



# **KEEP SOMERSET MOVING**

**TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2045**



**October 2024**



**SOMERSET COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ADOPTION OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY  
MASTER PLAN – CIRCULATION MASTER PLAN: KEEP SOMERSET COUNTY  
MOVING 2024**

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the provisions and spirit of the New Jersey Planning Act, N.J.S.A. 40:27-2 et seq., the Somerset County Planning Board (the Board) has prepared a Circulation Master Plan Element Entitled Keep Somerset County Moving 2045 to serve as a guide for the County's transportation planning efforts and investment decisions; and

**WHEREAS**, in conjunction with the foregoing, a public hearing was held by the County Planning Board as required on August 20, 2024 concerning the proposed creation of the Circulation Master Plan Element Entitled Keep Somerset County Moving 2045 ; and

**WHEREAS**, heretofore, as part of the process for the development of the aforesaid Circulation Master Plan, the Somerset County Planning Board conducted an extensive public outreach process from 2021 until 2024 in the form of municipal reviews, numerous meetings with stakeholder groups, presentations on drafts of the Cultural & Heritage Plan at regularly scheduled meetings of the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission and Somerset County Planning Board held from 2022 to 2024, a virtual survey, two public meetings and numerous outreach events, including several in-person pop-up events at a variety of locations, in order to obtain public input; and

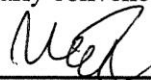
**WHEREAS**, based upon the foregoing, the Somerset County Planning Board has taken into due consideration the public comments and communications presented to the Board throughout this process.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** that the Somerset County Planning Board hereby formally adopts the Circulation Master Plan Element Entitled Keep Somerset County Moving 2045 as an element of the Somerset County Master Plan; and does so in support of the implementation of the Somerset County Investment Framework and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Somerset County adopted by the Somerset County Planning Board as amendments to the County Master Plan in 2014; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Somerset County Planning Board declares its intent to periodically review these documents and up-date them appropriately so that same remain relevant and valuable tools for county and local planning; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** electronic copies of the Circulation Master Plan Element Entitled Keep Somerset County Moving 2045 shall be made available to the Somerset County Board of County Commissioners, the municipalities of Somerset County, the Somerset County Parks Commission, the Somerset County Agriculture Development Board, adjacent counties, the New Jersey Highlands Council, the New Jersey Office of Planning Advocacy and the Somerset County Business Partnership.

I, Matthew D. Loper, Secretary of the Somerset County Planning Board, County of Somerset, in the State of New Jersey do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution adopted by said Planning Board of Somerset at its regularly convened meeting on October 15, 2024.



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Matthew D. Loper, Secretary  
Somerset County Planning Board

## **DISCLAIMER**

This report has been prepared as part of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) Subregional Studies Program with financing by the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation. This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Transportation in the interest of information exchange. The NJTPA is solely responsible for its contents.

## Acknowledgement

The Somerset County Planning Board and staff wish to acknowledge the recent passing of two long-time members of the Planning Board family, Bernie V. Navatto Jr. and Marlo Patrice Brown, for their many contributions to planning in Somerset County.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Keep Somerset Moving updates the County's previous circulation plan, Making Connections, with the purpose of developing a safe, accessible, and equitable transportation network that meets the needs of all ages and abilities. The plan defines a strategic vision and goals, and a consensus program of projects, plans, and implementation strategies.

Somerset County is among the oldest counties in the United States, and is prized for its high quality of life, excellent schools, rich history, diverse landscapes, and scenic communities.

Somerset is gradually becoming more diverse, and more like New Jersey as a whole, attracting larger numbers of foreign-born and lower income residents with limited English proficiency.

Using both FSI Crash Impact Data as well Keep Somerset Moving's Equity Assessment, the data indicates that there are disproportionate FSI crash impacts to both underserved communities and vulnerable roadway users within Equity Areas. Keep Somerset Moving prioritizes safety as the highest priority for roadway planning and design efforts to address these impacts.

With growing numbers of lower income and lower educational attainment residents, the need for affordable housing is also a priority, and Keep Somerset Moving recognizes the need to locate affordable units in areas with safe and accessible multimodal transportation options – transit, walking, and biking – to provide access to work, education, social services, and everyday travel needs.

These findings emphasize the need to prioritize equity, safety, access to opportunity, and

resilience to deliver on the bright promise of a better future for all.

Keep Somerset Moving was undertaken to ensure that the multimodal transportation network continues to meet these diverse and pressing needs.

New Jersey's Municipal Land Use law entrusts the responsibility for land development – including master planning, zoning, and land development review – to its municipalities. Counties, however, can play an essential role in promoting and advancing innovation in land use and infrastructure policies and practices. Somerset County's Planning Board and Planning Division have a strong history of close collaboration with the County's municipal partners to advance the state of planning practice, with its focus on safety, smart growth, job creation, resilience, and equity.

This plan was funded by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) and included extensive community and stakeholder engagement, multimodal transportation analysis, and development of a strategic vision and plan of recommended projects, master planning initiatives, and policies.

Keep Somerset Moving recommends a program of 42 roadway corridor projects, intersection and highway interchanges improvements, and bridge repairs and replacements. Supporting policies, strategies, and plans include enhanced project development process; municipal master plan element updates; supporting policies and strategies such as updating Complete Streets policies; and proposes several new studies of critical transportation corridors in Somerset County.

### Multimodal Transportation Planning Process

Keep Somerset Moving's planning process combined an inclusive and collaborative

community and stakeholder engagement effort and robust multimodal transportation needs

assessment to identify candidate projects, plans, and strategies, and guide transportation policies and decision making.

Somerset County's multimodal travel network includes roadways, rail and bus transit, pedestrian, bicycle, trail, freight, and aviation facilities to support the safe and effective movement of people and goods. The multimodal network serves a broad range of travel needs and trip purposes, and safe and efficient interconnections among the travel modes are essential, although the majority of travel and goods movement in Somerset County is made by automobile and truck.

Somerset County's robust and collaborative planning process has led to implementation of numerous multimodal transportation projects, programs and strategies, and Master Plan and zoning updates by both the County and partner municipalities, and working toward achievement of Somerset County's strategic vision and long term goals and aspirations.

### **INCLUSIVE STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Community input was an integral element of the planning process. Stakeholder and community engagement methodologies for Keep Somerset Moving were shaped by the initial equity assessment, with the goal of identifying underserved communities in Somerset County to better identify and address their concerns and needs.

Plan participants shared their concerns, desires, and travel experiences through more than 1,000 individual engagements, including multilingual materials and translation, where needed. The community outreach strategy utilized a multi-pronged approach to encourage participation from public officials, residents, and other stakeholders through both traditional and non-traditional methods. Community engagement methodologies included the plan website and social media; virtual focus groups and open houses; survey and interactive mapping tool; in-person community engagement events; and meetings with Somerset County departments and municipal representatives.

A Technical Advisory Committee provided guidance and oversight through the planning process, meeting three times, and included staff from county departments, state agencies, community and stakeholder organizations, and the NJTPA.

Stakeholders voiced opinions and raised concerns about traffic congestion and safety, especially for pedestrian and cyclists, including addressing the negative impacts of recent warehousing development and rising truck traffic, the need for improved and expanded transit service, responding to changing demographics and travel patterns, and the need for sustainable infrastructure and climate resilience. This information informed and shaped the Plan's strategies, policies, and recommended projects.



## Keep Somerset Moving Vision and Recommendations

The strategic vision outlines Somerset County's long term goals and aspirations and provides a roadmap of multimodal projects, plans, and strategies to implement the strategic vision.

In addition to supporting and advancing the strategic vision, many of these projects, plans, and strategies also provide environmental benefits, support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on busy roadways, and support the County's health and wellness goals by promoting active lifestyles.

### STRATEGIC VISION

Create a safe, accessible, comfortable, sustainable, resilient, and connected transportation system that addresses climate change risks and is coordinated with land use decision making.

Keep Somerset Moving enhances mobility for users of all travel modes and incorporates equity throughout the planning, prioritization, project selection, community outreach, design, construction, and maintenance of the County's transportation services and infrastructure.

### NOTABLE RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:

- Forty-two roadway and bridge projects consisting of seven roadway corridors, one intersection, two highway interchanges, and 32 bridge projects.
- Continue to implement a comprehensive project development process structured to develop multimodal projects that address a diversity of needs and achieve multiple plan goals.
- Review and update the County Complete Streets Policy based on Complete + Green Streets guidance.
- Support attainment of 100 percent Complete Streets Policy adoption by the municipalities.
- Work with the municipal partners to review and update their municipal circulation elements and assure compatibility with land use, housing, and affordable housing elements.
- Ensuring access and connectivity to safe multimodal systems and consistency with the County Investment Framework and sewer service area are key factors when selecting sites for affordable housing projects.
- Strengthen the connections between land use and transportation planning through innovative zoning, access management, redevelopment, and other methods at the municipal level.
- Support the NJTPA's effort to prepare Safety Action Plans.
- Take a lead role in the advancement of electric vehicles and connected and automated vehicle implementation strategies.
- Implement the recommendations Walk/Bike/Hike Study along with the regional trail projects from the County Preservation Master Plan.
- Initiate targeted planning studies of critical needs and corridors, including:
  - Reimagining of Somerset County Transit System
  - West Trenton Rail Restoration
  - Traffic studies of U.S. 206, including Montgomery and Rocky Hill; Hillsborough; and from Bridgewater north to the Morris County border

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Somerset County is among the oldest counties in the United States, with European settlements dating back as far as 1681. Before European settlers arrived, the Native American population in Somerset County was divided among seven distinct areas, including the Raritan Tribe in present-day Green Brook Township and the Lenni Lenape in the Somerset Hills area.<sup>i</sup>

Somerset is prized for its high quality of life, excellent schools, rich history, diverse landscapes, and lush and scenic communities. Perennially ranked among America's wealthiest, healthiest, and most highly educated counties - residents, employers, and visitors alike are all drawn to the County to live, work, play, and conduct business.

Through its robust and comprehensive planning efforts, Somerset County has placed itself at the forefront of New Jersey counties in addressing the many challenges to maintaining its prominence and desirability by addressing traffic congestion, equity, affordability, climate change, economic revitalization and redevelopment, and new and emerging transportation technologies and electric vehicles.

Safety, equity, sustainability, and access to opportunity are central to these efforts.

Keep Somerset Moving Transportation Plan 2045 updates the previous circulation plan, Making Connections, which was adopted in 2012. To ensure the transportation network can meet both current and future demands, the County initiated Keep Somerset Moving to develop and define a consensus program of future transportation strategies and infrastructure investments.

Somerset County has advanced many projects and strategies from the Making Connections Plan: the Complete Streets policy is in place; U.S.

206 Bypass in Hillsborough is open to traffic; and numerous infrastructure and safety projects have been completed. Great efforts have been made in addressing transportation safety. Since 2016 Somerset County has been awarded five projects through NJTPA's Local Safety Program, with the specific goal of addressing safety among all travel modes. These locations include: Main Street in Manville; Easton Avenue, Demott Lane, and Hamilton Street in Franklin; Talmage Avenue in Bound Brook; and Easton Avenue in Franklin.

Much has changed since the 2012 when Making Connections was adopted by the County: the COVID pandemic, work from home, the rise of e-commerce and logistics industries have led to reduced traffic, and the emergence of automated, connected, and electric vehicle technologies—rapidly reinventing daily life and travel needs in an already heavily-traveled region. And like much of New Jersey, Somerset is growing and changing, and becoming more diverse.

Keep Somerset Moving was funded in part by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) and included both extensive community and stakeholder outreach, and data-driven analysis of challenges, needs, and opportunities.

Keep Somerset Moving is therefore about much more than moving vehicles and maintaining infrastructure. Somerset must provide mobility that is multimodal and safe, equitable and affordable, adaptive and responsive to changing demographics and emerging travel modes and innovations, and that delivers a resilient and sustainable future.

## 2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Introduction

Outreach to community stakeholders, members of the public, and plan partners and agencies was an integral element of the Keep Somerset Moving planning process from the very beginning, informing the plan's vision, goals, objectives, and recommendations.

Equity considerations were a key driver of the planning process, with stakeholder and community outreach designed to engage Somerset County's underserved communities, and identify and address their concerns and needs.

The community outreach strategy included a multi-pronged, multilingual approach, utilizing both traditional and non-traditional methods to encourage participation and gain feedback from public officials, residents, and other stakeholders. Plan participants shared their concerns, desires, and travel experiences through more than 1,000 individual engagements.

Community engagement methodologies included the dedicated plan website; promotional materials; social media posts; virtual focus groups and open houses; a survey and interactive mapping tool; participation in community engagement events including farmers markets, community festivals, and the Somerset County 4-H Fair; and meetings with County departments and municipal representatives.

### TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) provided guidance and oversight throughout the development of the plan. The TAC was comprised of staff from County departments,

state agencies, community and stakeholder organizations including RideWise, NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT and the NJTPA. Three TAC meetings were held: September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Engagement Hub

The Keep Somerset Moving engagement hub was built to enable the public to participate more easily and to provide observations, comments, and feedback:

([www.somersetcounty.mysocialpinpoint.com](http://www.somersetcounty.mysocialpinpoint.com)).

Event announcements, public meeting registration links, and the public survey and interactive mapping tool were posted to the engagement hub, as were various project materials. The engagement hub worked in tandem with the study webpage on the Somerset County websites.

### SURVEY AND MAPPING TOOL

The online survey was available via the engagement hub from September 28<sup>th</sup> to December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 to gather comments and feedback.

An online interactive map was also available to obtain geographical input on problem areas /corridors and opportunity areas/ corridors in the County. A video tutorial was also created to guide participants in using the mapping tool. Participants were able to categorize their comments by selecting one of the icons at the top of the page, where they could either place an icon at a point to comment on an area or draw a line to comment on a corridor.

The survey received a total of 815 responses and the interactive map received 315 responses.



**Welcome to the Engagement Hub for  
Keep Somerset Moving: Transportation Plan 2045**



## COMMUNITY EVENTS

Members of the public were engaged at nine community events and met with over 300 people who live and work in Somerset County. The goal was to meet with people informally and in person, decreasing the barriers to providing feedback. These in-person outreach efforts paid special attention to engaging Somerset's underserved communities, with events in Manville, Bound Brook, Franklin, North Plainfield, and Montgomery.

The community events included display boards where the public was encouraged to discuss and comment on planning and transportation issues, highlight problems and concerns on a large map of the County, and proposed opportunities for new projects and planning strategies.

There was also space for people to leave comments about their vision for transportation in the County, and to learn about the plan and additional opportunities to participate, including the survey and interactive map.



DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
9/24/2022	Community Day	Manville
9/24/2022	Riverfest	Bound Brook
9/24/2022	Fall Festival	North Plainfield
9/24/2022	Franklin Day	Franklin
10/8/2022	Somerset Journey Through the Past	County Courthouse Green
10/15/2022	Farmer's Market	Montgomery
10/16/2022	Somerset County Diversity Festival	Somerville
10/22/2022	Fall Fest	Bedminster
8/9/2023-8/11/2023	Somerset County 4-H Fair 2023	Bridgewater

## PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Bilingual English-Spanish promotional materials were developed and distributed to help drive traffic to the survey, interactive map, and community events. These flyers were handed out at community events and posted online on Somerset County social media accounts. The County also sent emails to their contacts, and coordinated with local and regional organizations and leaders to drive traffic to encourage participation the various engagement activities and events.



## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Eight virtual focus group discussions were held in October and November of 2022, with more than 50 representatives from business, government, community, civic, and planning organizations participating and actively engaged. Feedback from the discussion groups helped clarify the

County transportation system's main issues, current strengths, and opportunities, as well as the vision for transportation in Somerset County.

Discussion group conversations touched on a variety of subjects:

- Resiliency and Sustainability
- Education, Health, and Equity
- Freight and Goods Movement
- Multimodal Transportation System
- Economic Development and Business
- Tourism
- Land Use
- Public Transit

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

Two virtual public meetings were held with summary presentations and breakout rooms for discussion and Q&A. The first virtual public meeting was held on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, with 82 participants in attendance. The purpose of the first meeting was to inform the community of the planning process, highlighting the work that had already been accomplished, and to solicit feedback on the draft vision statement.

The second virtual public meeting was held on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, with 45 participants in attendance. The purpose of the second meeting was to present the plan's draft vision, goals, and recommendations, and provide an opportunity for feedback.

Several additions were made to the final plan recommendations based on issues and concerns raised by meeting participants, including the proposed U.S. 206 South Corridor Study, U.S. 206 North Corridor Study, and Route 28 Corridor Study (see details in Planning and Conceptual Studies in the Recommendations Chapter).

## Key Takeaways From Community and Stakeholder Engagement

A wide range of comments were received from participants in the various meetings and engagement activities. The following paragraphs summarize the most frequently raised and concerns and issues, and helped inform Keep Somerset Moving's vision statement, goals, and recommendations.

- **Address the Impacts of Increasing Truck Traffic.** A major theme among stakeholders was the increase in truck traffic and freight rail traffic, and the development of new warehouses and logistics operations. Many respondents were very concerned about the noise, speed, safety, and traffic impacts that have come with increased truck traffic.
- **Address Impacts of Climate Change.** In the interactive map, focus groups, and public meetings, people identified locations where flooding occurs, and the need coordinate with Emergency Management to identify priorities for evacuation routes.
- **Recognize and Address Equity Impacts** Many responds note the needs to emphasize disproportionate impacts to underserved communities and vulnerable roadway users, in particular related to safety and accessibility
- **Expand Transit Services.** Participants expressed a strong desire for expanded transit service in every outreach activity. In the public survey, 71 percent indicated that a lack of convenient routes/destinations was a barrier to using transit. Improved reliability, expanded hours and frequency, as well as new routes and stations were all mentioned as priority issues.
- **Improve Transit Information and the Traveler Experience.** Many community members expressed confusion over the existing transportation services that are already offered in Somerset County. Some were unsure of where the County buses made

stops due to a lack of signage, while others felt that the lack of a modern payment system on County buses was also a hinderance. Many expressed a willingness to travel by transit and bicycle, but only if they knew how or where they could do so.

- **Enhance Connectivity for Walking and Bicycling.** Connectivity and integration of transit, employment, housing, and destinations was another major concern. In the public survey, 44 percent indicated first/last mile connections were a barrier to using transit. Lack of safe sidewalks/paths/trails and bikeways were mentioned as a barrier by 61 percent and 57 percent of respondents, respectively. Bikeshare/micromobility were mentioned as solutions for first/last mile connections in the focus groups, as was the fact that many new industrial developments have not been constructed with infrastructure for walking and bicycling.
- **Improve Safety at Railroad Crossings.** Conflicts and safety concerns among drivers, pedestrians, and long freight trains at rail crossings near schools were identified by many, with conditions especially troubling in the afternoon during school dismissal.
- **Respond to Changes in Demographics and Travel Patterns.** Many respondents indicated that changing demographics in Somerset County are also changing travel needs and commuting patterns, in particular more walking, bicycling, and use of transit, and that the transportation system and networks need to adapt to these changes.

## STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

The strategic vision outlines the vision and goals for the future of transportation and travel in Somerset County.

The vision was developed based on the plan's comprehensive community and stakeholder activities, the many comments, questions, and suggestions received, and reflects Somerset County's commitment to provide connected, equitable, safe, smart, and sustainable mobility options for travelers of all ages, abilities, and travel needs.

### Keep Somerset Moving: Vision Statement

Create a safe, comfortable, sustainable, resilient, and connected transportation system that addresses climate change risks and is coordinated with land use decision making.

Keep Somerset Moving enhances mobility for users of all travel modes and incorporates equity throughout the planning, prioritization, project selection, community outreach, design, construction, and maintenance of projects.

## PLAN GOALS

Transportation in Somerset County aims to be:

### CONNECTED AND EFFICIENT

- Maintain and operate an efficient multimodal county transportation system
- Work collaboratively with partners to improve mobility and connections

### EQUITABLE

- Prioritize funding for projects that benefit underserved communities
- Provide reliable and affordable multimodal transportation options

### SAFE

- Enhance safety for all users with an emphasis on the most vulnerable
- Promote land use policies that provide safe and convenient access to housing, jobs, services, and amenities

### SMART

- Advance electric, connected, and automated vehicle technologies
- Monitor the performance of the transportation system

### SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT

- Create a sustainable and resilient transportation system
- Support economic development and access to opportunity



### 3. PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Development of the Keep Somerset Moving plan was guided by a comprehensive review of planning guidance, and emerging trends and innovations.

The planning framework includes: Somerset County's planning framework; New Jersey planning guidance and legislation; recent Somerset County plans and studies; innovations in Complete Streets and Green Streets; FHWA guidance; the benefits of land use-transportation integration strategies; and examples of recent Somerset County project implementation success stories..

Together the element of the planning framework serve to guide the assessment of existing conditions (Chapter 4), and selection of potential transportation projects, plans, and strategies to implement the plan's vision statement and goals (Chapter 5).

#### SOMERSET COUNTY PLANNING FRAMEWORK

##### **Somerset County Planning Board and Planning Division**

The Somerset County Planning Board is dedicated to providing the most favorable living and working environment for the County's residents and employers, building balanced communities, promoting regional awareness and cooperation, and protecting the County's natural environment, history, and farmland through its influence on the County's growth and changes.<sup>ii</sup>

The Somerset County Planning Division supports the Planning Board in this mission and provides comprehensive planning services and collaboration with County administration and departments including Human Services, Public Health & Safety, Public Works, and other affiliated County agencies.

Consistent with Municipal Land Use Law Guidance, the core purpose of Keep Somerset Moving is to develop and advance the county capital improvement program and implement the Plan's vision, goals, and objectives through the master plan, and related plans, policies, and strategies.

### THE PLANNING DIVISION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Land development review and the preparation of the *Somerset County Master Plan* and its various elements.
- Oversight of transportation projects, planning, open space, historic preservation, wastewater management, and sustainability initiatives.
- Providing assistance and technical guidance regarding legislation, housing, demographics, mapping, and other responsibilities.

### New Jersey's County Planning Act

New Jersey County Planning Enabling Act of 1935 (40:27-2) establishes the authority for the counties to create a county planning board and therefore, the responsibility to prepare and adopt a county master plan "for the physical development of the county."<sup>iii</sup>

According the statute, "the master plan of a county, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive and explanatory matter, shall show the county planning board's recommendations for the development of the territory covered by the plan, and may include, among other things, the general location, character, and extent of streets or roads, viaducts, bridges, waterway and waterfront developments, parkways ... airports, and other public ways, grounds, places and spaces ... and to advise the board of chosen freeholders with respect to the formulation of development programs and budgets for capital expenditures."

Under the MLUL, the county planning board is also empowered to encourage the cooperation of the local municipalities to support the overall vision and goals for planning, mobility, and transportation.

### Master Plan and Circulation Element

The county master plan is a required responsibility of the County Planning Board, in accordance with the County Planning Act.

The primary purpose of the Circulation Master Plan is therefore to assess the extent and timing of need for capital facilities and to facilitate development of the county capital improvement plan. The circulation element establishes local and regional priorities, and identifies strategies to support the plan vision and goals.<sup>iv</sup>

Based on guidance from the Municipal Land Use Law, the circulation element should "describe the location and type of existing and proposed transportation facilities" with an emphasis on the movement of "both goods and people." not just vehicles.

Although not specifically required by state law, the circulation element has become an essential tool for understanding and establishing local and regional priorities, and the purpose and need for transportation, mobility, and safety improvements, and supporting policies and strategies.

### Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Somerset County's Six-Year County Capital Improvement Program serves as an action plan for development and maintenance of public infrastructure.

The master plan, including the circulation element, establishes the overall vision, goals, and rationale for action, and the capital improvement plan describes the actions to implement the master plan.

## SOMERSET COUNTY PLANS AND STUDIES

### **Making Connections Circulation Plan (2012)**

Making Connections, Somerset County's previous Circulation Plan, was guided by the consensus vision and goals and identifies emerging trends and issues for the coming decade. Making Connections evaluated existing transportation conditions, challenges, and opportunities, including bicycle and pedestrian circulation, transit mobility, goods movement, regional highways, trails and greenways, and several performance assessment (roadway congestion, crashes/safety) and asset management (bridge condition) factors. Environmental impacts and opportunities were a significant priority.

### **Somerset County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan (2013)**

The Transit Services Plan identifies significant gaps in public transit for much of the County. Existing services are primarily in the more densely populated communities and busier travel corridors. NJ TRANSIT rail service in the County primarily serves peak-hour weekday commuting to Newark and New York City. There is additional need for enhanced evening and weekend service.

### **Somerset County Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan (2018)**

The Somerset County Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan identifies goals, actions, and opportunities to support and advance the use of electric vehicles (EVs) in the County, including purchasing EVs, installing public charging stations, and assisting municipalities in encouraging and incentivizing EV use.

### **WALKBIKEHIKE (2019)**

WalkBikeHike aimed to improve multimodal mobility and safety for walking, biking, and hiking with over 220 candidate improvements, totaling almost 275 miles of new facilities across the County. The Framework Strategy includes the potential countywide multimodal network, focus area concept plans, implementation policies and strategies, and a Design Book that provides Somerset County-specific design and implementation guidance.

### **Somerset County Land Development Standards (2011)**

Somerset County's Land Development Standards provide rules, regulations, and standards to guide land development affecting or involving County facilities. The Standards state that access points along County roads should be minimized, the County can require developers to provide sidewalks (even if not required by the municipality), and if possible full-width shoulders (up to 8' wide) are typically provided on reconstructed and new County roads.

### **Somerset County Investment Framework (2014)**

The Investment Framework identified targeted investment areas for priority growth, preservation, greenway linkages, alternative growth, and limited growth in the County. The CIF serves as the geographic basis for all County planning projects and initiatives including the Priority Investment Studies.

