CR 605 to Route 206 south and I-80, from the very narrow, congested Brooklyn Road (CR 602). This proposed connector road would also help improve traffic circulation in this area, especially when combined and coordinated with the Route 206 improvements in Byram as well as the recently completed Route 183 improvements in Stanhope. This scoping effort was separated into a two phase study - with the first phase having determined the need and purpose of the project, and the second phase looking at potential alignments for the new connector road. This second phase, currently underway, will look at a number of different alternative alignments for connecting CR 605 with Route 206. This connection may include some type of grade separated “Fly-Over” in order to make this transition as efficient as possible.

Overall, this project will serve to increase safety, improve circulation and traffic flow and to remove traffic from residential streets in Stanhope and redirect it to a properly designed new section of road.

Future Scoping Projects: In addition to the projects described previously, there are a number of projects for which the County may apply to the NJTPA in the future. These projects would improve safety and provide for improved traffic flow. These projects include:

- Improvements to County Route 517 (Rudetown Road) from Route 23 in Hamburg Borough to Route 94 in Hardyston. A possible Scoping study on this busy section of highway would address a number of important issues. Among them is the difficult geometry of that section of CR 517 - these are numerous horizontal and vertical curve problems as well as sight distance problems and a very narrow right-of-way and pavement width in certain areas. There is also probably a need for turning accommodations in certain locations. All these issues, combined with a fairly high traffic volume that may increase in the future, indicates the need for some type of study to identify these problems and develop potential solutions. These types of problems run the entire length of CR 517 in the County. Other

sections of CR 517 in the County may need a potential future scoping study to identify these problems and issues and come up with potential solutions.

- Realignment of County Route 565 in Wantage Township. This study will run from the intersection of County Route 639 to Route 23. This section of CR 565 also has a number of issues that need to be addressed, including horizontal and vertical curves, narrow pavement widths, and a narrow, right angle, single lane bridge with poor approaches. All of these problems, along with any others including environmental, would be addressed in a scoping study. Sussex County will pursue funding for Scoping for this section of CR 565 as soon as possible through the NJTPA.

There are also a number of what could be referred to as “Emerging Issues” on the County highway system that will require further study in the future. Among these are the potential impact on traffic safety at the northern end of Sparta – Stanhope Road (CR 605) if the CR 605 extension goes through in Stanhope. CR 605 feeds into a five way intersection with Winona Parkway and Woodport Road (NJ 181) in Sparta. Of particular concern will be the potential use of the realigned roadway by truck traffic moving between I-80 and NJ 23 via CR 517. Another growing traffic problem is the Route 23/CR 653/I-84 area of the proposed Montague Tri-State Center. This area should be addressed in the future in connection with the center development. Currently traffic is congested and there are movement which need improvement. NJDOT, Sussex County and the New York DOT as well as the local municipalities, have already begun to look at this area.

Major County Highway and Bridge Projects

There are a number of major highway and bridge projects on County roads that are important for maintaining mobility on the County highway system. These include highway improvements such as roadway upgrades or realignments, intersection improvements and signal installation or upgrades. Another important part of maintaining the County’s highway system is bridge repair or replacement. Having to close or weight-post a bridge on the County or a municipal road (the County is responsible for bridges on both) causes major disruption in the movement of people and goods and services.

The following are a number of important highway and bridge projects, most of which are on the County road system, that will be necessary in the near future to maintain and improve the County’s highway system in order to increase safety and mobility for both County residents and residents alike, who use this system.

Major Roadway improvements include:

- Improvements to the CR 517, Maple Grange Road and Loundsberry Hollow intersection in Vernon Township
- Upgrade of the County Route 519 and 626 intersection at Halsey in Hampton Township

- Joint intersection improvement project with Wantage Township at County Route 650 and Old Clove Road
- Improvement of the intersection of County Routes 517 and 611 in Tranquility in Green Township.
- Joint intersection improvement project with Sparta Township at County Route 517 and West Mountain Road
- Realignment of County Route 669 (Limecrest Road) in Andover Township from MM 01 to MM 02.
- Suttons Corner Realignment of CR 605 and CR 607 in the Borough of Hopatcong.
- Improvement of the intersection of County Route 602 and Flora Avenue in Hopatcong Borough.
- Improvement of the intersection of CR 607 and CR 602 in Hopatcong Borough

Some of the major Bridge Replacement Projects proposed for Sussex County include:

- The replacement of Bridge # C-16 on County Route 607 over Lubbers Run in Byram Township.
- The replacement of Bridge # D-20 on County Route 565 over a branch of the Papakating Creek in Frankford Township.
- The replacement of Bridge # E-02 on County Route 631 over the Franklin Pond inlet in the Borough of Franklin.
- The replacement of Bridge # Q-06 on Main Street over the Wallkill River in Sparta Township.
- The replacement of Bridge # A-13 on County Route 663 over a branch of the Paulinskill River in Andover Township.
- The replacement of Bridge # H-12 on County Route 521 over the Lake Swartswood Inlet in Hampton Township.
- The replacement of Bridge # J-03 on County Route 515 over a branch of the Pequannock River in Hardyston Township.
- The replacement of Bridge C07 on County Route 650 over Beers Creek in Montague Township.

- The replacement of Bridge # V-05 on County Route 517 over a branch of the Pochuck River in Vernon Township.
- The replacement of Bridge # G-09 on County Route 519 over Bear Creek in Green Township.

Sussex County is also proposing a number of new signals throughout the County over the next six years in order to improve safety in the County. These new signal locations include:

- Installation of a new signal at the intersection of US Route 206 and County Route 603 in Andover Township.
- Installation of a new signal at the intersection of CR 517 and CR 644 in Vernon Township.
- Installation of a new signal at the Intersection of US Route 206 and County Route 630 at the northerly intersection, in the vicinity of Culvers Lake in Frankford Township.
- Installation of a new signal at the intersection of CR 602 and CR 605 in Stanhope Borough.
- Installation of a new signal at US Route 206 and County Route 653 in Montague Township.
- Installation of a new signal at the intersection of CR 515 and CR 638 in Vernon Township.
- Installation of a new signal at the intersection of US Route 206 and County Route 560 (Tuttles Corner) in Sandyston Township.
- Installation of a new signal at the intersection of State Route 23 and County Route 650 in Wantage Township.
- Installation of a new signal at the intersection of County Route 602 and Flora Avenue in the Borough of Hopatcong.
- Installation of a new signal at the intersection of County Route 517 and Passaic Avenue in Ogdensburg Borough.