### **Supporting Priority Investment Studies (2012-2017)**

The Priority Investment studies build upon the investment areas identified in the County Investment Framework. More than 30 areas were examined for integrated land use and transportation opportunities. Framework plans outline visions and development scenarios for location, including the role and need for transit, active transportation, and multimodal connectivity. Plans include innovative design approaches with goals for resilient communities, repurposing obsolete buildings, and promoting smart growth.

### **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2014)**

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report promotes goals and objectives for job creation and economic development across nine focus areas, one of which is transportation and commuting.

### **Somerset County Master Plan: Housing Element (2017)**

The Somerset County Housing Element focused on principles and objectives for improving housing availability, affordability, accessibility, smart growth, sustainability, quality of life, and economic competitiveness. The Plan's strategies and actions aligned with the County Investment Framework map identifying specific areas for growth and preservation, and emphasized a broad range of housing types at all levels of affordability with green infrastructure, pedestrian linkages, and access to jobs and amenities.

### **Somerset Co. Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2019)**

The Hazard Mitigation Plan investigated potential hazards and their impacts to the community via a risk assessment process and identified mitigation goals and actions, implementation strategies, and priorities to protect life, property, and the environment, and foster sustainable, resilient, and informed communities. The plan also detailed specific mitigation initiatives concerning open spaces, critical crossings, infrastructure, and facilities.

### **Somerset County Climate Change Resolution (2021)**

The Somerset County Climate Change Resolution endorses both national and state goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Methods available to the County to advance this mission include promoting and providing infrastructure for alternative transportation modes, including walking, biking, public transit, and carpooling, supporting transit-oriented development and smart growth techniques to target growth in transit-served areas, and encouraging and incentivizing EV use.

### **Somerset County Preservation Plan (2022)**

The Somerset County Preservation Plan provided comprehensive and integrated strategies and guidelines for preserving the county's open spaces (including trails, greenways, natural areas, and parks), reinforcing farming, protecting farmlands, and preserving historic properties. The plan comprised an Open Space Preservation Plan, a Farmland Preservation & Agricultural Development Plan, and a Historic Preservation Plan detailing goals and strategies, and success metrics for each of these areas.

## COMPLETE + GREEN STREETS POLICIES

Complete Streets are a proven strategic approach to improving safety, creating resilient and equitable communities, and providing access to opportunity for all. Complete and Green Streets provide the overall strategic framework to guide the planning, design, and maintenance of local, county, and state-owned roadways and transportation infrastructure.

### County Complete Streets Policy

Somerset County adopted the countywide Complete Streets Policy by Resolution on October 11, 2016, becoming the eighth New Jersey county to adopt Complete Streets as official policy (see Appendix A for the full text of the resolution). In accordance with the policy, the Somerset County Board of Commissioners is committed to creating street corridors that accommodate roadway users of all ages and abilities and for all trips.

The Policy's goals include providing safe and accessible accommodations for all modes of travel, establishing procedures to evaluate transportation projects and plans for Complete Streets opportunities, providing improved connections and crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, and including paved shoulders or multi-use pathways for all new roadway construction and reconstruction projects, including roadways used by more than 1,000 vehicles per day in rural areas.

The Somerset County Complete Streets Policy sets a mandate for the future planning, design, operations, and maintenance of County roads and bridges and provides leadership to the municipal partners for prioritizing circulation, safety, and mobility for all modes of transportation in future transportation projects and for land development review.

Additionally, in 2021, Somerset County adopted the Somerset County Climate Change Policy

Statement pursuing the goals of ending GHG emissions, deploying best practices and technologies to reduce rising temperatures, addressing potential job losses caused by decarbonization, and "mitigating the environmental impacts on low-income communities and communities of color."

Planning for a complete multi-modal transportation network is in alignment with the County's Complete Streets Policy, and a key strategy in reducing vehicular emissions. The Climate Change Policy will also influence the County's transportation planning by encouraging strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled and reduce and/or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions.

### NJDOT Complete Streets Policy

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) has been considered a national leader in Complete Streets, and numerous initiatives have been undertaken to engage the state's municipal and county decision makers and professionals, stakeholders, and advocates in the Complete Streets movement.

New Jersey has become a national leader, being among the first states in the nation to adopt a Complete Streets policy in December 2009. Initially, NJDOT's policy was rated the strongest Complete Streets policy in the nation.

NJDOT is currently engaged in a process to adopt a new and state-of-practice policy that reflects the unique needs, challenges, and opportunities present in the Garden State.



## Assessment of the Somerset County's Complete Streets Policy

When adopted in 2016, the Somerset County Complete Streets Policy represented the state-of-the-art Complete Streets thinking and policies in New Jersey, including:

- Committing to creating streets and corridors that safely accommodate road users of all ages and abilities for all trips.
- Prioritizing comprehensive, integrated, and connected multimodal networks.
- Encouraging the adoption of similar policies by regional and local jurisdictions.
- Providing safe accommodations for pedestrians, bike riders, and transit patrons.
- Establishing checklists to guide planning studies and project development and design.
- Anticipating likely future demand for bicycling and walking facilities and does not preclude the provision of future improvements.
- Complying with guidance of NJDOT Policy #705 by accommodating pedestrian and bicycle traffic during construction.
- Complying with federal and state equity and environmental justice guidance and law.
- Defining and documenting the exemptions process.

Much, however, has changed in Complete Streets practice since 2016, and Somerset would benefit greatly from a comprehensive reexamination of its policy. An updated statewide Complete Streets Policy is expected to be adopted in the near term.

The emphasis has shifted beyond just adopting policies to implementation: translating policy statements into projects, strategies, and plans that create safe, successful, equitable, healthy, and vibrant communities.

According to research by the National Complete Streets Coalition, a program of Smart Growth America, an ideal Complete Streets policy:<sup>v</sup>

- Includes a vision statement describing how and why the community wants to complete its streets, and mentioning the benefits that Complete Streets bring.
- Benefits all users equitably, particularly vulnerable users and the most underinvested and underserved communities.
- Applies to all projects — new, retrofit, reconstruction, maintenance, and operations.
- Sets clear and accountable procedures for exceptions, requiring high-level written approval and public notice.
- Requires coordination between government departments and partner agencies.
- Directs the use of the latest and best design criteria, guidelines, and checklists.
- Considers the surrounding community's current and expected land use and transportation needs.
- Establishes performance standards (including safety and crash reduction) that are specific, equitable, and accessible by the public.
- Provides criteria for prioritizing and implementing Complete Streets.
- Includes specific next steps for policy implementation.

## Complete & Green Streets for All: Model Complete Streets Policy & Guide

New Jersey now has a comprehensive guide to support the reexamination effort: *Complete & Green Streets for All: Model Complete Streets Policy & Guide (2019)*.<sup>vi</sup> This is a comprehensive guide for New Jersey municipalities, counties, agencies, organizations, and advocates with an interest in implementing Complete Streets in their communities.

*Complete & Green For All* includes a ready-to-adopt Resolution of Support, a state-of-the-practice Policy, and implementation checklists to ensure that every transportation project achieves Complete Streets objectives.<sup>vii</sup>

Assistance to support the review and update of Complete Streets policies is available from many

planning and advocacy groups and resources in New Jersey, including the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University, New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition, the state's three Metropolitan Planning Organizations, eight Transportation Management Associations, [National Complete Streets Coalition](#), and others.

*Keep Somerset Moving recommends the Complete & Green Streets for All: Model Complete Streets Policy & Guide as the primary resource for review and update of the Somerset County and municipal Complete Street policies to bring each in line with the current state-of-practice.*



## Municipal Complete Streets Policies

Sixteen of the County's 21 municipalities have adopted a Complete Streets policy:

1. Bedminster Township	2012
2. Bernardsville Borough	2020
3. Bound Brook Borough	2015
4. Bridgewater Township	2017
5. Far Hills Borough	2014
6. Franklin Township	2019
7. Green Brook Borough	2017
8. Hillsborough Township	2014
9. Manville Borough	2014
10. Millstone Borough	2017
11. Montgomery Township	2012
12. North Plainfield Borough	2016
13. Raritan Borough	2011
14. Rocky Hill Borough	2019
15. Somerville Borough	2015
16. South Bound Brook Borough	2018

Many were adopted eight or more years ago and are similar to the Somerset County policy: strong but in need of reexamination to take stock of strengths and weaknesses, and assess what has been accomplished and remains to be done.

Just two, Bernardsville and Rocky Hill, are based on *New Jersey Complete & Green Streets for All*. And five municipalities – Bernards, Branchburg, Peapack and Gladstone, Warren, and Watchung – have yet to adopt a policy.

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*Keep Somerset Moving recommends review and update of the County and municipal Complete Streets policies based on the guidance of Complete & Green Streets for All, with the goal of achieving 100 percent adoption across Somerset County.*

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## Complete Streets Implementation Plans

Several New Jersey Counties have undertaken the additional step of adopting a Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan, including both Essex and Sussex.

When adopted together, the Complete Streets policy and implementation plan advance the idea that for implementation to be successful, consideration of Complete Streets elements must begin at the earliest possible stages of project development and continue throughout each stage of the project development and design process.

An implementation plan would analyze the County's existing plans, policies, guidelines, and procedures, and outline how to update these documents as needed to fully integrate the Complete Streets Policy into the project development, construction, and maintenance processes; integrate Complete Streets into the subdivision and site plan review process; develop pilot Complete Streets demonstration projects; and train County staff on the incorporation of Complete Streets throughout all aspects of planning, design, operation, and maintenance of County roadways.

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*Keep Somerset Moving recommends the consideration of a Somerset County Complete Implementation Plan or to include the Implementation Plan elements into the new Comprehensive Project Development process; a summary is presented in the Recommendations Chapter.*

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## FHWA GUIDANCE AND GRANT PROGRAMS

### Safe System Approach

The FHWA's Safe System approach aims to eliminate fatal and serious injuries for all road users, and is becoming the essential tool to address roadway safety challenges. (<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/zero-deaths>)

The Safe System Approach has origins in Sweden's Vision Zero program and the Sustainable Safety from the Netherlands. These early adopters experienced impressive decreases in roadway fatalities—each with at least a 50-percent reduction in fatalities between 1994 and 2015. In comparison, fatalities in the United States decreased by less than 13 percent during the same period. International success with the Safe System Approach gives promise that the United States may also be able to achieve similar positive safety outcomes. With growing momentum and initiatives being taken by agencies across the country, the United States has started on the journey toward implementing a Safe System.<sup>viii</sup>

Implementing the Safe System approach involves anticipating human mistakes by designing and managing road infrastructure to keep the risk of a mistake low; and when a mistake does lead to a crash, the impact on the human body does not result in a fatality or serious injury. Road design and management should encourage safe speeds and driving behaviors to reduce injury severity.<sup>ix</sup>

Planning and design of future projects should follow the Safe System framework to build safety directly into the project development process: from planning and concept development through to project design, construction, and maintenance.

Following the Safe System Approach mitigates and reduces the potential of both crash risk and crash severity.

The Safe System Approach considers five elements of a safe transportation system—safe road users, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads, and post-crash care—in an integrated and holistic manner. Achieving zero traffic deaths and serious injuries requires strengthening all five elements. A Safe System cannot be achieved without all five elements working in synergy. Within a Safe System Approach, weaknesses in one element may be compensated for with solutions in other areas. A true systems approach involves optimizing across all the elements to create layers of protection against harm on the roads.<sup>x</sup>

Safe System starts with better data and analysis methodologies to understand the problem: Where are the safety risks? Who is impacted? What are the contributing factors to crash occurrence and severity?

Proven means of improving safety include lowering speeds to reduce crash risk and severity, employing traffic calming and innovative intersection designs to reduce speeds; providing greater separation between vehicles and vulnerable roadway users; improving visibility and lighting at crosswalks; and providing dedicated and separate facilities for pedestrians and cycling such as better sidewalks and crosswalks and protected bike lanes.

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*Keep Somerset Moving supports the Safe System Approach as the guiding framework for transportation planning and infrastructure design by Somerset County and its municipal partners.*

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## Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)

Somerset County supports the NJTPA efforts to prepare a countywide Local Safety Action Plan. This plan, initiated in the fall of 2023, will follow guidance in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program. It incorporates the Safe System approach and will serve as a blueprint for addressing the county's most urgent safety needs.

The SS4A program supports the development of comprehensive Safety Action Plans (Action Plan) that identify the most significant roadway safety concerns in a community and the implementation of projects and strategies to address these roadway safety issues. Action Plans are the foundation of the SS4A grant program.

The NJTPA region experienced 137 bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities in transportation crashes in 2018<sup>xi</sup>, accounting for about 40 percent of the region's total transportation fatalities and almost twice the nationwide rate<sup>xii</sup>, placing pedestrian and bicyclist safety at the forefront of NJTPA priorities.

Despite gradual reductions in serious injuries and fatalities between 2007 and 2017, severe crash rates have significantly increased since then. The NJTPA, in keeping with federal requirements and in response to this trend, recently adopted its own regional Roadway Safety Performance Measure Targets for 2023 with a data-driven timeline for reaching the goal of zero fatalities by 2050. Reaching the goal will rely on increased investment in safety improvements and building a traffic safety culture through a holistic Safe System Approach.<sup>xiii</sup>

The SS4A grant program is intended precisely to meet this challenge.

## Safety Action Plan Components

The NJTPA's Safety Action Plans will employ a Vision Zero-type approach to reduce and eliminate fatal and severe injuries.

- Planning structure and leadership commitment that requires both participation and commitment of partner counties and municipalities
- Data-driven systemic safety analysis and methodologies including geospatial identification of higher-risk locations
- Engagement and collaboration with municipal and agency partners, advocacy groups, and local and regional stakeholders to ensure participation and consensus of recommendations and implementation
- Ensure equitable investment in the safety needs of underserved communities
- Policy and process changes that recognize the need for new and innovative methodologies, low-cost, high-impact strategies and project design elements to address safety and equity deficiencies
- The Action Plan looks beyond traditional designs that prioritize congestion mitigation and vehicle throughput, based on data-driven and community-driven goals for reducing pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries
- Progress reporting and transparency, including annual public and accessible reporting on progress toward reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries

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*Keep Somerset Moving supports the development of NJTPA Safety Action Plans and the overall SS4A program as priority actions.*

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## LAND USE INTEGRATION

The Somerset County landscape includes a blend of rural, suburban, and urbanized communities that are largely reliant on the road network for most travel and trip purposes. NJ TRANSIT's Raritan Valley Line and Gladstone Branch provide additional rail connections, often for commuting into the more densely populated employment centers to the east, including Newark and New York City.

Somerset County's most densely populated communities are situated along the Route 22 and Route 28 corridors, and include Raritan, Somerville, Bound Brook, and portions of Bridgewater.

These communities are serviced by the Raritan Valley Rail Line and feature densities that accommodate active transportation modes, including walking and biking along historic main streets and downtowns.

Historic villages in less densely populated portions of the County are likewise interested in fostering active transportation and traffic calming in designated centers while minimizing cut-through traffic caused by proximity to major roadways.

The largely rural portions of the County (including Warren and Watchung) share the desire to minimize cut-through traffic while preserving narrow roadway rights-of-way, not wanting to cater to additional suburban sprawl and the added traffic volumes and need for roadway widenings it necessitates.

## Municipal Circulation Planning

Similar to Keep Somerset Moving, the municipal circulation element should be focused on moving people and goods, not just vehicles, and aligned with the land use, housing, and affordable housing elements to achieve common goals of equity, safety, mobility, and access to opportunity.

Most Somerset County municipalities have updated their circulation elements and reexamination reports within the last six years.

Recurring themes and priorities among these plans include:

- Preserving rural, scenic, and "small-town" character
- Mitigating impacts of regional development and traffic
- Traffic and quality-of-life impacts of growing warehousing and e-commerce business sectors
- Promoting walkable, bikeable, and transit-friendly downtowns and communities

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*Municipalities are responsible for guiding local development in ways that advance common goals of equity, safety, mobility, and access to opportunity. Development and redevelopment should advance these goals – not create new problems. Keep Somerset Moving recommends that the Somerset County Planning Board and Planning Division continue to work with the municipal partners to update the master plan reexamination reports, circulation, and related master plan elements, to achieve these far-reaching goals.*

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## Innovative Planning Strategies

In New Jersey, most zoning decisions are made by municipal governments. Counties, however, play an essential role in advancing innovation and changes in land use and infrastructure. Somerset County establishes the region's vision and goals through its Master Plan documents including the Investment Framework, Housing Element, Circulation Plan, and Preservation Plan. The County also plays an important leadership role in coordinating decisions across government agencies and between municipalities, as well as educating the public on benefits of linking transportation and land use.

### STRENGTHEN THE LAND USE-TRANSPORTATION CONNECTION

Strengthening the connections between land use and transportation planning presents the opportunity to address many critical needs for Somerset County – safety, mobility, equity, work access, and better health outcomes among them.

Improvements to county and municipal land use practices can address existing challenges, mitigate future problems, and counteract emerging challenges.

Examples include parking reforms; zoning innovations such as Transit-oriented Development (TOD), Transit Villages, and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs); and application of the New Jersey's redevelopment statutes. Each can be applied to create walkable, transit-supportive, mixed-use communities with Complete and Green Streets that address the needs of Somerset's growing cohorts of traditional underserved communities, including for example, addressing the unique need for seniors through aging-in-place strategies.

The Transit Village Initiative is a partnership between NJDOT and NJ TRANSIT which creates incentives for municipalities to use transit-oriented development (TOD) to help redevelop and revitalize areas around public transit stations. Incentives include commitment from New Jersey to coordinate and carry out the municipality's vision for redevelopment, priority funding and technical assistance from some New Jersey agencies, and eligibility for NJDOT grants funding.

Somerville, for example, was designated as a Transit Village in 2010. Because of its designation, Somerville has been awarded various grants for pedestrian access and streetscape improvements, such as a \$230,000 grant for streetscape improvements on Veterans' Memorial Drive West, and a \$100,000 state grant to widen sidewalks on Division Street to improve pedestrian access and circulation.

New sidewalks and a plaza, as well as bicycle racks and lockers, have been installed at the station. Transit service has also benefitted, with the \$15 million rebuild of the train station. Several mixed-use developments have been built or are planned within the Transit Village area.

The current Somerville Station project is one such example, which has redeveloped a former landfill with over 500 residential units, a 4,000-square-foot community civic center, and 4,000 square feet of retail space.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND MOBILITY BEST PRACTICES

Land use and urban form can have a significant impact on achieving better mobility and quality of life outcomes, and improving safety, mobility, and access. People who live in compact, walkable neighborhoods with access to public transit, jobs, stores, and services are more likely to have multiple transportation options to meet their everyday needs.<sup>xiv</sup>

According to the USDOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics, U.S. households spent an average of \$10,961 on transportation in 2021—the second largest household expenditure category after housing. Households in the lowest-income quintile spent the lowest dollar amount on transportation but faced a larger transportation cost burden, spending 26.9 percent of their after-tax income in 2021 on transportation, compared to 10.4 percent by the highest-income quintile.<sup>xv</sup>

Locating affordable housing accessible to jobs and multimodal transportation options can also provide additional cost savings to low- and middle-income individuals and families. However, proximity is not enough. A train station might be half a mile away but if residents must cross a highway to get there, it is not accessible. Accessibility must be safe, convenient, and efficient.

Location selection and approval for affordable housing is a significant challenge in New Jersey. The process of identifying and selecting these locations, however, often overlooks the essential transportation and mobility needs of future low-income residents, including access and connectivity to safe multimodal systems.

This affordable housing framework is an extension of the work done by Somerset County with its Investment Framework. Over several years through three studies, the County developed goals, visions, recommendations, and framework plans for 17 Priority Growth Investment Areas (PGIAs) and Local Priority Areas. Under the rubric of Smart Growth and resiliency, these studies support redevelopment opportunities and encourage investment, including the provision of affordable housing.

The 2017 Somerset County Housing Element responds to the overall housing needs of the County, calling for the provision of a variety of housing types at all levels of affordability. The Housing Element guides local and regional land use regulation for housing plans, policies, programs, regulations, and investment decisions. It also includes recommendations regarding the location and design of residential development throughout the County, which also consistent with the County Investment Framework.

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*Keep Somerset Moving proposes a broad range of criteria and methodologies the County and its municipalities can use to understand and inform locational decisions for future affordable housing. A summary is presented in the Recommendations Chapter.*

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## SOMERSET COUNTY IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS STORIES

### Priority Investment Studies Implementation Projects

Somerset County and partner municipalities have implemented numerous transportation projects, programs and strategies, and Master Plan and zoning updates from the three Priority Investment Studies.

These success stories serve as examples for other Somerset County municipalities to follow. Examples include:

- **Bound Brooks PGIA/Bound Brook:** This project is part of NJTPA's Local Safety Program, and the County is receiving a federal grant for its design and construction. The project includes streetscape and pedestrian safety improvements as part of the Safety Improvements to Talmage Avenue/Main Street/E. Main Street (CR 533 & CR 527) Project, from Tea Street to Bound Brook Border, Borough of Bound Brook, Somerset County.
- **Renaissance Redevelopment PGIA, Hamilton Street, Franklin** – The Hamilton Street project is part of NJTPA's Local Safety Program, and the County is receiving a federal grant for design and construction. It includes streetscape and pedestrian safety improvements as part of the Safety Improvements to Hamilton Street (CR 514) Project.
- **Regional Center PGIA/Somerville Borough:** Veterans Memorial Drive Road Diet project is currently in the design phase by Somerville Borough.
- **North Plainfield Town Center PGIA:** This project received a federal Safe Routes to School grant, and improved pedestrian crossings on Watchung Avenue (CR 531).

- **Meister Ave./Industrial Parkway PGIA:** A developer is currently connecting Meister Avenue as part of a new residential development. This includes reconfiguring the intersection of Route 22 and Easton Turnpike (CR 614) / Meister Avenue Extension.

Examples of Local Preservation Areas (LPAs) success stories include the following:

- **Far Hills Village Center LPA:** improved pedestrian crossings constructed at Liberty Corner Road (CR 512).
- **Watchung Village Center LPA:** Improved striping, curbing and pedestrian crossings constructed at the Watchung Circle.

A proposed program of land use and transportation improvements from the Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC)/ Easton Turnpike PGIA framework plan are currently under consideration in Branchburg Township. The plan seeks to create a walkable village center with connectivity between RVCC campus and nearby destinations and amenities.

RVCC is a significant regional asset but often noted as geographically disconnected from some who could benefit from improved education and marketable job skills.

Improved multimodal access to the campus is an essential regional strategy to deliver on improving access and opportunity to underserved communities.

## Innovative Street Design and Implementation Successes in Somerset County

Somerset County has many examples of innovative street design projects that were influenced by the Somerset County and municipal Complete Streets policies, and related County planning studies and initiatives, including WalkBikeHike, Making Connections, and the County Investment Framework.

Innovative street design successes on Somerset County roadways include:

- Somerset County installed bike lanes on Amwell Road in Franklin Township, Somerset Street in Watchung and Old York Road in Bridgewater.
- Safety improvements from the NJTPA Local Safety Program for Main Street (CR 533) in Manville are under construction (started Summer of 2023, expected to be completed in 2024).
- Mountain Avenue (CR 642) in the Borough of North Plainfield; completed pedestrian safety improvements, also from the NJTPA Local Safety Program. Construction was completed in 2017.
- Washington Ave (CR 529) & Greenbrook Rd (CR 634) in the Township of Greenbrook; completed intersection improvements and road diet of Washington Avenue.
- Talmage Avenue/Main Street/E. Main Street (CR 533 & CR 527) from Tea Street to Bound Brook municipal boundary in the Borough of Bound Brook; safety improvements currently in design as part of the NJTPA Local Safety Program.
- Hamilton Street (CR 514) from Franklin Boulevard to the County line in the Township of Franklin; safety improvements are currently in the design phase as part of an FHWA Local Safety Program grant.

Notable examples of innovative street designs and projects on municipal roadways in Somerset County include:

- Bernardsville installed a new crosswalk to improve access and safety at the train station on Minebrook Road (U.S. 202).
- Manville completed a Complete Streets biking network workshop through a Complete Streets technical assistance grant in 2019-2020.
- Raritan completed a town-wide walk audit in 2019 to update their Circulation Plan. As a result, they repainted crosswalks and plan to add more sidewalks.
- Hillsborough added new pedestrian beacons on Triangle Road at the intersection of Van Zandt Drive in December 2022.



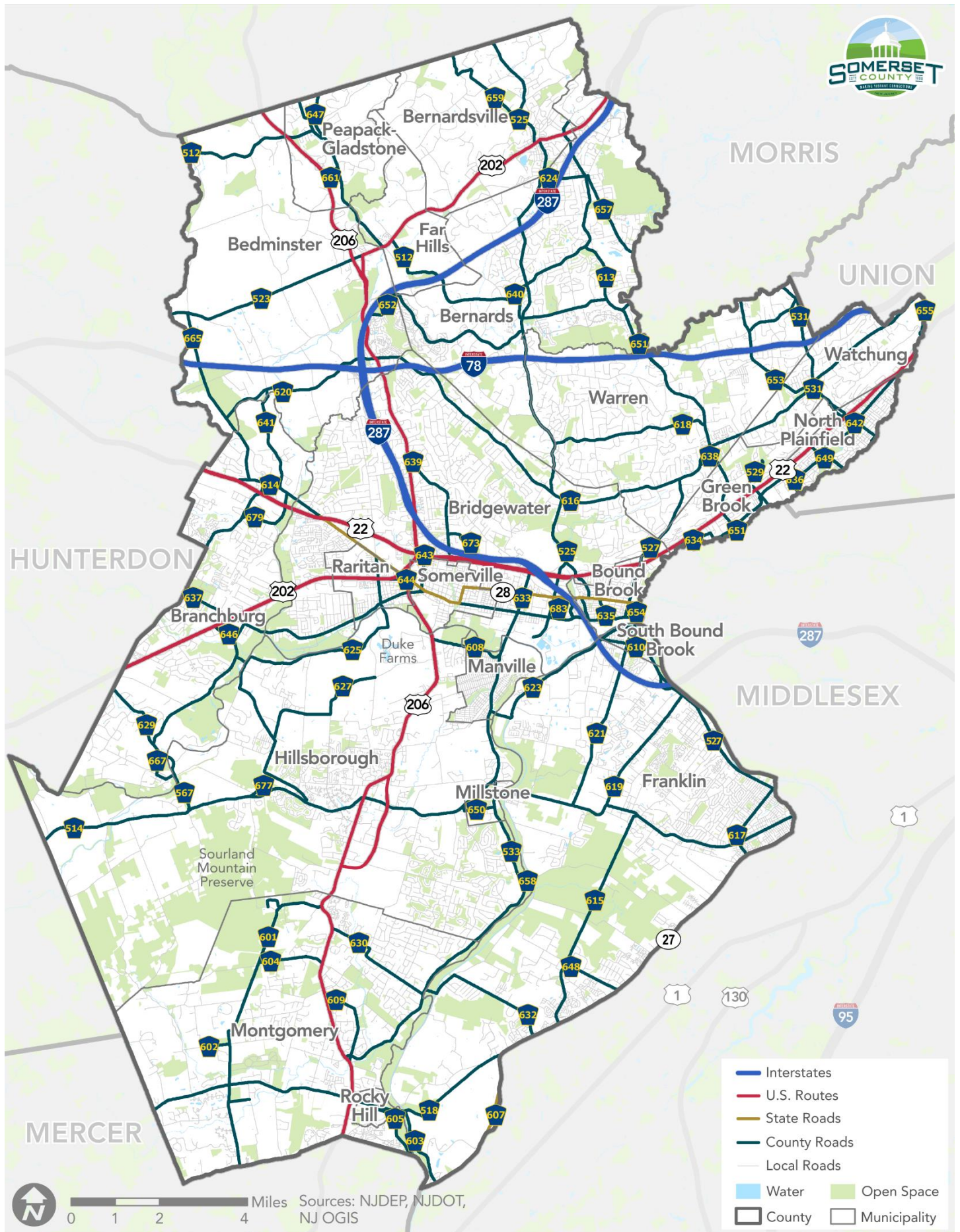


Figure 1: Somerset County Roadway Network



## 4. SOMERSET COUNTY CONTEXT

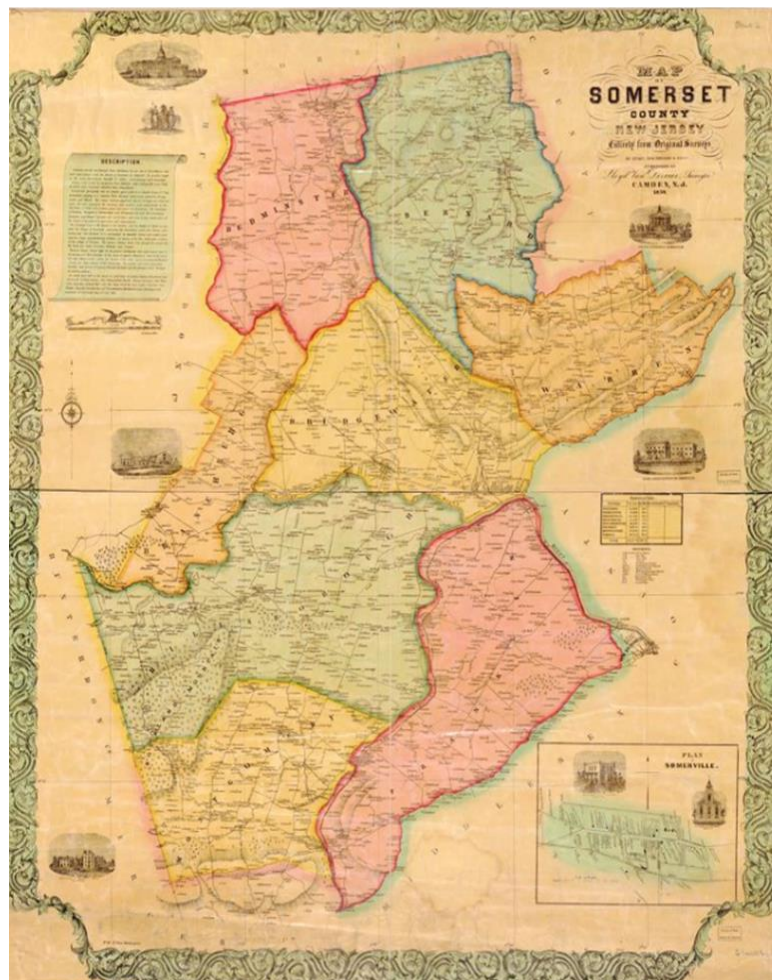
Somerset County features a rich diversity of landscapes – lush and scenic communities, desirable small towns and hamlets, and growing downtown areas.

Compared to their New Jersey counterparts, Somerset County residents are more likely to drive to work and less likely to use transit for commuting and daily travel, and they are older, more highly educated, and more affluent.

Somerset, however, is becoming gradually more diverse, more like New Jersey as a whole, becoming home for larger numbers of foreign-born and lower income residents with limited English proficiency. These vulnerable roadway users and underserved communities are often more reliant on transit, walking and biking, with limited access to automobile ownership. Crash data for Somerset County also indicate disproportionate safety and FSI crash impacts to these vulnerable roadway users and underserved communities.

With growing numbers of lower income and lower educational attainment residents, the need for affordable housing must be a priority. Keep Somerset Moving recognizes the importance of locating affordable units in areas with safe and accessible multimodal transportation options – transit, walking, and biking – to provide access to work, education, social services, and everyday travel needs.

These findings emphasize the need to prioritize equity, safety, access to opportunity, and resilience to deliver on the bright promise of a better future and outcomes for all who live, work, visit, and conduct business in Somerset County.



Source: <https://library.princeton.edu/njmaps/counties/somerset.html>

## SOMERSET COUNTY POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Somerset County is older, slightly less diverse, more highly educated, and more affluent than the averages for the NJTPA region and New Jersey as a whole.

Assessment of Somerset's population and demographic trends is based on data from the U.S. Decennial Census and the 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

### Population

Somerset County population tripled from 1950 to 2000, adding nearly 200,000 new residents in 50 years (see Figure 2), an annual growth rate of more than 3 percent per year. Since 2000, population growth has

slowed to less than one percent per year, but continues to steadily increase.

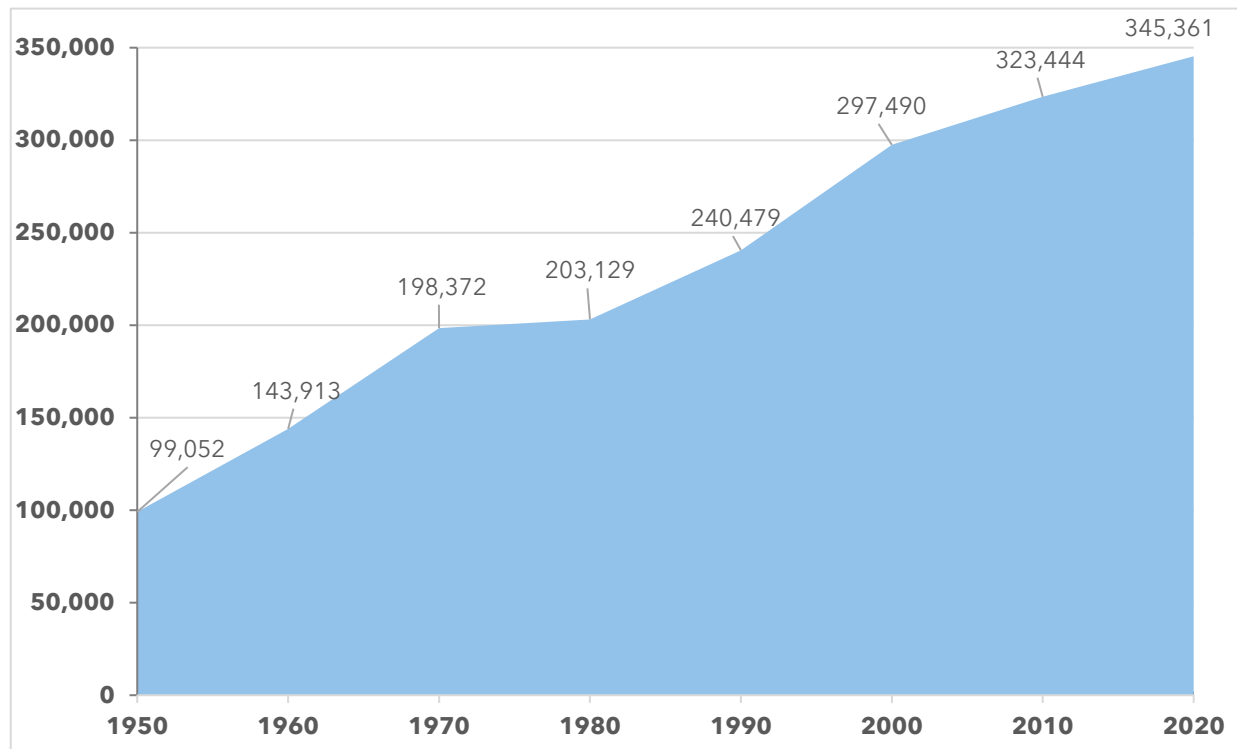
Franklin, Bridgewater, and Hillsborough Townships are by far the largest municipalities in Somerset County (see Table 1), together accounting for more than 46 percent of the County total.

Other municipalities with relatively large populations over 20,000 include Bernards Township, Montgomery Township, and North Plainfield Borough. The smaller boroughs of Far Hills, Millstone, and Rocky Hill each have a population of less than 1,000.

**Table 1: Somerset County 2020 Population, by Municipality**

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION
Bedminster Township	8,272
Bernards Township	27,830
Bernardsville Borough	7,893
Bound Brook Borough	11,988
Branchburg Township	14,940
Bridgewater Township	45,977
Far Hills Borough	924
Franklin Township	68,364
Green Brook Township	7,281
Hillsborough Township	43,276
Manville Borough	10,953
Millstone Borough	448
Montgomery Township	23,690
North Plainfield Borough	22,808
Peapack and Gladstone Borough	2,558
Raritan Borough	7,835
Rocky Hill Borough	743
Somerville Borough	12,346
South Bound Brook Borough	4,863
Warren Township	15,923
Watchung Borough	6,449
<b>Somerset County</b>	<b>345,361</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census.



**Figure 2: Population Growth in Somerset County, 1950 to 2020**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Somerset County's 2020 U.S. Census population of 345,361 makes it the thirteenth most populous county in New Jersey, with 3.7 percent of the statewide total population. Somerset's 2020 population density of 1,144.1 persons per square mile, about ten percent below the statewide average of 1,263 persons per square mile.

### Race and Ethnicity

More than 55 percent of Somerset County residents are White, and 44.9 percent are considered minority; of these 18.1 percent are Asian, 14.7 percent are Hispanic or Latino (of any race), 9.4 percent are Black or African American, and the remainder is made up of smaller percentages of other demographic groups.

Somerset County is slightly less diverse than the NJTPA region overall, where 47 percent of the population is considered a minority.

### Age

The median age of residents in Somerset County is 41.8 years of age, higher than New Jersey's median age of 40 and slightly above the NJTPA region median age of 41.2. About 40 percent of the population is under the age of 20 or over 64, which mirrors the NJTPA and state demographics. Children and older adults are especially vulnerable to fatal or severe crashes.

Enhancing safety and providing a well-connected transportation network benefits all roadway users including those using transit, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure.

## Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities are often more vulnerable to fatal or severe crashes than pedestrians and cyclists, since infrastructure is typically designed for those without disabilities, despite requirements that public infrastructure must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Navigation and/or mobility challenges can be exacerbated for those with vision, hearing, cognitive, and/or ambulatory challenges not only because the built environment isn't always accessible to them; they are also less likely to drive<sup>xvi</sup> or have access to transit.<sup>xvii</sup>

## Education

The vast majority of Somerset County residents (approximately 94 percent), have a high school degree or higher, and 55 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Both are higher than the State averages of 90 percent and 41 percent, respectively.

## Income

The median household income in Somerset County is \$116,510 in 2020 inflation adjusted dollars, which is significantly higher than the State median household income at \$85,245. More than 52 percent of County residents earn more than \$75,000.

## Employment

In 2020, private non-farm employment in Somerset County totaled 343,390. Management, business, science, and arts accounted for 54.4 percent of all jobs. Sales and office occupations make up the next largest category at 19.5 percent of all jobs.

Many of the major employment hubs in Somerset County are along the region's principal

roadways and interstate corridors, including County Routes 514 and 527; Routes 22, 27, and 28; Interstate highways 78 and 287; and Routes 202 and 206.

## Vehicle Ownership and Commuting

According to the 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 98 percent of Somerset County, households own one or more vehicles and 82 percent own two or more vehicles. Households with no vehicles must rely on pedestrian, bicycle, and/or transit systems to their daily travel needs.

Approximately 50 percent of Somerset County's working population work within the County, while 43 percent work outside of the County. The remainder – 7 percent - work outside the State (Figure 3).

Commuting trips impact the transportation network, especially those made by single-occupant vehicles. According to the 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, over 75 percent of Somerset County workers over the age of 16 commuted in single-occupant vehicles, while around 7 percent carpooled, and 4.8 percent took public transit. The share of public transit commuter trips is half that of New Jersey, where roughly 11 percent of commuters utilize public transit. Somerset County has a higher percent of workers who work-from-home, roughly 9.7 percent compared to 7.3 percent throughout New Jersey. Less than 2 percent of Somerset County workers walk or bicycle to work.

Majority of commuting trips from workers outside of Somerset County, come from Middlesex County, with 30,607 workers (Figure 4). Most of the remaining non-resident Somerset County workers, came from neighboring counties, with Union County in second, with 12,920 workers.





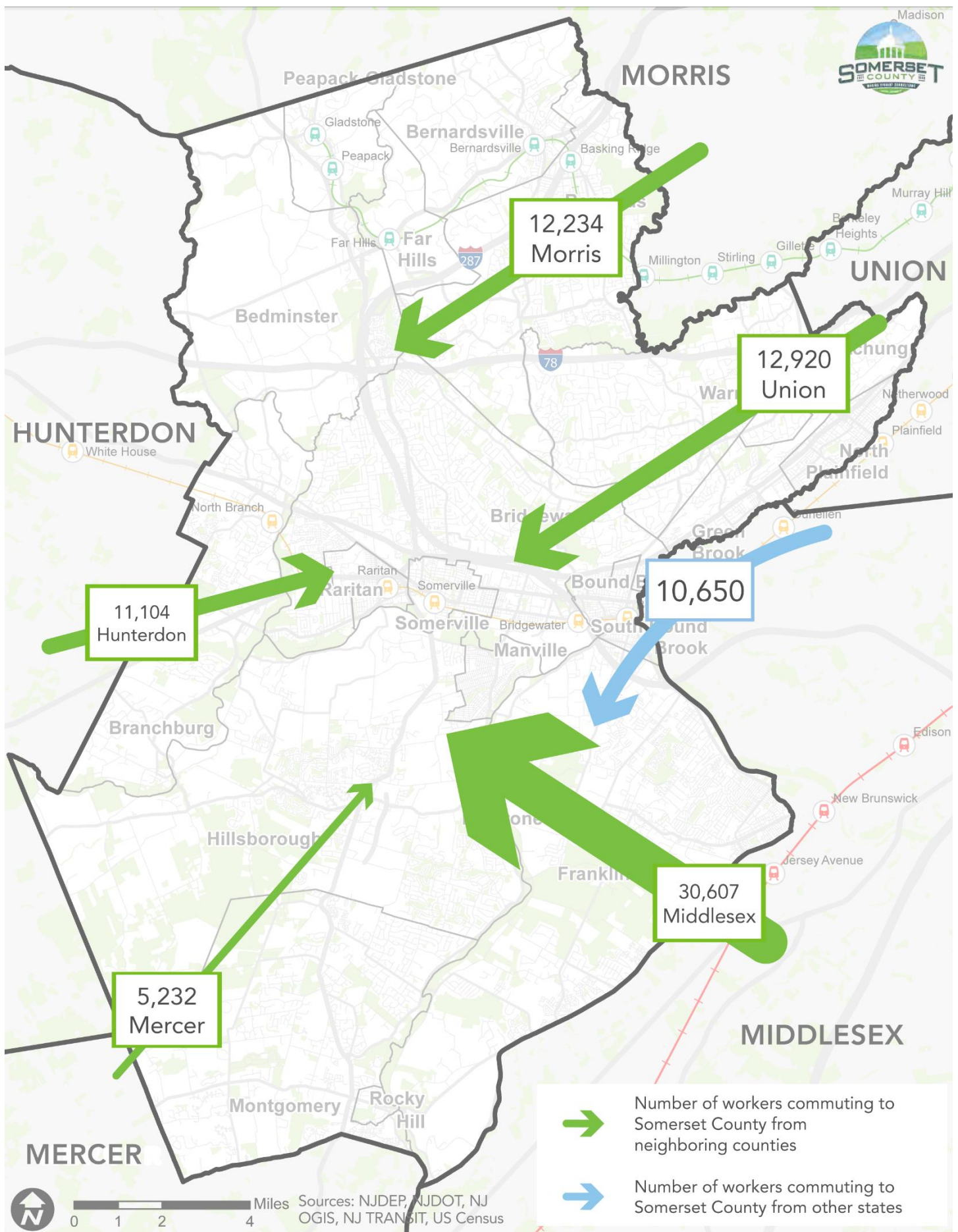


Figure 4: Commuting Patterns into Somerset County



## EQUITY ASSESSMENT AND CRASH ANALYSIS

Keep Somerset Moving recognizes that equity is integral and an essential element of comprehensive and thoughtful planning for the county. A central goal of understanding and addressing transportation equity is to facilitate social and economic opportunities by providing equitable access to affordable and reliable transportation options, particularly among populations that are considered underserved.<sup>xviii</sup>

Areas that include larger populations of underserved communities face significant challenges in attaining affordable and reliable transportation and access to social and economic opportunity.

This equity assessment was based on NJTPA's guidance for environmental justice assessment and equity analysis to achieve the following goals.<sup>xix</sup>

### EQUITY GOALS

Based on the equity assessment, Keep Somerset Moving should:

- Continue to advance equity principles as part of project life-cycle process: planning, prioritization, project selection, community outreach, design, construction, and maintenance.
- Community outreach methods and materials should be proactively informed by which particular groups are overrepresented in the project area (e.g., people with disabilities, low-income, limited English proficiency, etc.).
- Projects should advance equity and address historic and ongoing inequities.

### EQUITY ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The NJTPA equity methodology examines the demographic data to determine where underserved communities are located:

- Minority
- Foreign-born
- Low income
- Limited English proficiency
- Age, including children and seniors
- Persons with disabilities
- Female population
- Zero-Vehicle households

The relative concentration of each of these underserved communities in Somerset County was calculated by comparing the population density of each underserved community at the census tract level to the County average (Figure 5). The results were then categorized, based on the comparison of population density between the census track and county for each underserved community: well below average; below average; average; above average; and well above average. Average represents census tracts that are at or near the Somerset County average for that population.

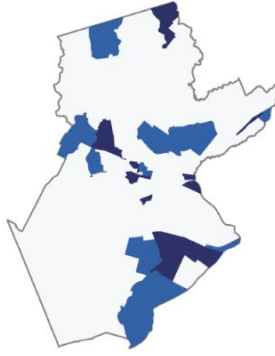
Finally, a composite countywide equity score was calculated by adding the component scores of all ten underserved communities together. The composite score for Somerset County is 17, on an overall scale of 0 to 40..

Somerset's underserved communities are located predominantly in portions of Bridgewater, Raritan, Somerville, the Bound Brooks, and Manville. Significant underserved communities are also present in northeastern Hillsborough, portions of Franklin, and much of North Plainfield, see Figure 6.

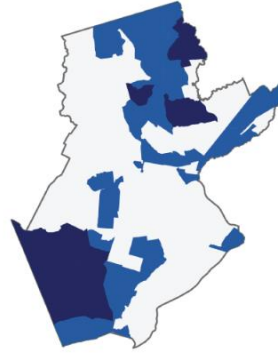
# EQUITY SCORES BY CENSUS TRACTS



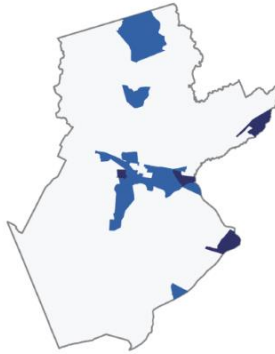
AGE UNDER 5 YEARS



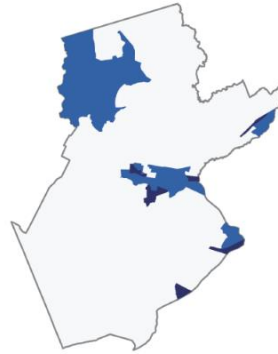
AGE 5 TO 17 YEARS



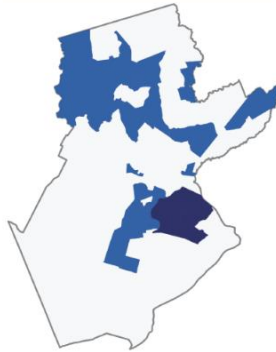
LIMITED ENGLISH  
PROFICIENCY



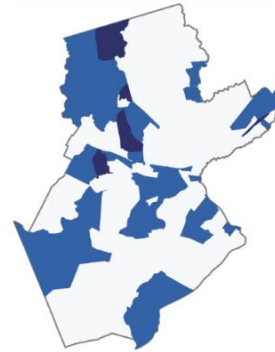
LOW INCOME



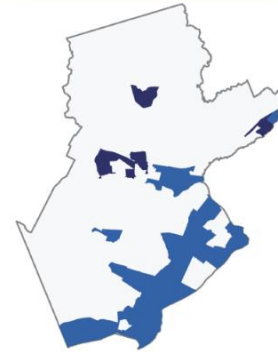
AGE OVER 65 YEARS



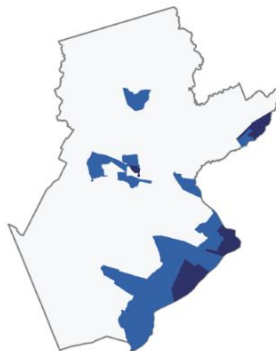
FEMALE



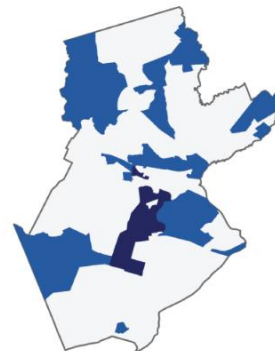
FOREIGN BORN



MINORITY



PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES



ZERO VEHICLE  
HOUSEHOLDS

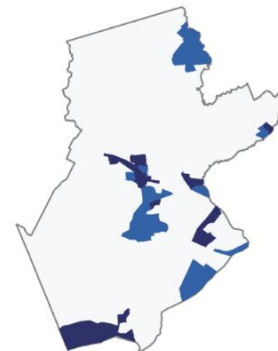


Figure 5: Above and Well Above Average Equity Census Tracts

# HIGHER EQUITY SCORE AREAS

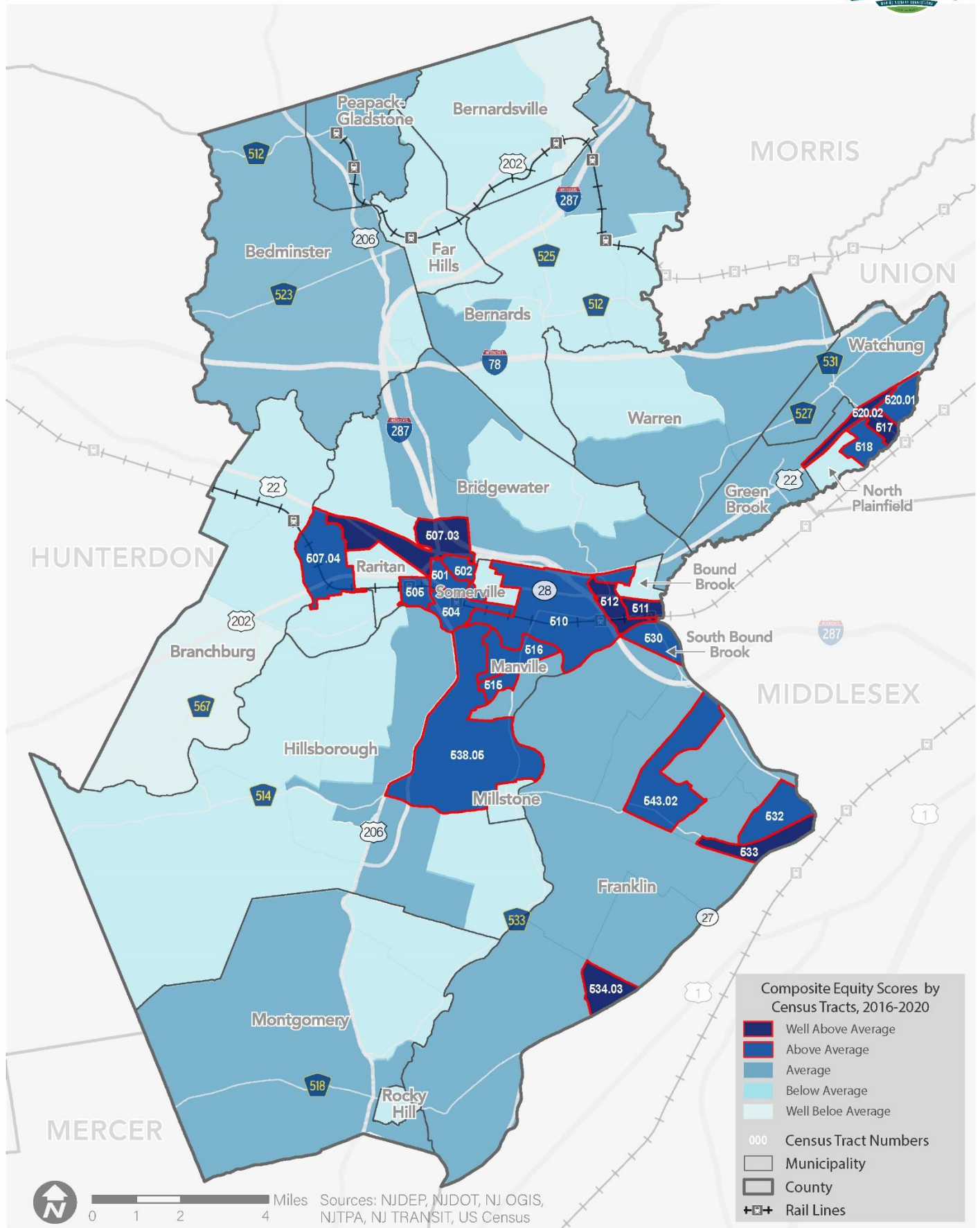


Figure 6: Composite Equity Scores, Above and Well Above Average Census Tracts



## Comparison of Equity Indicator Demographics

Additional assessment was undertaken to compare Somerset County to both the NJTPA region and statewide averages. (See Table 2 below).

Overall, the comparative assessment shows that the county's population indicators to be largely similar to both the region and the state with the following notable differences.

- Somerset County has a higher share of low-income residents at 12.3 percent compared to the region (9.4 percent) and the state (9.7 percent).
- The share of zero-vehicle households (4.4 percent) in the County is much lower compared to the region (12.1 percent) and statewide (11.2 percent).
- Somerset County has a smaller share of LEP residents (9.6 percent) than both the region and the state at 13.5 percent and 12.1 percent, respectively.
- Somerset County has a smaller share of residents with disabilities (7.8 percent) compared to the region (9.7 percent) and the state (10.4 percent).

Table 2: Comparison of Equity Indicators: Somerset County, NJTPA, and New Jersey

EQUITY INDICATOR	SOMERSET COUNTY	NJTPA REGION	STATEWIDE
Minority	44.9%	47.3%	45.3%
Foreign-born	25.9%	26.1%	22.7%
Low Income	12.3%	9.4%	9.7%
Limited English Proficiency	9.6%	13.5%	12.1%
Age: Children Under 5 Years	5.1%	5.9%	5.8%
Age: Youth 5 to 17 Years	16.8%	16.2%	16.2%
Age: Elderly Over 65 Years	15.8%	16.1%	16.2%
Disability	7.8%	9.7%	10.4%
Female	51.1%	51.1%	51.1%
Zero-Vehicle Households	4.4%	12.1%	11.2%

Source: U.S. Census 2020

## Ten-Year Demographic and Equity Indicator Trends

Recent changes in underserved community populations from 2010 to 2020 were also examined to identify any notable trends and demographic changes over the most recent 10-year census period.

Combined with the comparative demographic analysis, the ten-year trend lines indicate that Somerset County is gradually becoming more diverse, and more like New Jersey as a whole, and attracting large numbers of foreign-born and lower income residents with limited English proficiency. The County has significant and growing populations of underserved groups, particularly in the central and eastern portions of the County:

Some notable trends among the equity indicators from 2010 to 2020 include:

### MINORITY POPULATION

- Increased in a large majority of Somerset County (61 of the 68 census tracts).
- Areas with the highest percent increase in (100 percent or more) include: portions of Bridgewater along Route 22, Millstone, Montgomery, Manville, Franklin, Peapack-Gladstone, and Hillsborough.
- Minority population also grew by 50 percent to 100 percent in Bernards and portions of Hillsborough, Warren, and Bridgewater.

### LOW-INCOME POPULATION

- At least doubled in areas throughout Somerset County; each municipality experienced this trend to some degree.

### FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION

- Grew significantly (by 100 percent or more) in parts of southern Somerset: including portions of Montgomery, Franklin, Rocky Hill, and Hillsborough.
- Northern areas of the County saw a 50 percent to 100 percent increase in Bernards, Warren, and Bridgewater.
- Portions of Bedminster, Bound Brook near the train station, Franklin from Millstone to Rocky Hill, Branchburg, North Plainfield, Somerville, and Watchung experienced a decrease in foreign-born populations.

### LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

- At least doubled in areas that include Bedminster, Bernards near Basking Ridge, Millstone, North Montgomery, Northwest Franklin, Rocky Hill, South of Hillsborough, and western Bridgewater.

### POPULATION OVER 65 YEARS

- Increased in most areas of the County- (59 of the 68 census tracts).

### ZERO-VEHICLE HOUSEHOLDS

- At least doubled in areas that include: Branchburg (in the North and South), Bernards near Basking Ridge, North Warren, Rocky Hill, South and East Hillsborough, and South Montgomery.
- Areas where carless households reduced by half or more include: Branchburg (North Branch), Bernardsville, Far Hills, Hillsborough (south of Raritan), North Montgomery, Peapack-Gladstone, and portions of Bridgewater.

## Crash and Safety Data Assessment (2016-2020)

Crash data for the five-year period from 2016 to 2020 were examined to evaluate travel safety in Somerset County. During this period there were 50,239 total crashes of all types including 5,079 (10.1 percent of the County total) that involved a truck and 593 crashes (1.2 percent) involved pedestrians and cyclists. Pedestrians were involved in 386 crashes (0.8 percent) and cyclists were involved in 238 crashes (0.5 percent).

The data indicate that Somerset County is severely overrepresented for fatal and severe injury crashes particularly among pedestrians and cyclists. Although pedestrians and cyclists comprise just 1.2 percent of all crashes they are involved in one-quarter of all fatal and severe injury crashes. Compared to statewide totals for the 2016-2020 period, crashes in Somerset were about 52 percent more likely to result in fatal or serious injury.

### CRASH HOTSPOTS: ALL CRASH TYPES (2106-2020)

Crash hotspots among all crash types in Somerset County occurred primarily on the higher functional classification and busiest roadways and include portions of the county, municipal, and state/interstate roadways (Figure 7). These hotspots include:

#### *Hotspots: County and Municipal Roadways*

- Amwell Road (CR 514) in Hillsborough, Millstone, and Franklin
- Georgetown-Franklin Tpke/Washington St (CR 518) in Montgomery and Rocky Hill
- Main Street/Easton Avenue (CR 527), in Bound Brook, So. Bound Brook, Franklin
- CR 533 in Manville
- Bridge Street in Somerville
- Franklin Boulevard (CR 617) and South Middlebush Road (CR 615) in Franklin

- Watchung Avenue (CR 531), Somerset Street (CR 631), Mountain Avenue (CR 642), Norwood Avenue, North Plainfield

#### *Hotspots: State-Owned Roadways*

- Interstate 78 and 287 throughout Somerset County
- U.S. 202 in Branchburg and Raritan, throughout U.S. 206, and along much of NJ Routes 22 and 28

### CRASH HOTSPOTS: INVOLVING PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS (2016-2020)

Of the total of 593 crashes that involved a pedestrian or bicyclist in Somerset County, more than 70 percent occurred in North Plainfield, Somerville, Raritan, the Bound Brooks, Manville, and Franklin adjacent to New Brunswick (Figure 8).

Many smaller and isolated crash hotspots are found throughout Somerset County, including many lower density and suburban communities.

Significant hotspot roadways for pedestrian and cyclists in Somerset County include:

- Route 22, Greenbrook Road (CR 636), West End Avenue (CR 649), in North Plainfield
- Route 28, Main Street, and Bridge Street in Somerville
- Main Street (CR 533) and N 13<sup>th</sup> Street adjacent to Manville High School in Manville
- Portions of Amwell Road (CR 514) in Hillsborough, Millstone, and Franklin
- Georgetown-Franklin Turnpike/Washington Street (CR 518) in Montgomery and Rocky Hill
- Main Street/Easton Avenue (CR 527), in Bound Brook, So. Bound Brook, Franklin
- Franklin Boulevard (CR 617) and Hamilton Street (CR 514) in Franklin

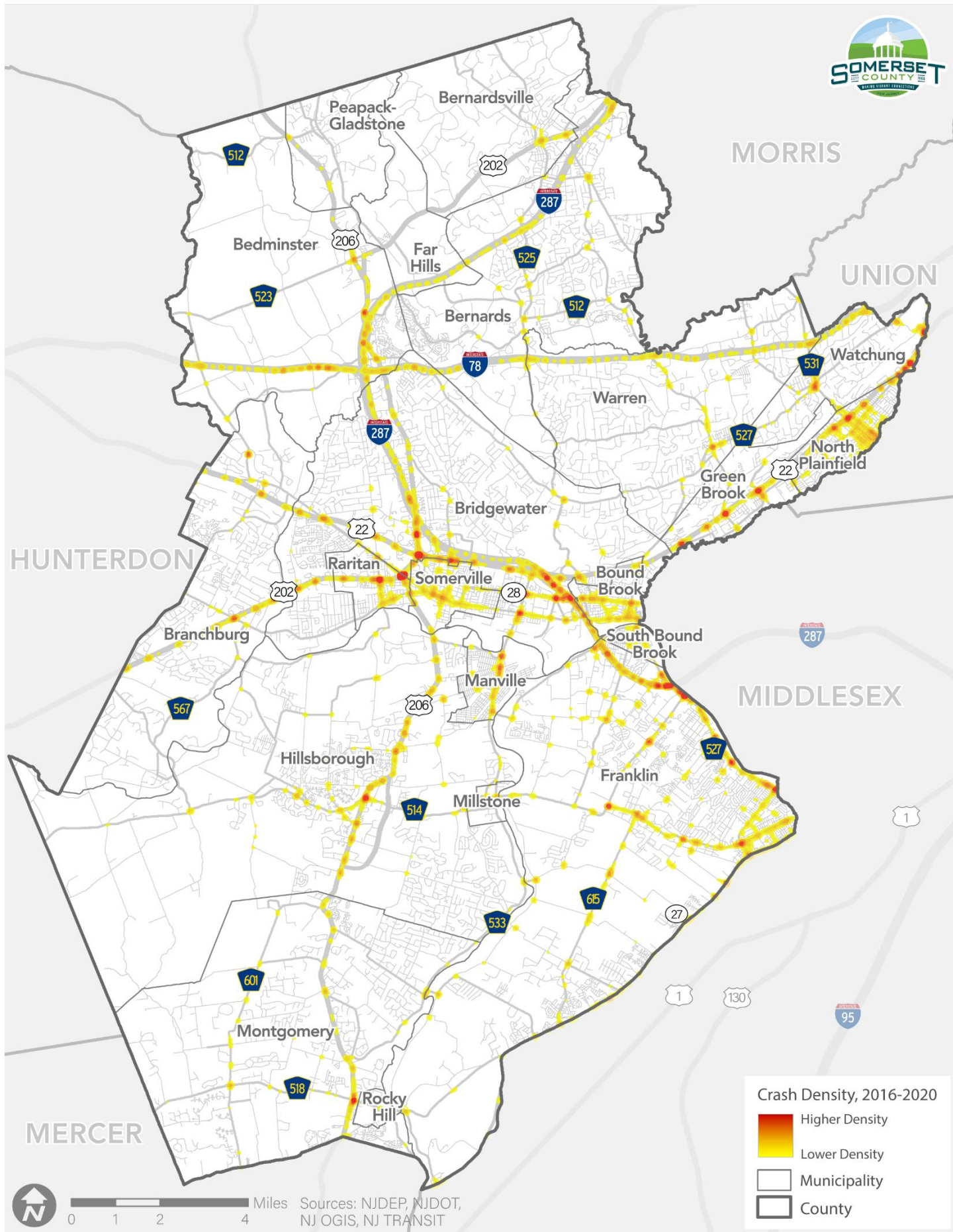


Figure 7: Crash Hotspots, All Crash Types



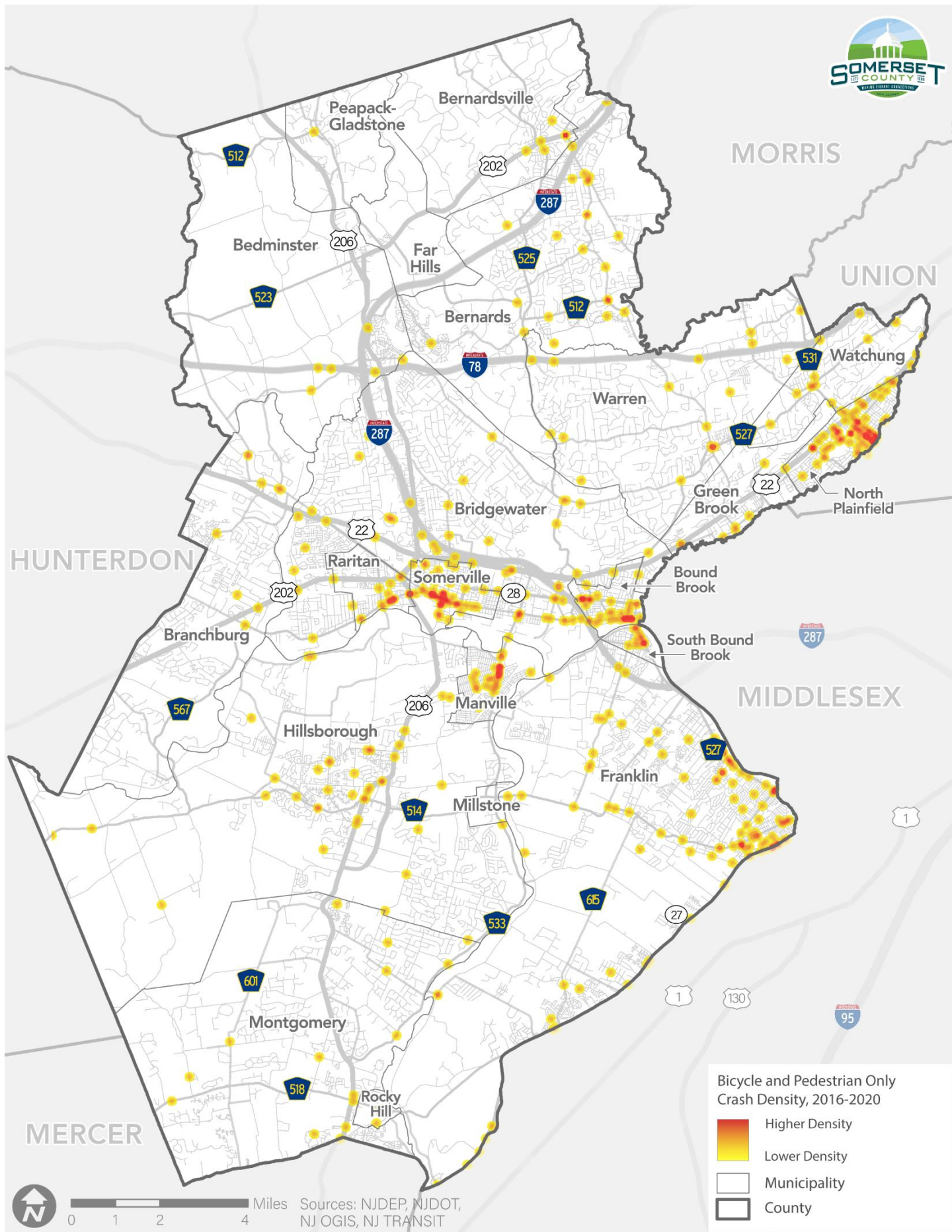


Figure 8: Crash Hotspots, Pedestrian and Bicycle Involved



## Crash Severity and Equity (2016-2020)

Fatal and severe injury (FSI) crashes disproportionately impact Somerset County vulnerable roadway users, particularly among Somerset County's underserved communities.

Figure 9 and Figure 10 depict the overlay of FSI crash hotspots in Somerset County on the underserved community areas, demonstrating where vulnerable roadway users in underserved communities are most at risk.

### FATAL AND SERIOUS INJURY (FSI) CRASHES

Of the County's total of 407 FSI crashes, about one-third occurred in the above average and well above average composite equity score areas, even though these areas comprise just a small portion of Somerset's overall land area and census tracts.

In particular, the communities of North Plainfield, Raritan, Manville, Somerville, the Bound Brooks, Franklin, and eastern Bridgewater have experienced a significant number of FSI crashes as depicted in Figure 9.

The state and Interstate highways, including Routes 22 and 28, U.S. 202 and 206, and I-78 and I-287, with their higher traffic volumes and speeds, account for 41 percent of County FSI crashes. Lower density communities such as Warren and Watchung with interstate highways also experience high numbers of FSI crashes.

Somerset County-owned roadways account for 35 percent of all FSI crashes.

Similar to findings among all transportation crashes, many smaller and isolated FSI crash hotspots are located throughout Somerset County, including many lower density and suburban communities.

### PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE (FSI) CRASHES

FSI risk and exposure are even more pronounced and severe among pedestrians and cyclists; 98 out of the total of 593 total bike and ped crashes involved FSI. Furthermore, of the total of 98 pedestrian and bicycle FSI crashes, more than one-half occurred in the above average and well above average equity composite score areas (Figure 10).

In particular, the communities of North Plainfield, Manville, Somerville, the Bound Brooks, Franklin adjacent to New Brunswick, and eastern Bridgewater have experienced significant numbers of pedestrian and bicycle FSI crashes.

Exposure to FSI crashes is much more pronounced on Somerset County roadways, accounting for 43 percent of pedestrian and bicycle FSI crashes.

The state highways, including Routes 22 and 28, and portions of U.S. 202 and 206, experienced 27.5 percent of these crashes.

Smaller and isolated pedestrian and bicycle crash FSI hotspots are found throughout Somerset County, including among the lower density and suburban communities.

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*Overall, the data indicates significant and disproportionate FSI crash impacts to both underserved communities and vulnerable roadway users in Somerset County. Keep Somerset Moving prioritizes safety as the top priority for roadway planning and design to address these impacts.*

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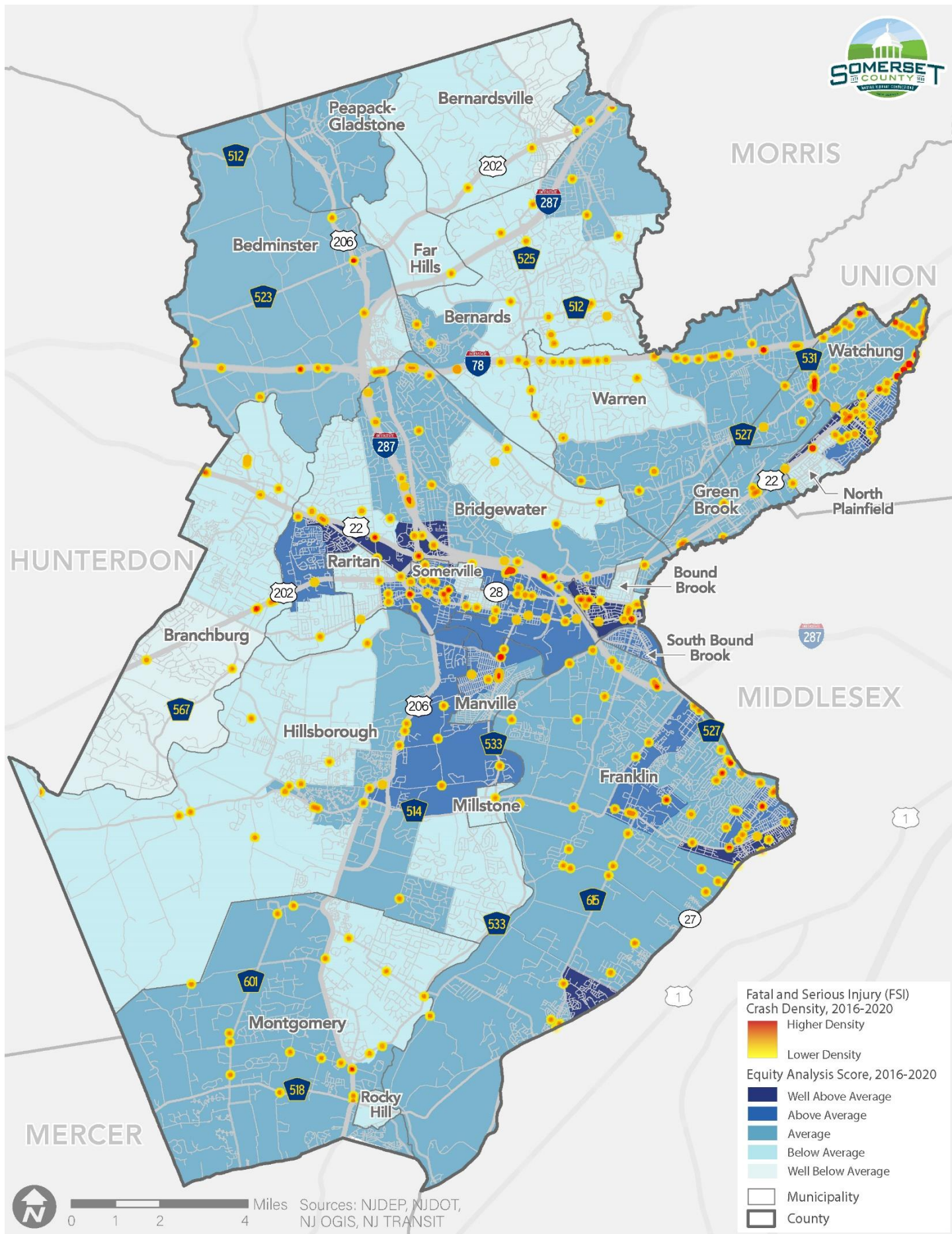
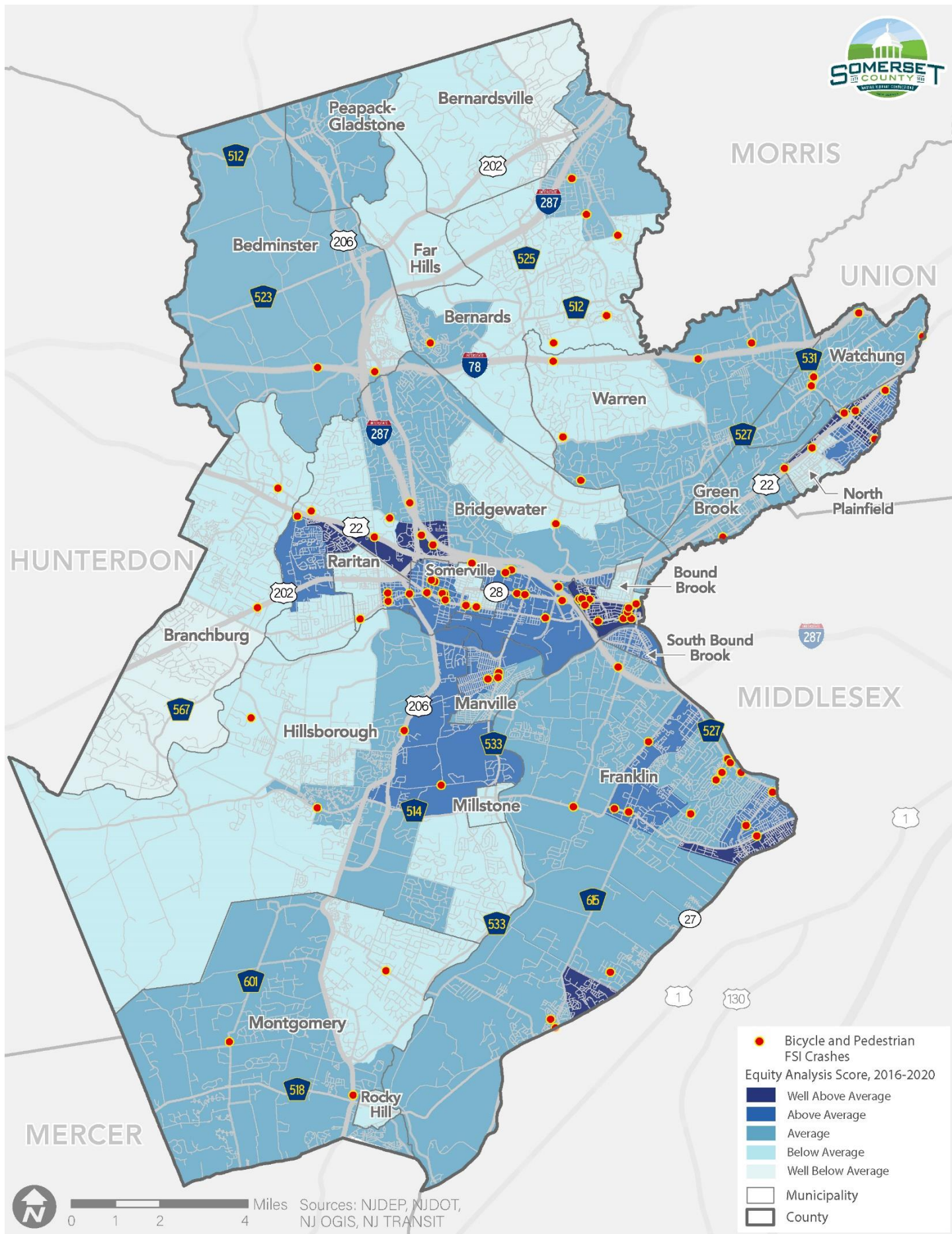


Figure 9: Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes, All Crash Types





**Figure 10: Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes, Pedestrian and Bicycle Involved**

## LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS

### Existing Land Use Patterns

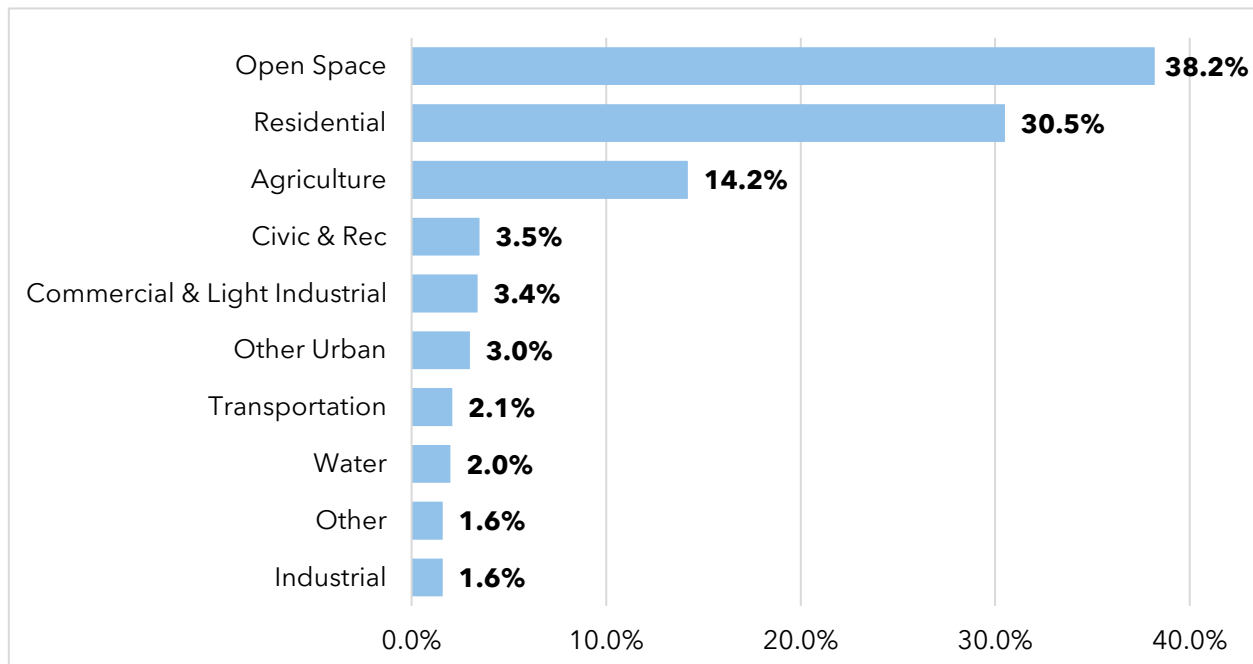
Much of Somerset County is comprised of open space, at 38 percent of all land area, followed by residential (30 percent), and agricultural (14 percent) uses (see Figure 11). All other land uses collectively account for less than four percent of the County land area. The significant presence of open space and agricultural land gives Somerset County an endemic natural, rural, and scenic character.

The majority of medium and high-density residential land uses are concentrated in the eastern and central portions of the County, primarily along major roadways and passenger rail corridors, particularly Route 22, Route 28, and the Raritan Valley Line. Industrial land uses are distributed throughout Somerset County and typically concentrated along major or minor arterials and major collectors. The northwestern, southwestern, and southeastern corners contain

much of the agricultural land, in addition to wetlands and forested areas.

### COUNTY INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

The Somerset County Investment Framework (Figure 12) identifies areas most suitable for future growth (in purple in (Figure 12), local preservation (in brown), and agricultural use (in green). shows the land uses within Somerset County. The growth areas include prime locations for the vibrant mixed-use, live-work environments within walking distance of transit and green space, and that many employers, workers and households desire. Designated growth areas feature the infrastructure and community facilities necessary to support growth are concentrated, and where growth is supported through state, regional and local planning and land use policies.<sup>xx</sup>



**Figure 11: Summary of Somerset County Land Uses, 2020**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



# COUNTY INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

## Somerset County, NJ

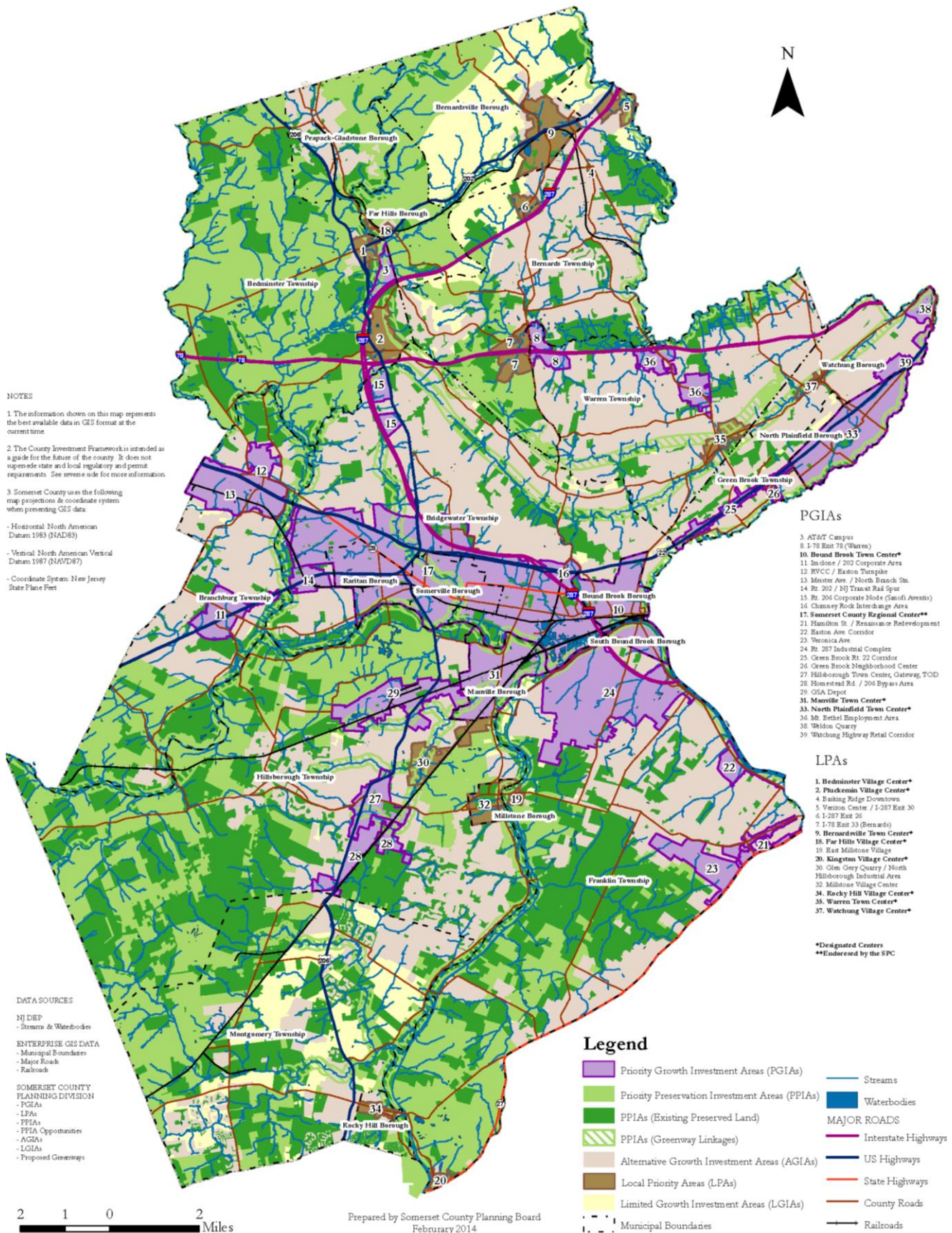


Figure 12: Somerset County Investment Framework Map



## Housing Stock and Costs

Based on the 2020 data, there are 127,090 total housing units in the County, of which 119,721 are considered occupied units. Of the occupied units, 90,666 or 75.7 percent are owner-occupied and 29,055 or 24.3 percent of units are renter occupied. The average household size is 2.72 people among all households, 2.81 people for owner-occupied households, and 2.45 people for renter-occupied households.

The most common housing type is single-family detached units (nearly 60 percent of the total), followed by single-family attached (14 percent), and apartments with ten or more units (12.4 percent). There are very few mobile homes or other types of housing in Somerset County.

Throughout Somerset County, housing costs are high due to demand. The median home value for owner-occupied housing units in Somerset County is \$437,200, significantly higher than the statewide median value of \$350,800. The median monthly mortgage for homeowners is \$2,795, \$319 higher than the statewide median and \$101 higher since 2010.

For renter households in the County, the median monthly rent is \$1,636 (2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). The median monthly rent in the County has risen \$341 from the median of \$1,295 in 2010 (2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates).

Housing cost is often a large portion of an individual's or household's monthly expenses. A household is considered housing cost burdened if housing expenditures total 30 percent or more of the household's income. In Somerset County, approximately 31 percent of occupied housing units are cost burdened, with about 27 percent of owner-occupied housing units cost burdened (2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). Housing cost burden is significantly more severe for renters, with 44 percent of renters spending 30 percent or more of their income on housing. Owner-occupied and rental housing burden is between 3 and 4 percent lower for Somerset County than for New Jersey where 30 percent of owner-occupied units are housing cost burdened and 48 percent of renters are housing cost burdened.

## Major Travel and Employment Destinations

The principal travel destinations in Somerset County include work locations, hospitals, parks, and schools. Many of the principal work locations are adjacent to the state and interstate highways (Figure 13).

### EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

Employment tends to be concentrated along major roadways and rail lines throughout Somerset County. The highest concentration of employment exists in the central east-west portion of the County along I-287, Route 202, Route 22, Route 28, and the Raritan Valley Line.

### PARKS & RECREATION

- Duke Farms
- Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park
- Colonial Park
- Negri-Nepote Native Grassland Preserve
- Six Mile Run State Park
- Sourland Mountain Preserve
- Washington Valley Park
- Natirar Park
- Lord Stirling Park
- Mountain View Park
- Washington Rock State Park
- John Clyde Memorial Grassland Preserve
- Duke Island Park
- East County Park
- Raritan River Greenway
- Skillman Park

These parks are home to a variety of trails, activities, and active and passive open spaces. There are also numerous local parks and natural areas not listed above that serve the recreational needs of residents throughout the County.

### HIGH SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

There are at least 18 high schools within Somerset County, including:

- Somerset County Vocational and Technical High School
- Somerville High School
- Bound Brook High School
- Manville High School
- Hillsborough High School
- Bridgewater-Raritan Regional High School
- Immaculata High School
- Montgomery High School
- Franklin High School
- The Pingry School
- Bernards High School
- Ridge High School
- Watchung Hills Regional High School
- North Plainfield High School
- Mount Saint Mary Academy
- College Achieve Central Charter School
- Matheny School
- Rutgers Preparatory

### HIGHER EDUCATION

- Raritan Valley Community College
- American Institute which has a campus in Franklin Township and offers vocational education

### HOSPITALS & MEDICAL SERVICES

- Carrier Clinic, Belle Mead
- East Mountain Hospital, Belle Mead
- Matheny Medical and Educational Center, Peapack
- RWJ Barnabas Health – Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, Somerset
- VA New Jersey Health Care System, Lyons



## ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ISSUES

Climate change considerations are now an essential part of the transportation planning process and integral to Keep Somerset Moving. The plan considers big-picture climate change issues, air quality, and the impact of flooding events. Somerset County already experiences significant impacts from each.

Fostering a more resilient transportation network through mitigation, adaptation, and hardening will be vital to maintaining Somerset County's transportation system, competitiveness, and quality of life.

### Climate Change

In January 2020, the State of New Jersey released its Energy Master Plan, calling for the State to achieve 100 percent clean energy by 2050. A central tenet of this plan is to utilize carbon-neutral electricity generation and maximize the electrification of the transportation and building sectors to significantly reduce emissions. Achieving this goal would help New Jersey achieve its Global Warming Response Act (GWRA) target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent (below 2006 levels) by 2050.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) publishes an inventory every two years which summarizes statewide GHG emissions data. The 2022 Mid-Cycle Update Report, published December 2022, reported that transportation is the largest contributor to GHG emissions in New Jersey, accounting for over 40 percent of annual emissions.

### Air Quality

Poor air quality can limit mobility for sensitive groups who may not be able to leave their homes for extended periods of time, especially if they rely on alternative and active modes of transportation such as walking, cycling, and transit use. NJDEP monitors air quality across the New Jersey; are no monitoring stations within Somerset County.

Ground-level ozone forms when nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds react in sunlight and heat. Ozone typically forms on hot and sunny summer days. Vehicle exhaust, industrial facilities, and electric utilities release the pollutants required to form ozone.

According to the NJTPA Air Quality Conformity Determination from August 2021, the NJTPA region, including Somerset County, is a federally designated maintenance area for particulate matter and non-attainment for ozone.

In 2013, the NJTPA region was approved for meeting the particulate matter standards and began a 20-year monitoring period to demonstrate that it can continue meeting those standards.



## Flooding Events and Impacts

According to the 2019 Somerset County Hazard Mitigation Plan, Somerset County frequently experiences riverine flooding, flooding from dam failures or ice jams, and urban flooding caused by heavy rains in developed areas without enough stormwater storage or drainage.

The majority of Somerset County lies within the Raritan River basin. Severe flooding has occurred in nearly all Raritan River basin municipalities because of prolonged heavy rain. Additional flood impacts occur at the Millstone River, Green Brook, and Passaic River.

The Millstone River basin covers portions of Franklin, Hillsborough, Manville, Millstone, Montgomery, and Rocky Hill. The most severe flooding occurs in Manville where the Millstone River joins the Raritan River.

The Green Brook basin has longstanding flooding issues that are most severe in Bound Brook, Bridgewater, and North Plainfield.

The northeastern corner of Somerset County, including Bernards Township, Bernardsville, Bridgewater, Far Hills, and Warren Township, falls within the Passaic River basin. Although the Passaic River basin is recognized as one of the most flood-prone river systems in the U.S., these flooding events occur downstream and outside of Somerset County, and the impacts from the Passaic River are much less than from the Raritan and Millstone Rivers.

Tropical storm Ida severely impacted Somerset County in September of 2021, 8 to 12 inches of rain in Somerset County was common, with much of this falling in just three hours.

New Jersey received \$228,346,000 in federal Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds to help communities meet unmet housing, infrastructure, planning, and other needs resulting from Hurricane Ida's effects.<sup>xxi</sup>

To address flooding, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) partnered with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to construct a flood control project. The project currently known as the Green Brook Flood Damage Reduction Project consists of three sections – lower, Stony Brook, and upper. Bound Brook and Green Brook are within the lower portion of the watershed. The Bound Brook section was completed in 2016. Many elements in Middlesex County have been completed. The project team is developing a schedule to complete the Stony Brook section, which includes North Plainfield and Watchung.

The 2019 Somerset County Hazard Mitigation Plan includes an inventory of flooding events. While this inventory does not include all flooding events, it identifies at least 51 flooding events that resulted in road closures. There are several roads within Somerset County that flood multiple times a year including South Middlebush Road (CR 615), Griggstown Causeway, and Blackwells Mills Causeway.

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*Keep Somerset Moving recommends that the County continue to use the Hazard Mitigation Plan and planning process to track and report on flooding events on County roadways and to use this data in the recommended project planning and concept development phases.*

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## MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Somerset County's multimodal travel network includes highway, rail and bus transit, pedestrian, bicycle, trail, freight, and aviation facilities to support the safe and effective movement of people and goods. The multimodal network serves a broad range of travel needs and trip purposes. Interconnections among the travel modes are essential. See Figure 14 for the full Somerset County multimodal transportation map.

Somerset County prioritizes safe, accessible, and equitable mobility options for travelers of all ages, abilities, and travel needs. Currently, however, the roadway network is the primary means of mobility through the County for most travel and trip purposes.

Plans to complete I-95 through central New Jersey would have linked Mercer County and Somerset County and connected to I-287 in Bridgewater. The proposed route was abandoned in the 1990s, leaving a significant gap in access and mobility needs. The lack of a central north-south travel corridor continues to impact the County today. This lack of freeway capacity south of Somerville places a significant burden on the County roadways.

Somerset is served by two Interstate highways, several U.S. and State routes, and a diverse County roadway inventory. The bulk of the interstate, U.S. and State Route network lies in the northern half of the County. South of the Regional Center, U.S. Route 206 and NJ 27 have few alternatives or parallel routes and are forced to meet both local and regional travel needs – resulting in significant peak period traffic congestion, delays, and safety risks for vulnerable roadway users.

Many County roadways are a legacy of the region's rural and agricultural origins, following old property lines rather than more direct routing and intersection alignments, significant constraints (wetlands, floodplains, terrain, private property etc.) are often barriers to roadway upgrades. With continued population and job growth, land development, higher traffic volumes, and increased freight and trucking needs, these shortcomings pose safety and capacity issues that were not a concern when these roads were first built.

Rolling and hilly terrain topography, and Somerset's extensive water bodies, rivers, stream, and creeks, create the need for numerous bridges that further constrain roadway and intersection expansion and improvements.

The Engineering Division of the Somerset County Department of Public Works is responsible for the planning, design, and construction of county roads, traffic signals, bridges, drainage facilities, buildings, and parks. This includes the design and construction of improvements to update and modernize the existing infrastructure and to develop new facilities to improve the level of safety for the general public.

Somerset County also works collaboratively with NJDOT and NJTPA to maintain and improve transportation infrastructure bringing much needed improvements and maintenance to roads, bridges, electric vehicle systems, public transportation, freight and goods movements, sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrians, and bicycle facilities and trail networks.

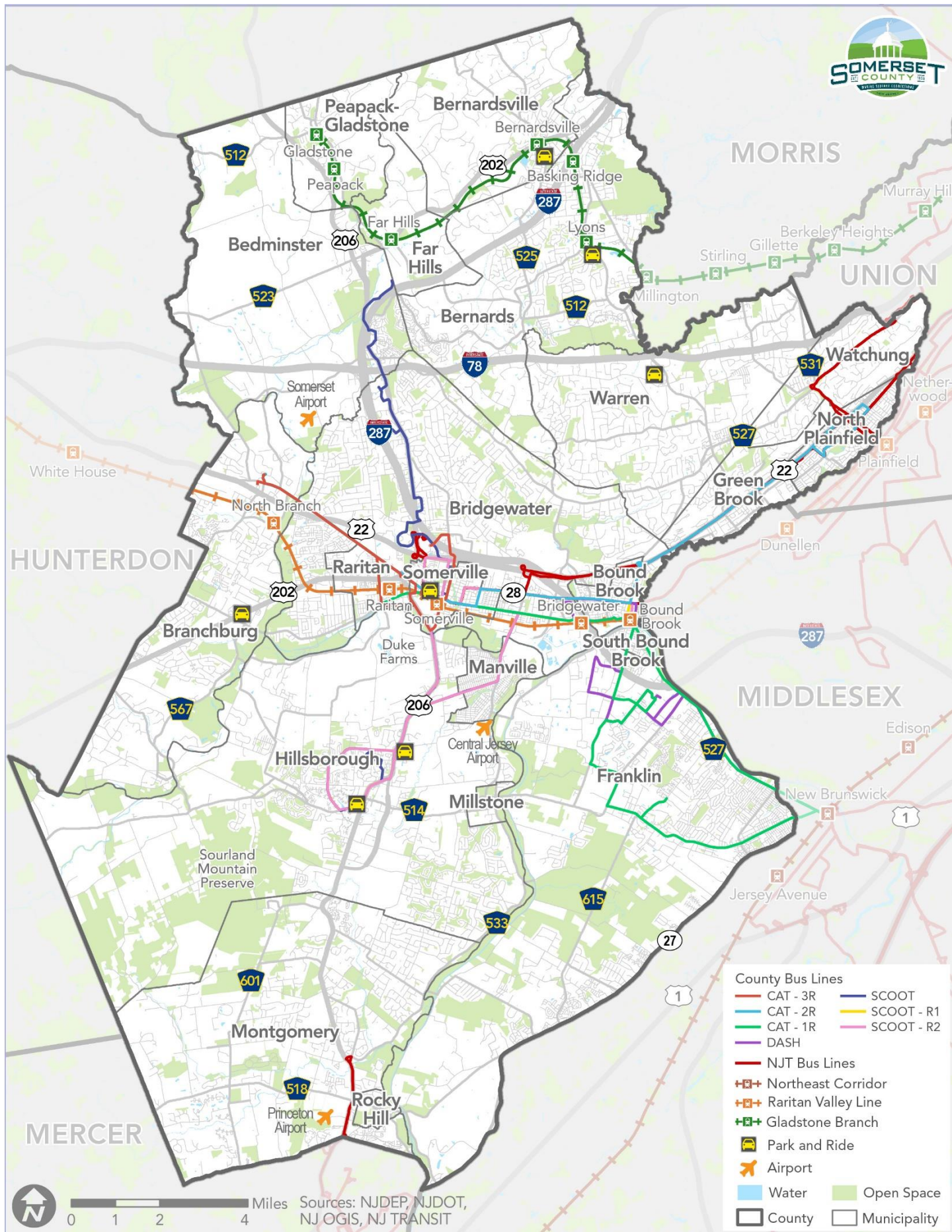


Figure 14: Multimodal Transportation System, Somerset County

## Roadway Inventory

Somerset County has approximately 1,762 miles of state, county, and municipal roadways,<sup>xxii</sup> and an inventory of 364 bridges (of greater than 20 foot span). Somerset accounts for 4.5 percent of New Jersey's total roadway mileage.

The Somerset County roadway inventory (Figure 15) consists of various roadway classifications.<sup>xxiii</sup> These include:

- **Interstate:** Highways such as I-78 and I-287 that are part of the federal interstate highway system.
- **Other Principal Arterials:** U.S. routes including U.S. 202, U.S. 206, and U.S. 22 that provide regional connections between or within states.
- **Minor Arterials:** State routes such as NJ 27 and NJ 28 or county roads that connect communities throughout New Jersey and can serve as "Main Streets".
- **Major Collectors:** Some county 500 and 600 routes which often serve as commercial corridors and important connections within Somerset County or to adjacent counties.
- **Minor Collectors:** County 600 routes and some local roads which may also serve as commercial corridors with local connections within Somerset County.
- **Local Roads:** Neighborhood roads that connect residents from their homes to local destinations or major roadways for regional connections.

The principal arterials comprise about 9 percent of roadway miles in Somerset County, but along with the Interstate highways they carry the bulk of vehicular travel.

County roadways are classified as either major or minor collectors. There are over 85 County routes within Somerset County, which form the bulk of the network of minor arterial or collector roadways throughout the County.

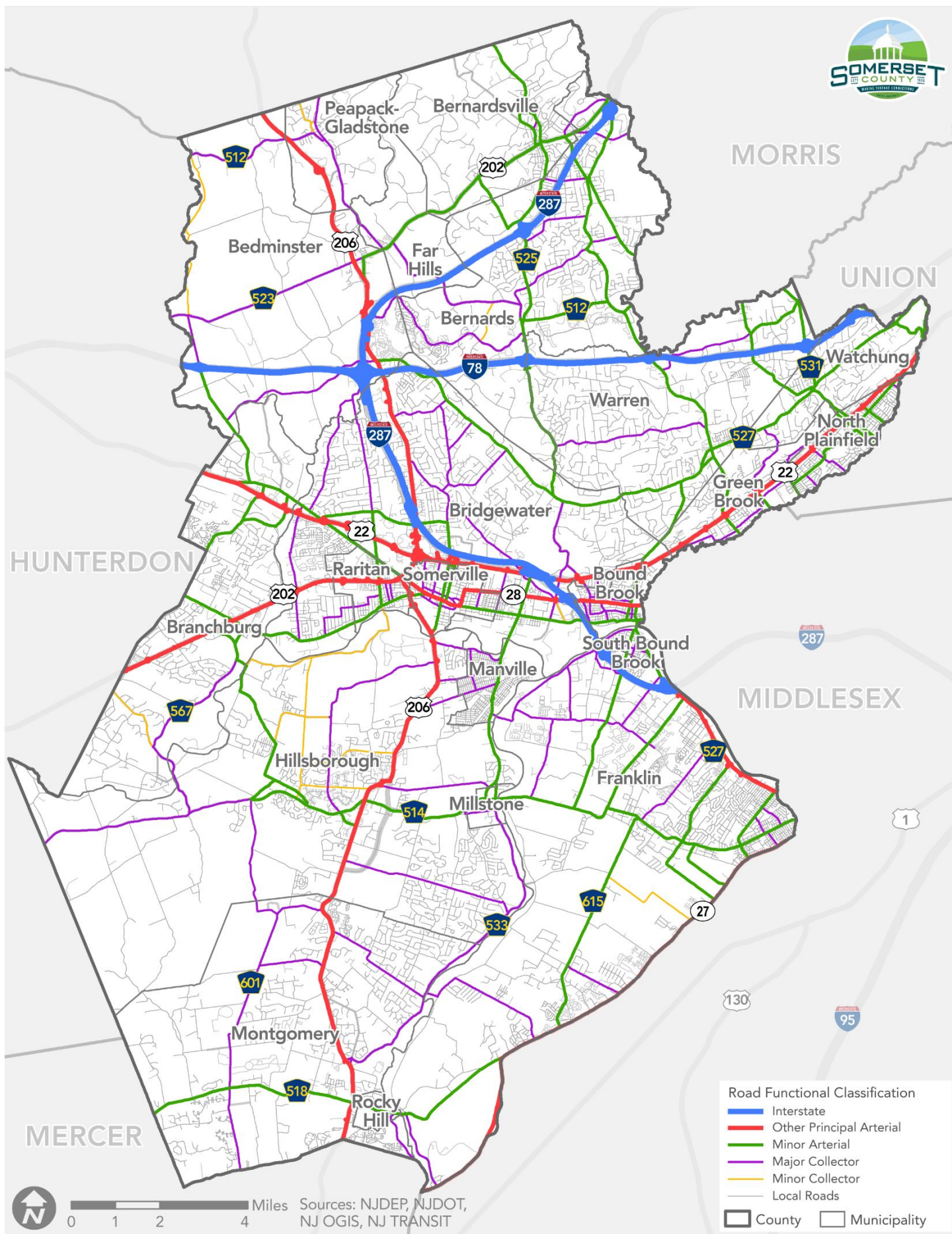
### INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS:

- **I-287**, a major "ring road" and/or "beltway" for the Greater New York metropolitan area, which generally passes north-south through the central and northern portions of Somerset County.
- **I-78** which passes east-west through the northern portion of the County, providing connections to points east including Newark, Jersey City, and New York and points west including Pennsylvania.

### PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL ROADWAYS INCLUDE:

- **U.S. 22** is aligned east-west across the center of the County.
- **U.S. 202** is aligned east-west between Hunterdon County and U.S. 206, before merging with 206 in a north-south manner. It breaks from 206 in Bedminster, traveling east-west between there to Morris County.
- **U.S. 206** travels north-south through the entire county, between Bedminster in the north and Montgomery in the south, with a bypass in Hillsborough Township.
- **NJ 27** runs along the southeastern border of the County through Franklin Township.
- **NJ 28** runs east-west through the center of the County between North Branch and Middlesex County.





**Figure 15: Roadway Functional Classification, Somerset County**



### MINOR ARTERIALS INCLUDE:

- **CR 514** crosses Somerset County east to west, entering from Middlesex County into eastern Franklin and passing through Millstone and Hillsborough before passing into Hunterdon County.
- **CR 518** crosses Somerset County east to west, entering from Middlesex County into southern Franklin and passing through Rocky Hill and Montgomery before passing into Mercer County.
- **CR 525** crosses Somerset County north-south, entering from Morris County into northern Bernardsville and passing through Bernards, Warren, Bridgewater, and Bound Brook before passing into Middlesex County.
- **CR 527** travels along the eastern edge of Somerset County, entering from Union County in Watchung and passing through Warren, Green Brook, Bound Brook, South Bound Brook, and Franklin before passing into Middlesex County.
- **CR 531** crosses Somerset County north to south, entering from Morris County into Watchung and passing through North Plainfield before passing into Union County.
- **CR 533** traverses Somerset County north-south, beginning at Route 206 in Montgomery and passing through Hillsborough, Millstone, and Manville before terminating in Bound Brook.

### MAJOR COLLECTORS INCLUDE:

- **CR 512** crosses Somerset County east to west, entering from Morris County into Bernards and passing through Far Hills, Peapack-Gladstone, and Bedminster before passing into Hunterdon County.
- **CR 523** travels through Somerset County east to west, entering from Hunterdon County in Bedminster before meeting and terminating at Route 202.
- **CR 529** travels through the central portion of Green Brook, coming from Middlesex County, and terminating on Rock Road West.
- **CR 567** travels through the western portion of Somerset County, beginning in Hillsborough at County Route 514 before passing through Branchburg, Raritan, and terminating in Bridgewater at Route 28.

Many local and neighborhood roadways in Somerset County serve as connectors between local land uses such as residential areas or businesses and local and regional destinations.

Additional details on County roads not listed above can be found on Somerset County's website:

<https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/public-works/engineering/county-routes-by-municipality>

## Roadway Congestion

Each day, Somerset County travelers drive about 9,400,000 miles on the roadway network of interstate, state, county, and local roadway, the 11th highest total among New Jersey's 21 counties. In comparison, neighboring Middlesex records nearly 23 million miles traveled on a daily basis and Mercer more than 9.5 million miles each day.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Daily travel conditions and roadway congestion are a significant concern for Somerset County. Detailed assessment of traffic congestion is provided in the following paragraphs. Traffic congestion and the associated delays impact local and regional business operations and efficiency, and create significant quality of life and health impacts for residents.

The analysis reveal peak period congestion in short segments of mostly 1--3 miles on various Interstate, U.S., State, County, and municipal-owned roadways spread across about one-half of Somerset's municipalities. Congestion is more widespread during the PM peak period compared to the AM.

There is some moderate but not heavy worsening of traffic congestion in the future during both the AM and PM peak periods.

These data will help inform future project development efforts by Somerset County Engineering and Planning

This assessment of roadway and traffic congestion for Somerset County draws upon the North Jersey Regional Transportation Model-Enhanced (NJRTM-E), NJTPA approved demographic projections, and future changes traffic congestion and mobility for both the existing (2022) and projected future (2045) conditions.

## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Maps are provided on the following pages to support the assessment of roadway congestion for the AM and PM peak periods.

Figure 16 depicts the changes in Somerset County AM peak period traffic congestion and roadway system performance between 2022 (existing conditions) and 2045 (projected future conditions), based on NJRTM-E traffic model data and projections.

Figure 17 depicts the changes in Somerset County PM peak period traffic congestion and roadway system performance between 2022 (existing conditions) and 2045 (projected future conditions), based on NJRTM-E traffic model data and projections. Traffic congestion is depicted in two levels:

### MILD TRAFFIC CONGESTION:

Peak period travel demand is approaching roadway capacity, creating periodic slowing of travel speeds, minor traffic delays, and longer travel times.

The Mild Congestion level is displayed in light green for the existing year and dark green for the future projected year.

### SEVERE TRAFFIC CONGESTION:

Peak period travel demand is well above roadway capacity, creating significant slowing of travel speeds, and much longer delays and travel times.

The Severe Congestion level is displayed in light red for the existing year and dark red for the future projected year.

## TRAFFIC CONDITIONS: AM PEAK PERIOD

Figure 16 reveals peak period congestion occurring in short segments of mostly 1--3 miles on various Interstate, U.S., State, County, and municipal-owned roadways.

Congested roadways in the 2022 AM peak include segments of:

- Belle Meade Griggstown Road in Montgomery; Georgetown-Franklin Tpke (CR 518) and U.S. 206 in Montgomery and Rocky Hill; U.S. 206 and Amwell Road (CR 514) in Hillsborough; Valley Road, U.S. 206, and Camplain Road in Hillsborough and Manville; Dukes Parkway East in Hillsborough and Manville.
- First Avenue in Raritan; Old York Road in Raritan and Somerville; NJ 28 in Bridgewater, Raritan, Somerville, and Bound Brook; Main Street in Somerville and Bridgewater; Fontheil Road in Bridgewater; I-287 in the Bound Brooks; Amwell Road (CR 514), Blackwells Mill Road, Cedar Grove Lane, Easton Avenue (CR 527), Elizabeth Avenue, So. Middlebush Road, and Manville Causeway in Franklin.
- I-78 in Bedminster and I-287 in Bridgewater; Washington Valley Road in Bedminster; Hillcrest Road (CR 531) and Somerset Street in Watchung; Watchung Avenue and West End Avenue in North Plainfield. Bonnie Burn Road in Watchung.

There is some moderate but not heavy worsening of AM peak period congestion in 2045 along isolated segments of NJ 28 and Main Street in Bridgewater; the Watchung Circle; and Warrenville Road in Green Brook.

### TRAFFIC CONDITIONS: PM PEAK PERIOD

Figure 17 reveals congestion to be much more widespread during the PM peak period compared to the AM, but still in short segments of mostly 1--3 miles on the various Interstate, U.S., State, County, and municipal-owned roadways.

Congested roadways in the 2022 PM peak include segments of:

- Hollow Road and Belle Meade Griggstown Road in Montgomery; Georgetown-Franklin Tpke (CR 518) and U.S. 206 in Montgomery and Rocky Hill; U.S. 206 and Amwell Road (CR 514) in Hillsborough; Valley Road, U.S. 206, and Camplain Road in Hillsborough and Manville; Dukes Parkway East in Hillsborough and Manville.
- U.S. 202 in Branchburg and Raritan; First Avenue in Raritan; Old York Road in Raritan and Somerville; NJ 28 in Bridgewater, Raritan, Somerville, and Bound Brook; Main Street in Somerville and Bridgewater; Fontheil Road in Bridgewater; I-287 in the Bound Brooks; Amwell Road/Hamilton Street (CR 514), Blackwells Mill Road, Cedar Grove Lane, Easton Avenue (CR 527), Elizabeth Avenue, So. Middlebush Road, and Weston Canal Road and Manville Causeway in Franklin.
- I-78 in Bedminster and I-287 in Bridgewater; Washington Valley Road in Bedminster; Valley Road in Bernards; Valley Road and Mountainview Road in Bernards and Warren; Mount Horeb Road and Mount Bethel in Warren; Hillcrest Road (CR 531), Mountain Boulevard (CR 527), Washington Rock Road, Washington Avenue (CR 529) in Watchung and Green Brook; New Providence Road and Bonnie Burn Road in Watchung; Watchung Avenue and West End Avenue in North Plainfield.

There is some moderate but not heavy worsening of PM peak period congestion in 2045 along isolated segments of U.S. 206 in Hillsborough, NJ 28 in Bridgewater; Amwell Road (CR 514), Easton Avenue (CR 527), and Franklin Boulevard in Franklin; and New Providence Road in Watchung.

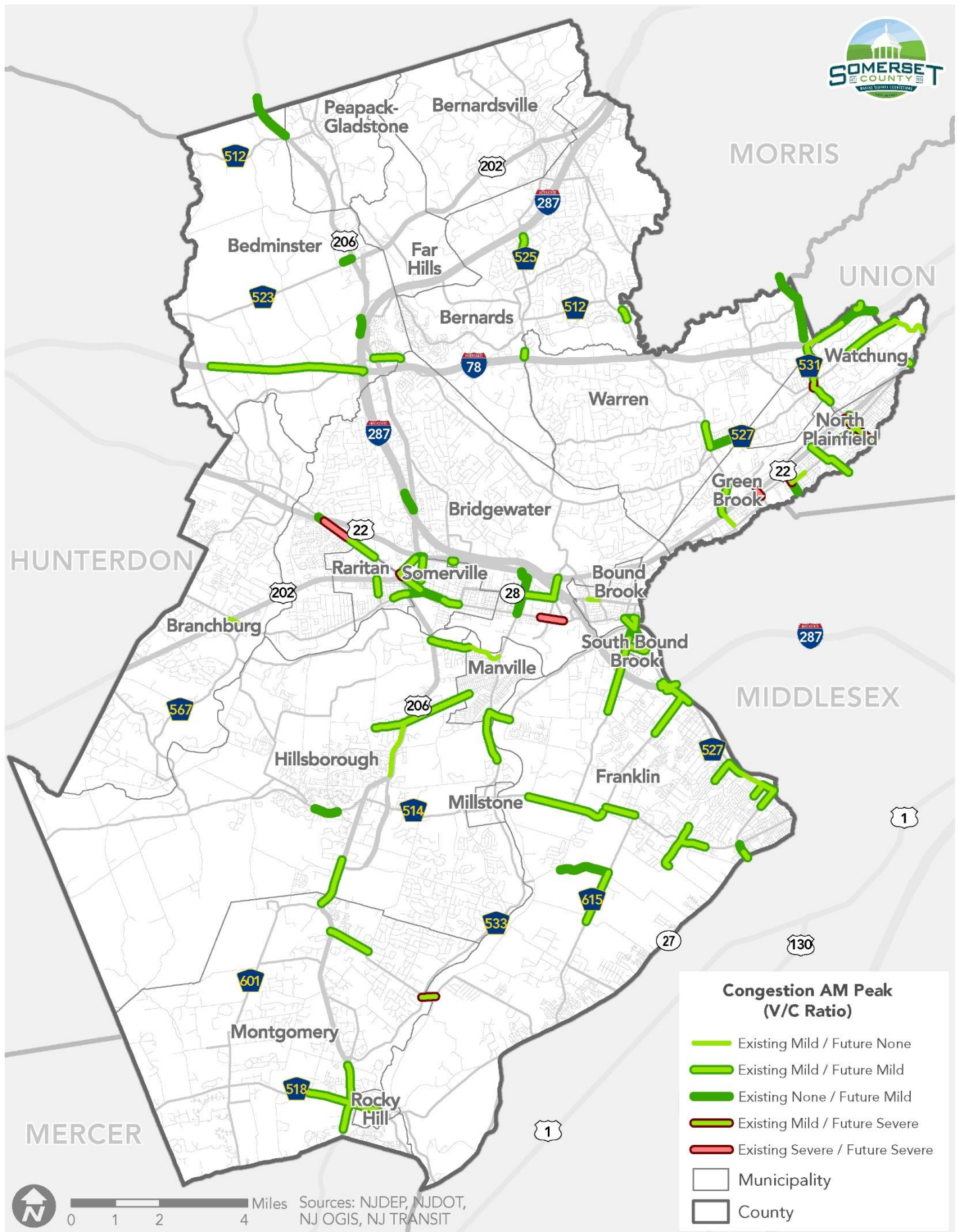


Figure 16: Traffic Congestion, AM Peak Period, Existing 2022 and Projected Future 2045



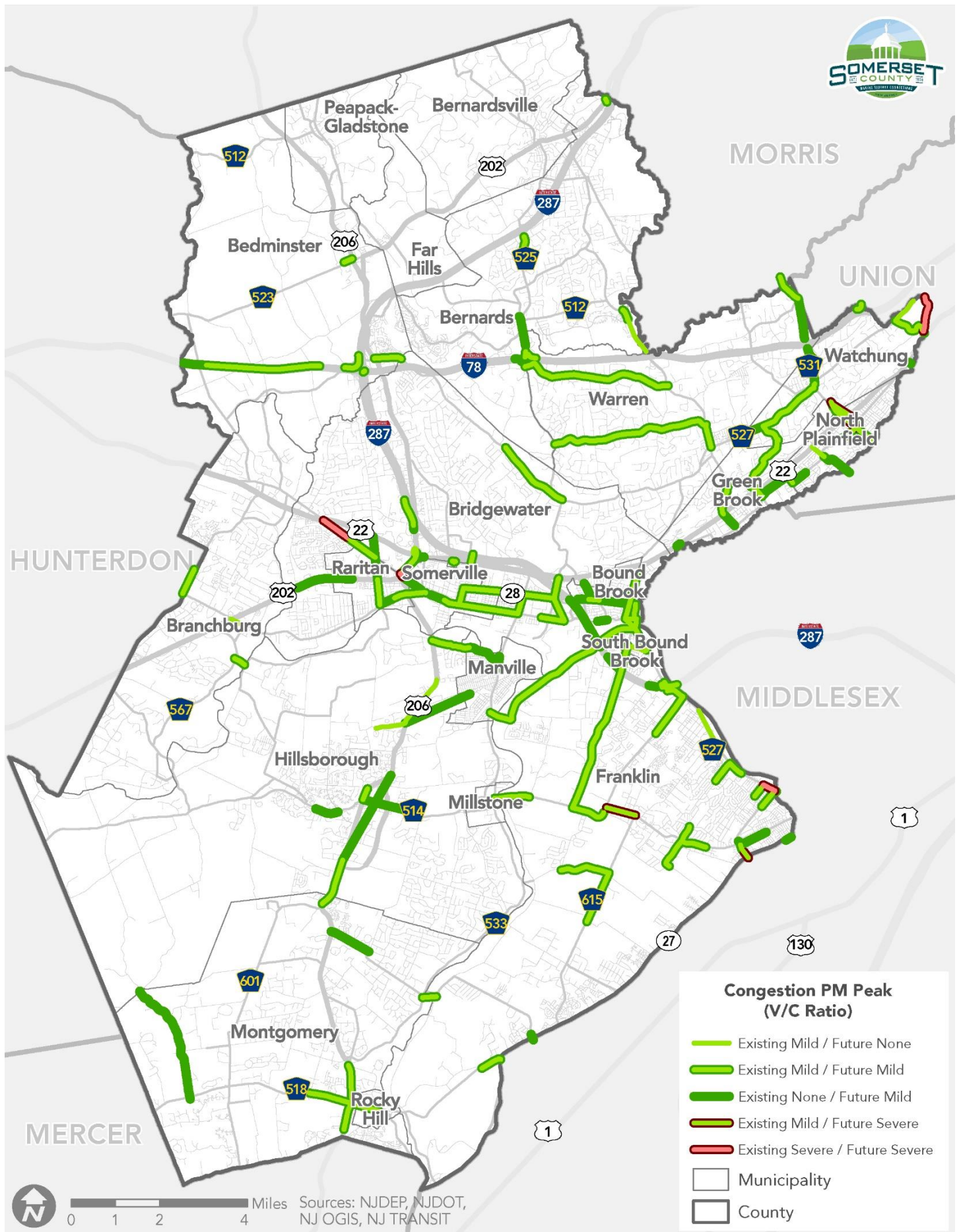


Figure 17: Traffic Congestion, PM Peak Period, Existing 2022 and Projected Future 2045

## Pavement Condition

NJDOT ranks pavement conditions on State roads using a Surface Distress Index (SDI) methodology. The index rates roads on a scale of 0 to 5 with 5 being a road free of distress. Roads with an SDI of 3.5 or above are considered in good condition (or good state of repair), between 2.4 and 3.5 is considered fair, and 2.4 or under is poor.

Pavement condition data for state-owned roadways is maintained and provided by NJDOT; the most recent data is from 2021. The Somerset County Engineering Division performs annual visual examination pavement conditions for County-owned roadways.

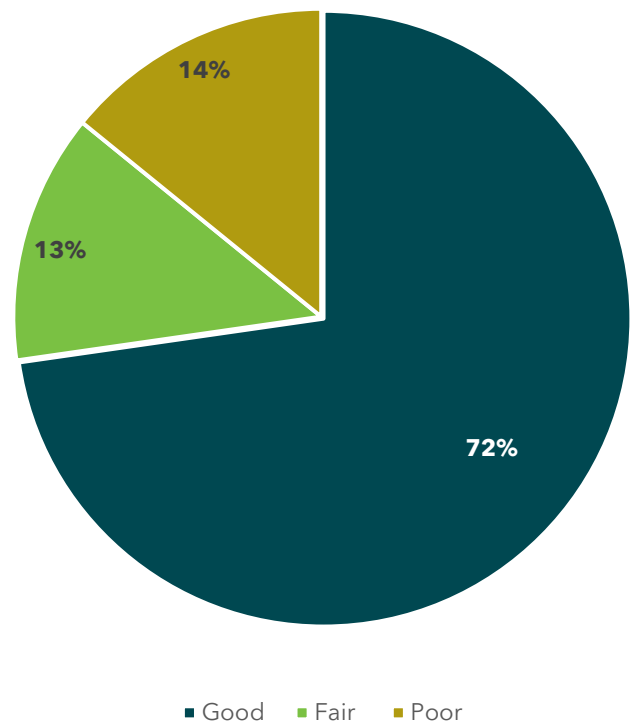
The Somerset County pavement inventory comprises a total of 157.94 miles of state-owned roadway in Somerset County; this includes NJ Routes 22, 27, and 28, and U.S. Routes 202 and 206.

Based on the 2021 data, 14 percent of state-owned roadway mileage is in poor condition, 13 percent is fair, and 72 percent is in good condition. Individually, the pavement of NJ Route 27 has the worst conditions with nearly 49 percent of its mileage rated in poor condition (Figure 18).

U.S. Route 202 fares the best, with just 0.9 percent in poor condition. Much of the U.S. 206 pavement in poor condition is located in Hillsborough parallel to the U.S. 206 bypass.

*Somerset County provides adequate travel conditions on County-owned roadways.*

*Keep Somerset Moving recommends that the County continue to incorporate pavement conditions on County-owned roadways to recommend future roadway resurfacing projects.*



**Pavement Condition, NJDOT-Owned Roadways in Somerset County, 2021**



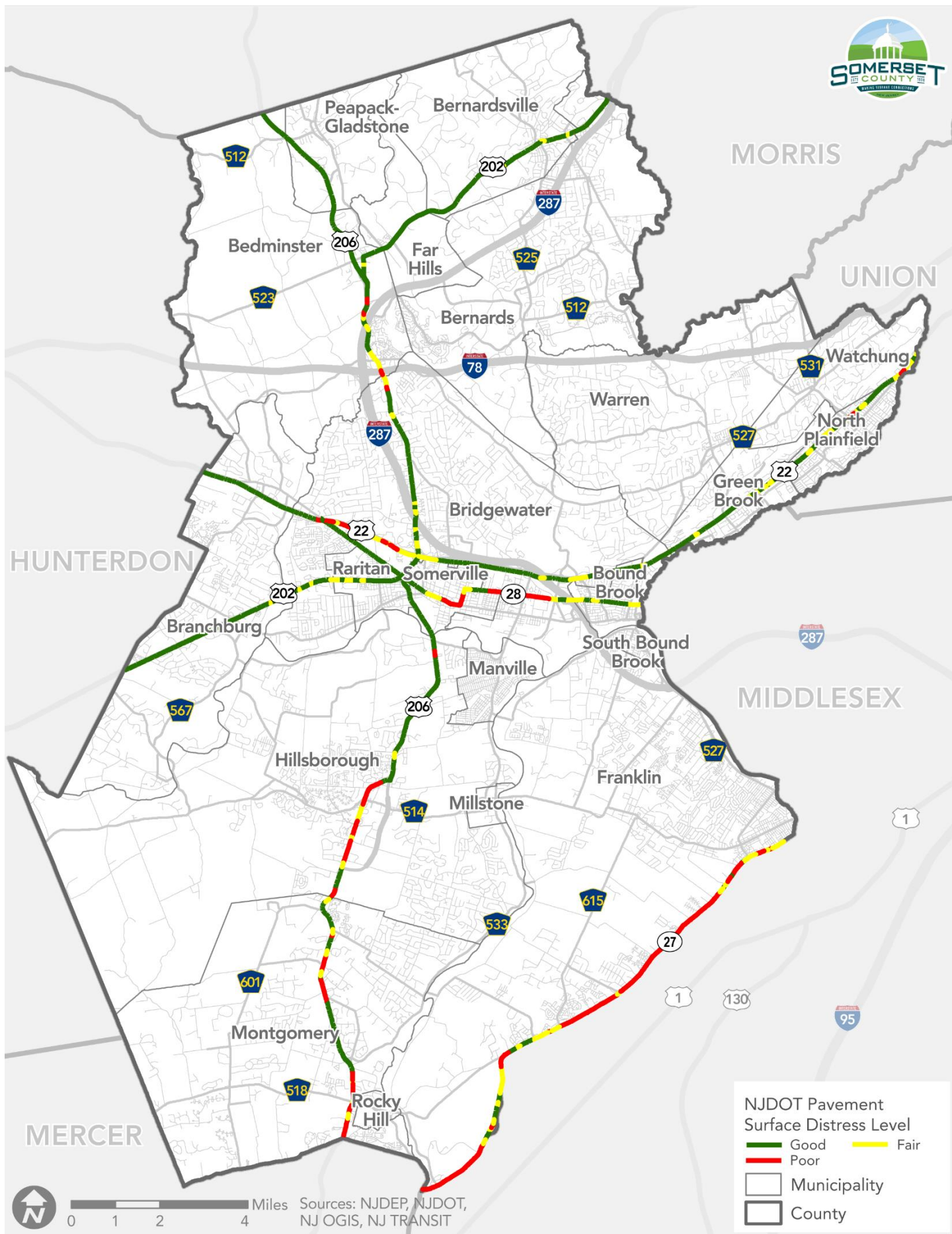


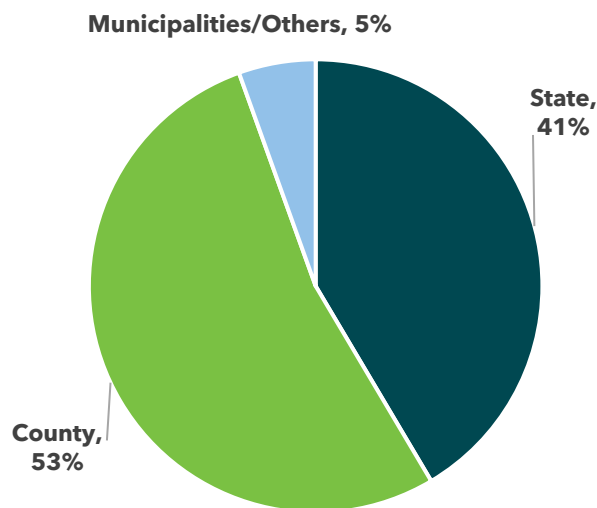
Figure 18: Pavement Condition, NJDOT-Owned Roadways in Somerset County, 2021

## Bridge Condition

The Engineering Division of the Somerset County Department of Public Works is responsible for operations, maintenance, and repair of County-owned bridges.

Somerset County has 364 total bridges in the Inventory (see Figure 19); of these 193 are county-owned (53 percent), 151 are state-owned (41.5 percent), and 20 are owned by municipalities or others (5 percent).

Bridge Ownership by Jurisdiction, 2022



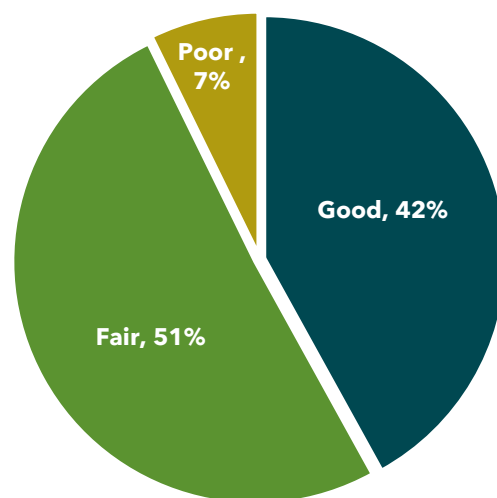
Bridges are evaluated based on the physical condition of the bridge materials and structure elements. Bridge condition is determined by the lowest rating of National Bridge Inventory (NBI) condition ratings for the deck, superstructure, substructure, or culvert elements. The U.S. Department of Transportation maintains the National Bridge Inventory database.

The most recent National Bridge Inventory data is from the year 2020, and includes a total 620,699 bridges nationwide. Of these almost 43,000 or 6.9 percent were rated in poor condition. New Jersey has 2,989 total bridges in the Inventory and exceeds the national average with 7.4 percent of bridges rated as poor.

For bridges of all ownership jurisdictions, Somerset County significantly exceeds the statewide average for bridges in poor condition, with total of 44 bridges or about 12.1 percent of the county total rated as poor. This is primarily due to the high rate Somerset-County owned bridges rate as poor.

Somerset County has 14 County-owned bridges rated in poor condition, 7.3 percent of the County total. This is similar to the statewide average of all county-owned bridges of 6.5 percent in poor condition.

Bridge Condition, Somerset County-Owned Bridges, 2022





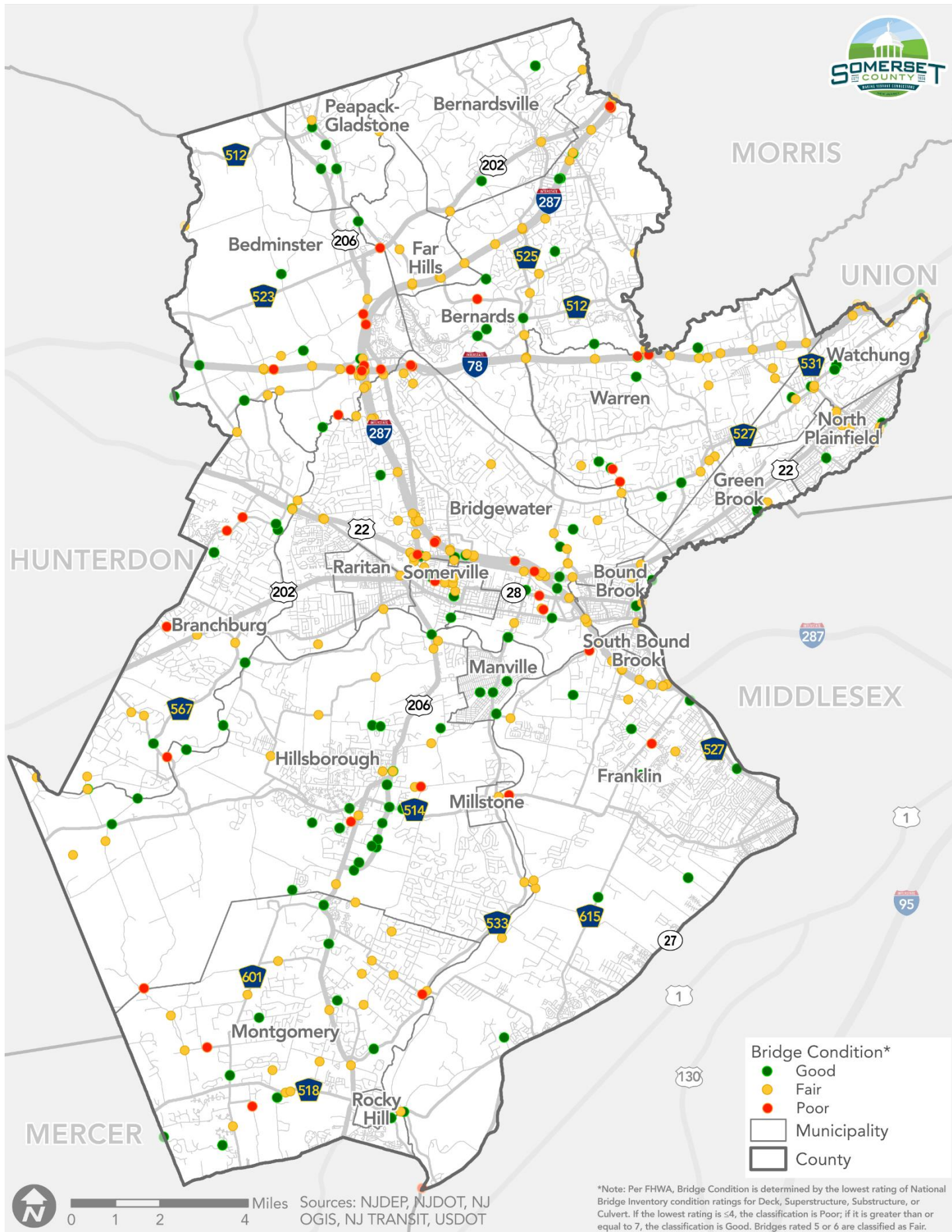


Figure 19: Bridge Condition, Somerset County-Owned Bridges, 2022

## Somerset County Transit Network

Somerset County residents and workers benefit from an extensive but fragmented transit network, with significant gaps in access, service times, and equity concerns (see Table 3 and Figure 20).

Rail service is limited to the regional center and the most norther communities of Somerset County; County-provided bus service is limited primary to the central communities; NJ Transit buses serve only Montgomery and Rocky Hill; and the Private bus lines are focused on the New York City commuters. Large portions of Somerset County, including most of Hillsborough, Warren, and Watchung, have little or no transit access.

Overall, Somerset County's transit inventory includes:

- NJ TRANSIT Rail Service (two rail lines)
- NJ TRANSIT Bus Service
  - Seven bus lines and paratransit
- Eight Somerset County Bus Routes
- Three Private Bus Lines

### NJ TRANSIT PASSENGER RAIL

Two passenger rail lines run through Somerset County, both operated by NJ TRANSIT. The Gladstone Branch of the Morris and Essex Line, with service between Gladstone and Hoboken or New York City. and the Raritan Valley Line from High Bridge to New York City stops within the County in North Branch, Raritan, Somerville, Bridgewater, and Bound Brook.

Table 3: Average Weekday Boardings, NJ TRANSIT Rail, FY 2024

STATION	LINE	WEEKDAY RIDERSHIP
		FY 2024
Bound Brook	Raritan Valley Line	370
Bridgewater	Raritan Valley Line	198
Somerville	Raritan Valley Line	435
Raritan	Raritan Valley Line	417
North Branch	Raritan Valley Line	30
Lyons	Morris & Essex Line - Gladstone	197
Basking Ridge	Morris & Essex Line - Gladstone	54
Bernardsville	Morris & Essex Line - Gladstone	103
Far Hills	Morris & Essex Line - Gladstone	58
Peapack	Morris & Essex Line - Gladstone	25
Gladstone	Morris & Essex Line - Gladstone	58

Source: New Jersey



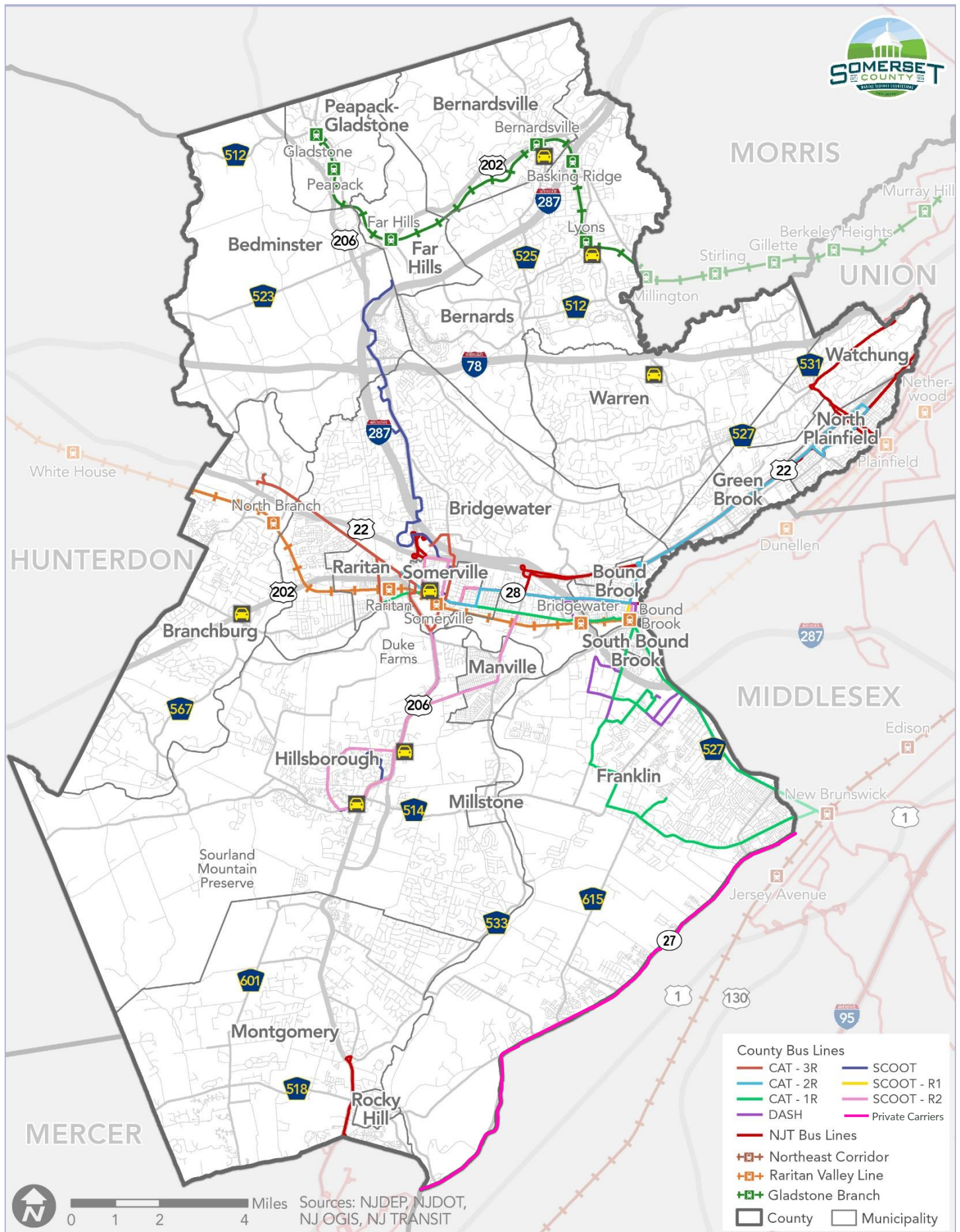


Figure 20: County and NJ TRANSIT Network, Somerset County

## NJ TRANSIT Bus Service

NJ TRANSIT operates seven bus routes throughout Somerset County (Table 4), in addition to Access Link which provides paratransit services for those unable to use the local fixed route bus system.

The seven routes include:

- NJ TRANSIT 114 – Bridgewater to Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York
- NJ TRANSIT 117 – Somerville to Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York
- NJ TRANSIT 65 – Bridgewater to Newark Penn Station
- NJ TRANSIT 66 – Bridgewater to Newark Penn Station
- NJ TRANSIT 822 – North Plainfield to JFK Medical Center
- NJ TRANSIT 605 – Montgomery to Lawrence Township
- NJ TRANSIT WHEELS 986 – North Plainfield to Murray Hill Rail Station

Notably, many of these routes terminate in Somerset County. This limits travel options for residents needing transit to travel to neighboring counties.

**Table 4: Average Weekday Ridership, NJ TRANSIT Buses, FY 2024**

NJTRANSIT Bus Route	Average Weekday Ridership
65	352
66	1,317
114	4,631
117	201
605	224
822	52

Source: NJTRANSIT

## SOMERSET COUNTY BUS SERVICE

Somerset County operates local bus service on weekdays along eight routes.

### SCOOT Bus

- PEAK – serving Hillsborough, Manville, Somerville, Bridgewater, and Bedminster
- R1 (Region 1) – serving Bound Brook, Bridgewater, and Hillsborough
- R2 (Region 2) – serving Bound Brook, Bridgewater, Hillsborough, Manville, and Somerville

### DASH (Davidson Avenue Shuttle)

- 851 – serving New Brunswick, Bound Brook, and Franklin
- 852 – serving New Brunswick, Bound Brook, and Franklin

### CAT (Community Access Transit)

- 1R – serving Franklin, Bound Brook, Somerville, Raritan, and Branchburg
- 2R – serving North Plainfield, Somerville, Raritan, and Branchburg
- 3R – serving Bridgewater, Somerville, Raritan, and Branchburg

Routes have specific stops and an approximate schedule listed for each stop, but flag-down service is also offered, whereby waiting passengers can indicate to drivers that they want to be picked up anywhere along the route if there is a safe place for the driver to pull over. Passengers may also get off the bus anywhere along the route. Trips cost \$2 per rider, with transfers costing 50 cents each. The current service only accepts cash.



### TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR SENIORS AND DISABLED ADULTS

The Somerset County Division of Transportation offers paratransit services for senior citizens (age 60+) and people with disabilities (age 18+) for medical appointments, employment opportunities, nutrition programs, and access to senior centers, pharmacies, banks/credit unions, salons/barber shops, and other destinations. Residents may also apply for route deviations to the standard County bus routes for people who require ADA accommodations.

NJ TRANSIT also operates Access Link which provides paratransit services for those unable to use the local NJ TRANSIT fixed route bus system.

### PRIVATE BUS SERVICE

Lakeland Bus Line operates express bus service between Bernardsville and the Port Authority Bus Terminal (PABT) in midtown Manhattan.

Trans-Bridge Lines operates bus service from Branchburg to PABT.

Coach USA, through their Suburban Transit system, operates bus service from Franklin Park in Franklin Township, to PABT and Palmer Square in Princeton.

Coach USA recently restarted their Line-200 service, a weekday bus line from the Hillsborough Promenade at 315 U.S. Route 206 to four destinations on the Upper East Side in Manhattan in New York City.

Coach USA provides reduced fares for senior citizens and people with disabilities.

### HUNTERDON COUNTY LINK TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM BUS SERVICE

The Hunterdon County LINK Transportation System provides transportation services to ALL residents of Hunterdon County, NJ, with additional service to Somerset County.

Hunterdon County's LINK 23 route originates at the Hunterdon County LINK Bus Transfer Center in Flemington and provides roundtrip service to the RVCC Campus, Bridgewater Commons Mall, Somerville Train Station, and back to Flemington.

The Hunterdon County LINK Bus Transfer Center is located at Park Avenue/ Capner Street in Flemington (at the Hunterdon County Jury Parking Lot).

### PARK AND RIDE FACILITIES

There are seven Park and Ride facilities within Somerset County including:

- Branchburg – with service on the Trans-Bridge Line from Branchburg to PABT in New York
- Bernards Township – with service on the Lakeland bus line via I-78
- Bernardsville- with service from the Bernardsville Train Station to the PABT through the Lakeland bus line.
- Hillsborough (South side of Amwell Road across from the Post Office)
- Hillsborough (Route 206) – with service on the Suburban Transit 200 bus
- Warren – with service on the Lakeland 78 bus
- Somerville Station – operated by NJ TRANSIT with service on the Raritan Valley Line and the following bus routes: 65 Newark-Somerville, 114 Bridgewater-New York, 117 Somerville-New York Express, SCOOT and CAT County bus routes

## Walk Bike and Hike Mobility

*WalkBikeHike Somerset County (2019)* was undertaken to transform how Somerset County, its municipal partners, and stakeholders plan, design, and construct the built environment, with an emphasis on designs for walking, biking, and other forms of active transportation.

The goal is to have a countywide multimodal mobility network emerge over time as individual segments and improvements are designed, built, and maintained. The proposed countywide *WalkBikeHike* network includes more than 220 candidate walk, bike, and hike improvements, totaling almost 275 miles of new facilities across Somerset County.

### SIDEWALKS

The need for sidewalks is largely dependent on surrounding land uses, the presence of pedestrian generators, the general density of adjacent development, as well as local zoning regulations and land development review practices. Per state statute (NJAC 27:14-2), Somerset County is only required to maintain their roadways curb to curb. Sidewalk construction and maintenance is up to the individual municipalities.

Due to cost, environmental constraints, limited right-of-way availability, and other considerations, Somerset County does not provide sidewalks on County roadways, unless specifically requested by the local municipality.

The Making Connections Plan estimated that only 23 percent of County roadways have sidewalks, as shown in Table 5 below (more recent sidewalk coverage data is not available). Sidewalks are most prevalent along County roads in municipalities located in the eastern and central portions of the County.

**Table 5: Estimated Sidewalk Coverage on County Roadways, by Municipality**

Municipality	Sidewalk Coverage along Somerset County Roadways
Somerville	100%
Bound Brook	98%
North Plainfield	87%
South Bound Brook	85%
Rocky Hill	81%
Raritan	71%
Manville	60%
Bernards	46%
Bernardsville	34%
Peapack-Gladstone	27%
Bridgewater	25%
Millstone	24%
Franklin	21%
Watchung	17%
Far Hills	12%
Hillsborough	9%
Green Brook	9%
Montgomery	7%
Warren	6%
Bedminster	5%
Branchburg	4%
<b>Somerset County</b>	<b>23%</b>

## BICYCLE FACILITIES AND NETWORK

A methodology for gauging the suitability of roadways for cycling facilities is called Level of Traffic Stress (LTS). NJTPA conducted this analysis for the entire NJTPA region including Somerset County. LTS analyses attempt to quantify the amount of discomfort cyclists experience on certain roadways. LTS scoring goes from 1 through 5:

- **LTS 1:** Little to no stress. Suitable for all cyclists including children. Sample facility types: fully separated bike lanes, shared-use paths, trails.
- **LTS 2:** Little traffic stress. Suitable for most adult cyclists but may present challenges for children. Sample facility types: low-volume and low-speed local roads or neighborhood streets.
- **LTS 3:** Moderate traffic stress. Comfortable for some adults. Sample facility types: roads with marked but unseparated bike lanes.
- **LTS 4:** High traffic stress. Only for very experienced and confident bicyclists. Sample facility types: higher-speed roads (40+ mph), multi-lane roads, biking in mixed traffic.
- **LTS 5:** Bikes are prohibited. Sample facility types: limited access highways, interstates.

Figure 21 depicts the LTS assessment for all roads in Somerset County using the NJTPA analysis methodology.

The mileage for each LTS category is:

- **LTS 1:** 20 miles – approximately 1 percent of roadway miles in Somerset County
- **LTS 2:** 777 miles – approximately 39 percent of roadway miles
- **LTS 3:** 668 miles – approximately 33 percent of roadway miles
- **LTS 4:** 444 miles – approximately 22 percent of roadway miles
- **LTS 5:** 92 miles – approximately 5 percent of roadway miles

Approximately 40 percent of streets in Somerset County are comfortable to ride on for most adults (LTS 1 or 2). However, most of the network is comprised of more isolated neighborhood streets and trails/paths. Safe and low-stress connections between them are limited, which constrains access to many destinations.

Approximately 55 percent would be considered moderately or highly stressful to ride on for most adults (LTS 3 or 4). These mainly comprise collectors, County roads, and State roads.

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*Keep Somerset Moving recommends that development of bicycle and pedestrian improvements adhere to design criteria and speed limit guidance from the WalkBikeHike Design Book and New Jersey Complete Streets Design Guide (2019), to provide consistent and compliant designs across all facility ownership types and all jurisdictions: municipal, county, state, parks, and private.*

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## TRAILS NETWORK

Somerset County is home to many trails intended for walking and bicycling, including both regional trails and those found within County parks (see Somerset County Preservation Plan Map - Figure 22).

Somerset County Parks with trails include:

- Duke Farms with 18 miles of trails of compacted dirt and paved multi-use trails
- Washington Valley Park with eight miles of dirt and gravel multi-use trails
- Sourland Mountain Preserve with seven miles of dirt and gravel trails
- Colonial Park with two miles of paved and compacted dirt multi-use trails
- Duke Island Park with two miles of compacted dirt and gravel multi-use trails
- East County Park with one mile of paved trails
- Lord Stirling Park with 25 miles of dirt trails, three miles of boardwalks (handicapped-accessible), and equestrian trails
- Mountain View Park with one mile of paved trails
- Natirar Park with three miles of gravel and dirt multi-use trails
- Raritan River Greenway with three miles of dirt and paved trails
- Skillman Park with 2.5 miles of paved trails

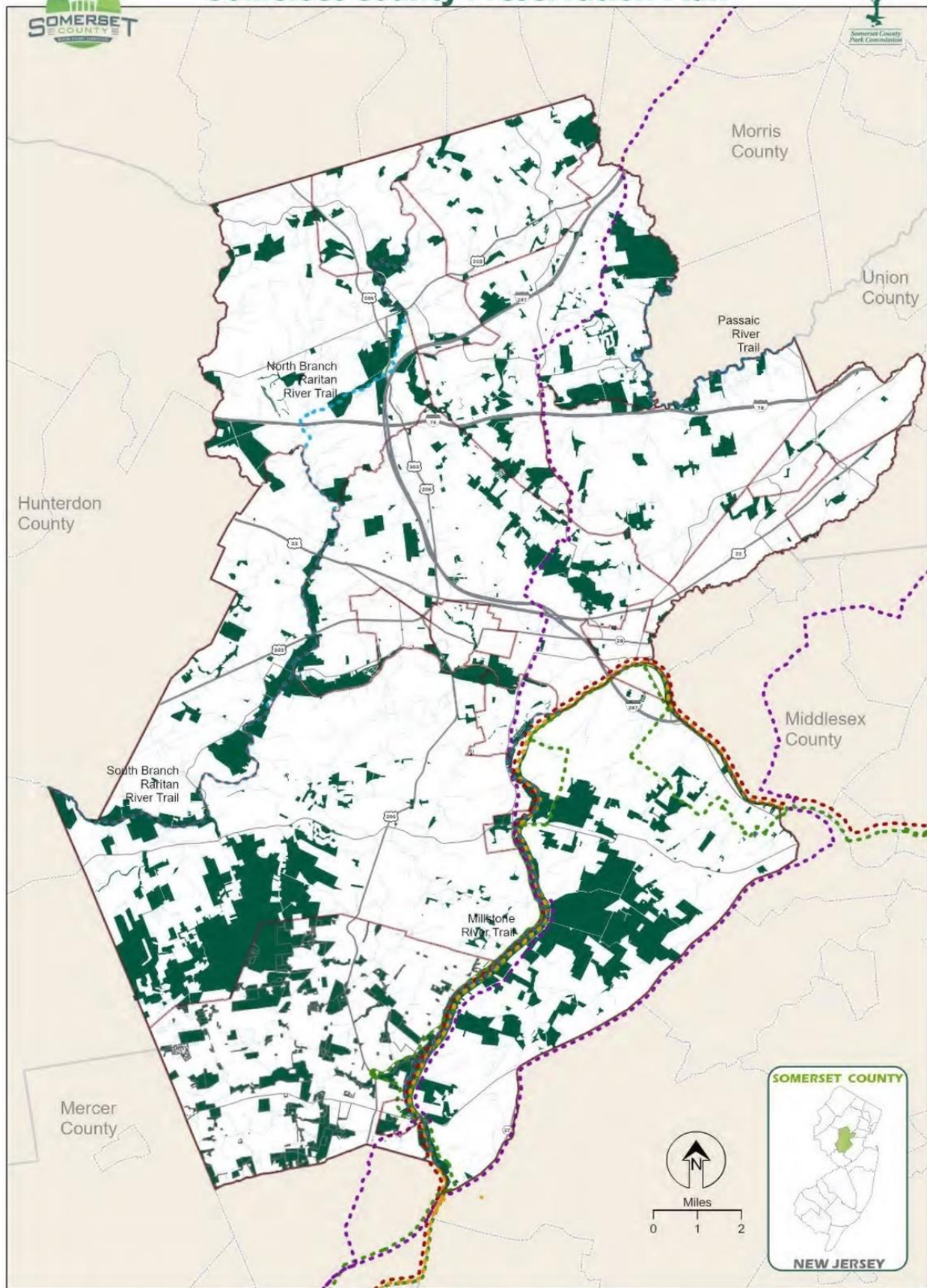
These trails provide opportunities for Somerset County residents to enjoy open spaces and natural areas throughout the County and, in certain instances, regional connections. Somerset County parks, open space, and long-distance trails are shown on the previous page.

Regional Trails that pass through Somerset County include:

- **Delaware & Raritan Canal Towpath:** Home to a major regional trail network, with 22 miles of crushed stone multi-use towpath trails along the Delaware and Raritan Canal. The D&R Canal Towpath accounts for almost one-quarter of New Jersey's 98 miles of East Coast Greenway, connecting Somerset County and New Jersey to trail destinations from Maine to Florida).
- **Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail:** In 1781, General Rochambeau's French Army joined forces with General Washington's Continental Army. The effort and cooperation between the two sides led to a victory at Yorktown and secured American independence. The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT encompasses over 680 miles of land and water trails from Massachusetts to Washington D.C, including at least nine separate historic sites and encampments. The **Washington-Rochambeau Trail** this is part of Millstone Valley SC Byway <sup>xxv</sup>
- **September 11 National Memorial Trail:** This 1,300-mile living monument trail links the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the Flight 93 Memorial. In Somerset County the trail follows the alignment of the D&R Canal Towpath/East Coast Greenway.



## Somerset County Preservation Plan



### Long Distance Trails

Routes of long distance trails (planned and existing) in Somerset County, plus river trails

- Water Trails
- D&R Canal
- Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail
- East Coast Greenways
- September 11th National Memorial Trail
- Preserved Open Space



HERITAGE strategies

Map prepared for Somerset County Preservation Plan by Washington College's ORP Program, © 2002. This map is intended for illustrative purposes only, supporting the Plan. Somerset County assumes no responsibility for errors, omissions or misinterpretations.

Figure 22: Somerset County Preservation Plan, Parks, Open Spaces, and Trails

## Freight and Goods Movement

Somerset County, centrally located between New York to the east, and Pennsylvania to the west, is a major conduit for goods movement through central and northern New Jersey via Interstates 78 and 287, and U.S. Routes 22, 202, and 206. Goods flows into, out of, and within Somerset County are expected to increase 15 percent by 2050, according to the NJTPA Freight Forecasting Tool.

Optimizing goods movement will be a key strategy in supporting the demand for goods, especially with the emergence of e-commerce, which can bring new hosts of demands that can test existing infrastructure. Future freight considerations may include how to best site additional warehousing needed to fulfill demand, optimizing truck routes for the rise in truck volumes, and ensuring that the necessary infrastructure is in place, including truck parking, to safely accommodate the movement of goods within the region.

According to the NJTPA's 2050 Freight Industry Level Forecasts and the 2023 New Jersey Statewide Freight plan, more than 189,400 people are employed in Somerset County. About one-third (32 percent) of these are employed in freight-related industries such as construction, manufacturing, mining and extracting, retail trade, logistics, and wholesale trade.<sup>xxvi</sup>

## INDUSTRY TRENDS

The emergence and rapid expansion of e-commerce and the logistics industry is impacting communities and industry sectors across the U.S. leaving many struggling to mitigate the explosive growth of new warehouses, heavy truck traffic, and delivery trucks in towns, local roads, and neighborhoods.

The logistics and E-commerce sector has been growing rapidly for two decades. From 2002 to 2018, e-commerce sales grew at 7.1 percent per year for wholesale, 11 percent per year for manufacturing, and 16.6 percent per year for retail. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to sharp decreases in certain economic sectors but has led to an increase in e-commerce and home deliveries.

There have been significant increases in truck trip generation, including trucks traveling directly to individual residences. This can exacerbate congestion and lead to more trucks on roadways not designed for their use. Numerous large online retailers have opened warehouses in New Jersey to allow for swifter deliveries to homes. These warehouses (or fulfillment centers) must be sufficiently close to delivery destinations to meet customers' expectations.

A 2020 survey found that 67 percent of consumers now expect same-day or next-day delivery. CBRE Research estimates that for every \$1 billion increase in e-commerce sales, an estimated 1.25 million square feet of warehouse space is needed to keep up with demand.<sup>xxvii</sup>



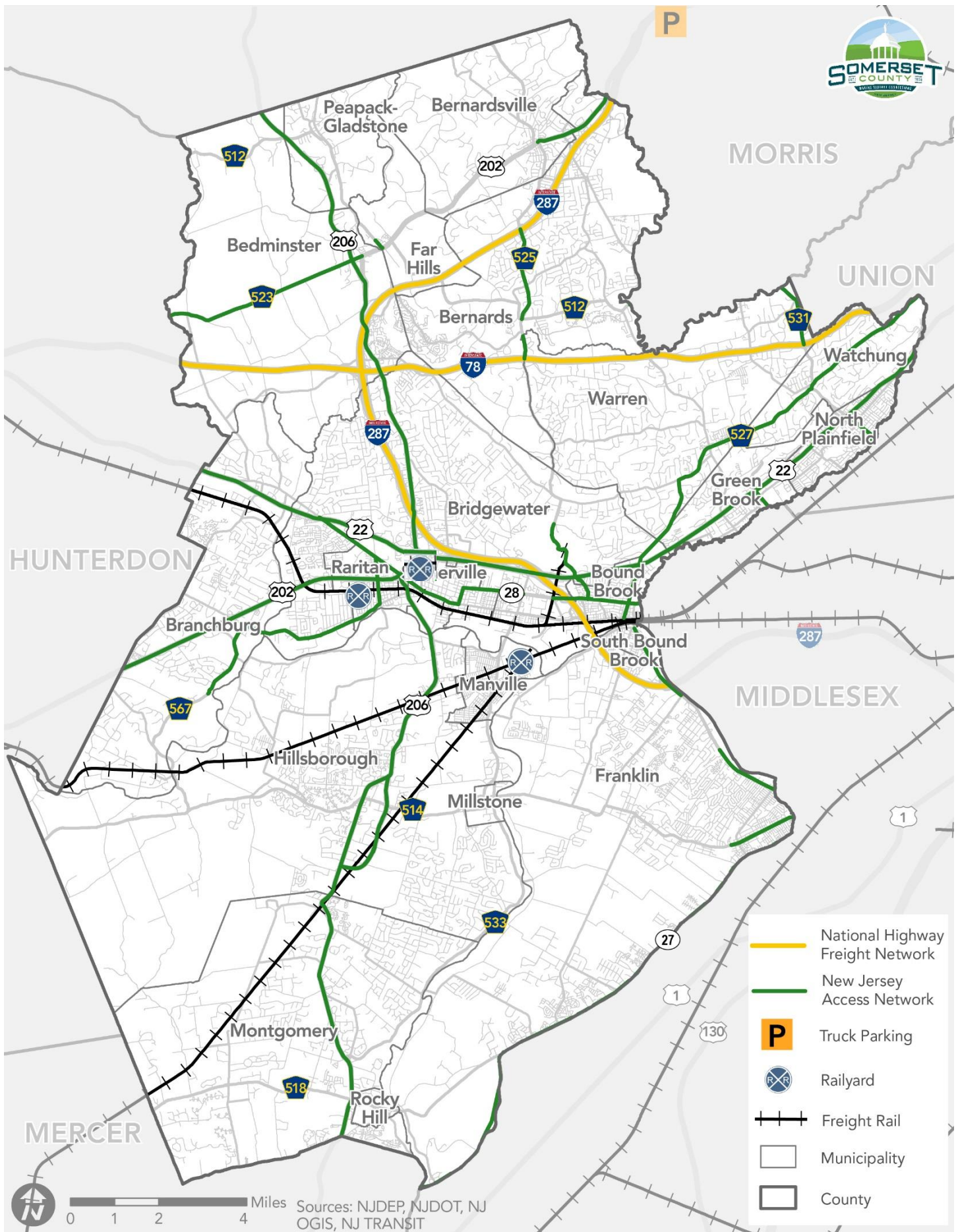


Figure 23: Freight Network and Infrastructure, Somerset County



## FREIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE

Somerset County has a robust Interstate, state, and county roadway system accommodating trucking and goods movement, and two rail lines that support additional freight transport (Figure 23).

### Truck Network

The movement of freight and heavy trucks in Somerset County is prioritized on I-78 and I-287 which are part of the National Highway Freight Network (NHFN) and a series of New Jersey Access Network roadways (NJAN), including County Routes 512, 514, 523, 525, 527, 529, 531, and 567.

Somerset County does not expressly prohibit trucks on any county roadways. However, due to weight restrictions, roadway geometrics, and other conditions there are truck restrictions on portions of County Routes 527 (Morning Glory Road), 529 (Washington Avenue), 531 (Hillcrest Road), 615 (South Middlebush Road), 604 (Dutchtown Harlingen Road), 632 (Bunker Hill Road, Canal Road and Griggstown Causeway), 645 (Rock Avenue), 648 (Claremont Road), and 651 (Warrenville Road).

### Truck Parking

There are no official truck parking locations in Somerset County. There are, however, four truck parking sites adjacent to Somerset County, listed below:

- Joyce Kilmer Service Area (East Brunswick Township, Middlesex County), 50 spaces, has fuel available
- 7-Eleven Jamesburg (Jamesburg Borough, Middlesex County), five spaces, has fuel available
- Sunoco #7704 (Monroe Township, Middlesex County), four spaces, has fuel available

- Harding Township (I-287 NB) Rest Area (Harding Township, Morris County), 20 spaces, does not have fuel available

### Railroad and Railyards

Manville is home to the Manville Yard at the junction of the Lehigh Line and Trenton Subdivision. These routes merge to the east, continuing into Essex County and to Newark. The Lehigh Line continues west into Hunterdon County to Phillipsburg, NJ, and Easton, PA. The Trenton Subdivision continues southwest into Mercer County, becoming SEPTA's West Trenton Line offering passenger service to Philadelphia.

NJ Transit has a railyard in Raritan Borough. The Raritan Valley Line offers local freight service through Conrail and Norfolk Southern. The Raritan Valley Line runs from west of the Hunter interlocking outside of Newark to Clinton Township, Hunterdon County.

### Air Cargo Facilities

Newark-Liberty International Airport (EWR)m located approximately 11 miles east of Somerset County, is the 17th busiest cargo airport in the U.S., transporting 3.1 billion pounds of cargo in 2021.

Owned and managed by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, EWR is adjacent to multiple freight facilities, including maritime ports and railyards, and is a major hub for air freight cargo carriers, including FedEx, UPS, and DHL. To the east of Manville Yard, the Lehigh Line provides connections to Newark-Liberty International Airport through connections to the Port Reading Secondary and Chemical Coast Secondary. Additionally, I-78 provides direct access to EWR.

## GOODS MOVEMENT TRENDS

In 2020, an estimated 29 million tons of domestic freight moved into, out of, or within Somerset County, not including tonnage that fully passes through the County without stopping. Of this domestic tonnage, the County accommodates more than one million tons of nonmetallic minerals, warehouse and distribution center freight, and chemicals or allied products. Freight in each of these commodities mainly travels outbound. A significant portion of the freight tonnage moving into and through Somerset County, have origins and destinations in New York and Pennsylvania.

### Annual Average Daily Truck Traffic

Trucks carry at least 95 percent of freight in Somerset County. The interstate highways are the primary movers in the County, as depicted in **Error! Reference source not found..** More than 6 ,000 trucks travel on both I-78 and I-287 each day and in each direction. Volumes are highest near the confluence of the two corridors.

The next highest truck movement volumes are found on U.S. 202/206 south of U.S. 22 in Bridgewater at more than 1,000 trucks daily in each direction. Additional locations with high truck volumes include U.S. 22 in North Plainfield (more than 1,000 trucks daily) and NJ Route 28 in Somerville and Raritan east of U.S. 202/206.

I-78 and I-287 carry primarily longer-distance truck travel throughout New Jersey and the northeast while U.S. 22, U.S. 202/206, and NJ Route 28 provide both local and regional truck access within Somerset and adjacent counties.

Among Somerset County-owned roadways, Easton Avenue (CR 527) experiences severe truck volume impacts; these volumes are growing with the ongoing expansion of warehousing and logistics industries in the adjacent areas. Additional County-owned roadways with high truck volumes include County Route 531 (Somerset Street/Hillcrest Road) in Watchung, with 650 daily trucks, County Route 527 (Valley Road) in Watchung, with 550 daily trucks, and County Route 621 (Elizabeth Avenue) in Franklin, with more than 500 daily trucks.

### Rail Network Utilization

According to the NJTPA Freight Forecasting Tool, in 2020 just two percent of domestic freight traveling to, from, or within Somerset County moves by rail, and 3 percent moves through other modes. Most of the County's rail freight is moved inbound.

### Industry Type and Location by Size

Data concerning business establishment industry and location was obtained from NJTPA's Freight Activity Locator and mapped in Figure 24. Somerset County is home to more than 120 manufacturing sites and 300 warehousing/distribution buildings. The County's primary freight cluster is located in Franklin, south of I-287 and west of County Route 621 (Elizabeth Avenue). This area is home to numerous transportation and warehousing businesses, including several sites of more than 100,000 square feet. Smaller freight clusters are found in Franklin, south of County Route 514 (Hamilton Street), Branchburg near the intersection of County Route 567 (South Branch Road) and U.S. Route 202, and at Bridgewater Commons in Bridgewater which hosts many small (less than 50,000 square feet) businesses.



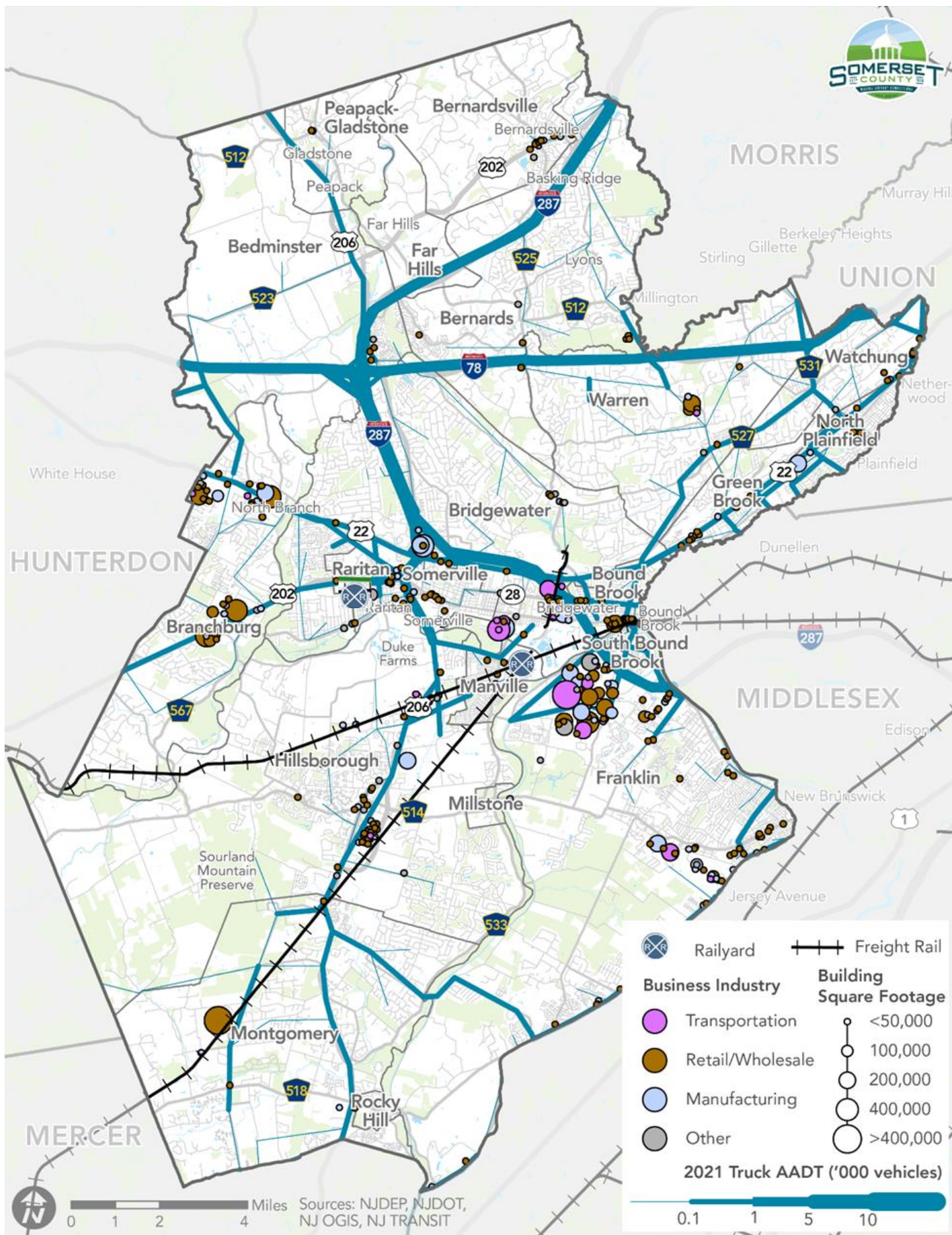


Figure 24: Freight and Goods Movement Truck Volumes, Somerset County



## Aviation Facilities

The 2016 New Jersey Statewide Airport Economic Impact Study serves as a periodic review and update of the New Jersey State Airport System Plan.

Somerset County has three privately-owned airports. None of these facilities serve air cargo.

Somerset Airport, which is home to George Walker Field, is a family-owned airport. It is located in Bedminster and is a public use airport with three runways on 210 acres.

The airport codes for Somerset Airport are ICAO:KSMQ and FAA:SMQ.

Central Jersey Airport in Hillsborough Township and the Princeton Airport, located in Montgomery Township, are also public use airports, offering flight school and maintenance services.



Source: Princeton Airport, Montgomery, New Jersey

## Electric, Connected, and Automated Vehicle Technologies

Electric Vehicles (EV) and Connected, and Automated Vehicle Technologies (CAV) have the potential to bring significant and wide-ranging equity, environmental, safety, mobility, and accessibility benefits to Somerset County.

These benefits, however, will not come about on their own. Widespread deployment will not take place without collaboration and support among local, county, regional, and state agencies.

According to NJTPA projections, there will be 133,943 households in Somerset County in 2045. Using an estimate of 1.8 vehicles per household – the national average – and one charging port per 24 vehicles, there is a need for approximately 10,000 public electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE or charging ports) in Somerset County by 2045. With approximately 180 existing EVSE in the County per NJDEP records, there will be a need for an estimated 9,850 new ports.<sup>xxviii</sup>

To advance EV adoption in New Jersey, Governor Phil Murphy signed an Executive Order in February 2023 phasing out sales of new gas- and diesel-powered cars and light trucks by 2035.

While electric vehicles are currently one of the more widely popular Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFVs), other fuel alternatives such as natural gas, propane, biodiesel, ethanol, and hydrogen, can facilitate the transition and dependence from oil, allowing the County to pursue its Climate Change Policy to reduce emissions. Alternative fuels, while currently available, still lag when it comes to the availability of fueling infrastructure. Ethanol and hydrogen particularly can be used for passenger vehicles but have not seen the level of investment as with electric vehicles in the passenger vehicle category.

Based on 2021 data, New Jersey has 6 ethanol, 5 biodiesel, 0 hydrogen, 27 natural gas, and 16 propane fueling stations; none of these are located in Somerset County.<sup>xxix</sup>

Impacts from connected and automated vehicle (CAV) technologies will be felt in the longer-term. Current technologies are generally vehicle-focused, whether through original equipment manufacturer (OEM) parts or aftermarket add-ons such as sensors (cameras, LIDAR, radar, etc.) and computers that aid in data capture and environmental recognition and reaction (acceleration, braking, steering, etc.). Infrastructure technologies in the form of mounted cameras, traffic signals, signage, and static roadside units for information transmission will be required to fully realize connected and autonomous mobility in the coming decades.

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*Keep Somerset Moving recommends that Somerset County take a lead role in the advancement of EV and CAV technologies and implementation strategies as presented in the Recommendations Chapter.*

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## 5. PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

Keep Somerset Moving recommends a comprehensive program of project, plans, and strategies to achieve the strategic vision. These recommendations are derived from the overall planning process: community engagement, equity and underserved community assessment, safety and crash analysis, and multimodal transportation system analysis.

Collaborative partners would include state agencies such as NJDOT and NJ TRANSIT; regional agencies including North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA); municipalities and neighboring counties; and applicable stakeholders, non-profits, and advocate groups.

Keep Somerset Moving recommendations include:

- Priority Transportation Projects
- Comprehensive Project Development Process
- Complete + Green Streets Policies
- County and Municipal Master Plans and Policies
- Strengthen the Land Use-Transportation Connection
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4a)
- Electric, Connected, and Automated Vehicle Strategies
- Freight and Goods Movement Strategy
- Transit Concepts and Strategies
- Planning and Conceptual Studies

### SOMERSET COUNTY PRIORITY TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

The Keep Somerset Moving priority projects include a total of 42 roadway corridor, highway interchange, roadway intersection, and bridge projects.

These projects were assembled by the Somerset County Planning Board and Planning Division

from a variety of plans and studies, and recommendations by plan participants, partners, and stakeholders, and include both quantitative and qualitative sources and methodologies.

The Making Connections Plan included a total of ten proposed projects of a variety of types and purposes, and included both intersection and corridor locations. Seven of the ten proposed projects from Making Connections are not yet completed, but still considered relevant, and therefore carried over to Keep Somerset Moving as priority projects. These include a variety of project purposes, needs, deficiencies, and locations across Somerset County.

Three new projects were added by Somerset County Engineering Division based on pavement condition, crash, traffic, and other data sources, for a total of 10 Somerset County priority roadway projects.

These 10 priority roadway projects are listed in Table 6 and depicted in Figure 25. These include Local Safety Projects; capacity and other improvements; completion of the U.S. Route 206 Bypass in Hillsborough; and minor roadway extensions at Brown Avenue in Hillsborough (Project Number C-5) and West County Drive in Branchburg (Project C-1). Both are carried over from Making Connections and displayed in Figure 26.

The 32 priority bridge projects on Somerset County-owned roadways are listed in Table 7 and Figure 27. These include projects in both the design and construction phases.



Table 6: Somerset County Priority Roadway Projects

Project Number	Municipality	Major Street	Project Limits	Project Phase	Project Details
<b>Corridor Projects - Carried over from Making Connections (2011)</b>					
C-5	Branchburg Township	West County Drive Extension (CR 646)	U.S. 202 to Old York Road (CR 646)	Planning	Connect U.S. 202 to Old York Road (CR 637) in Branchburg
C-6	Bridgewater Township	U.S. Route 22 Long Term Improvements	U.S. Route 202/206 to I-287	Engineering (CD)	Safety and capacity improvements to U.S. Route 22, between U.S. 202/206 and I-287 in Bridgewater
C-1	Hillsborough Township	Brown Avenue Extension (Municipal Project)	U.S. 206/Brown Avenue to Roycefield Road	Planning	Connect U.S. 206 to Roycefield Road in Hillsborough
C-7	Hillsborough Township	U.S. 206 Bypass and Section 15N Widening	Old Somerville Road to Brown Avenue	Design	Complete bypass of U.S. 206 and widen section 15N from Old Somerville Road to Brown Avenue in Hillsborough
<b>New Corridor Projects</b>					
C-2	Bound Brook Borough	Talmage Avenue/ Columbus Place/ Main Street (CR 533)	Tea Street to Bound Brook Stream	Engineering (PE)	FY 2022 Local Safety Project
C-4	Franklin Township	Easton Avenue (CR 527)	Worlds Fair Drive to Landing Lane	Engineering (CD)	FY 2023 Local Concept Development Phase
C-3	Franklin Township	Hamilton Street (CR 514)	Berry Street to Mile Run Stream	Engineering (PE)	FY 2020 Local safety project; includes design and currently in PE Phase
<b>Highway Interchange Projects- Carried over from Making Connections (2011)</b>					
I-2	Berkeley Heights (Union County)	I-78 / Diamond Hill Road Interchange	at Interstate-78	Planning	Complete the existing interchange to provide full movements and missing connections including WB I-78 to Diamond Hill Road
I-3	Franklin Township	I-287 at Easton Avenue (CR 527) Interchange	at Interstate-287	Planning	Improve connections between the two roadways, enhance the interchange and surrounding roadways
<b>Roadway Intersection Projects - Carried over from Making Connections (2011)</b>					
I-1	Raritan Borough	U.S. 202 at 1st Avenue Intersection	at U.S. Route 202	Design	Widen intersection to provide 3 travel lanes in each direction; includes traffic signal and striping improvements

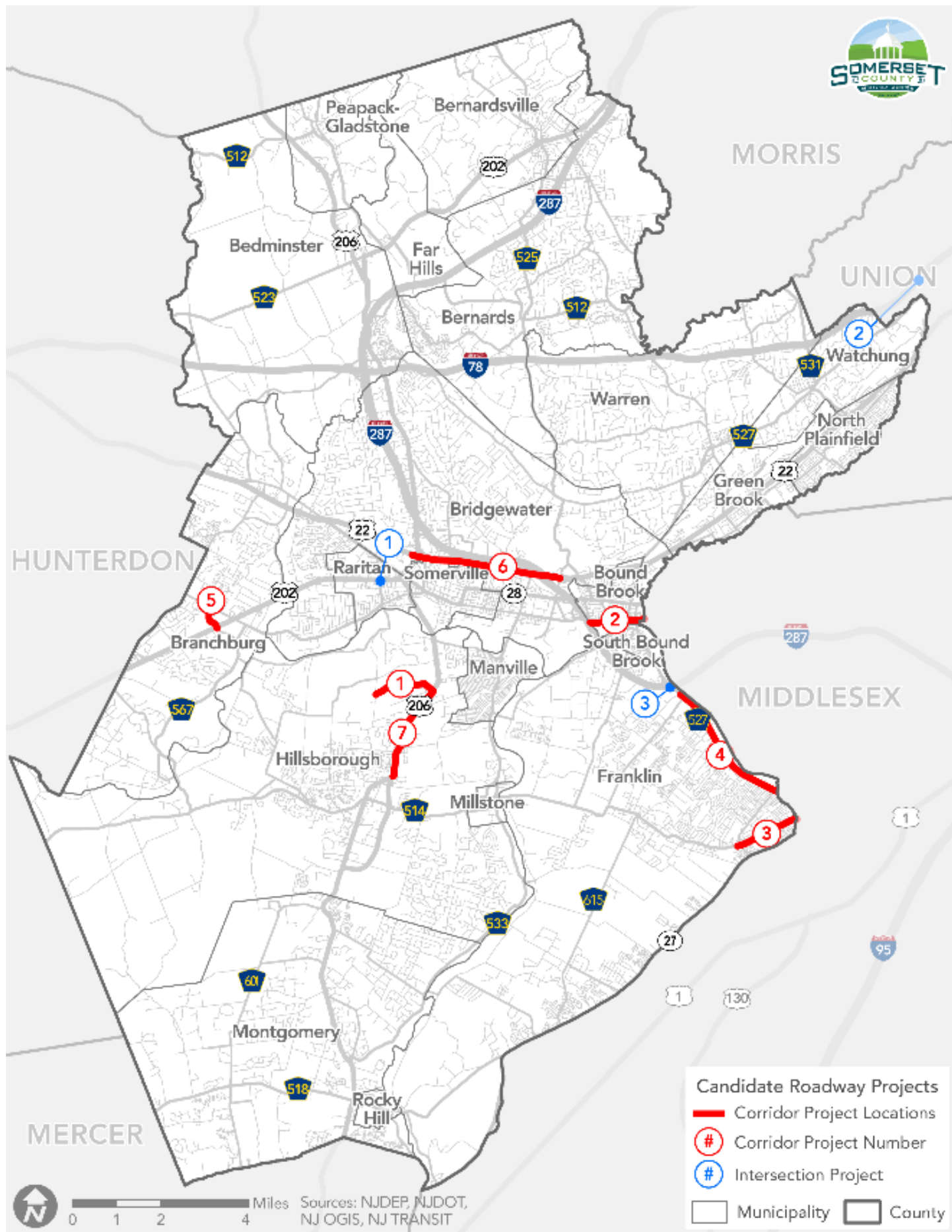


Figure 25: Somerset County Priority Roadway Projects

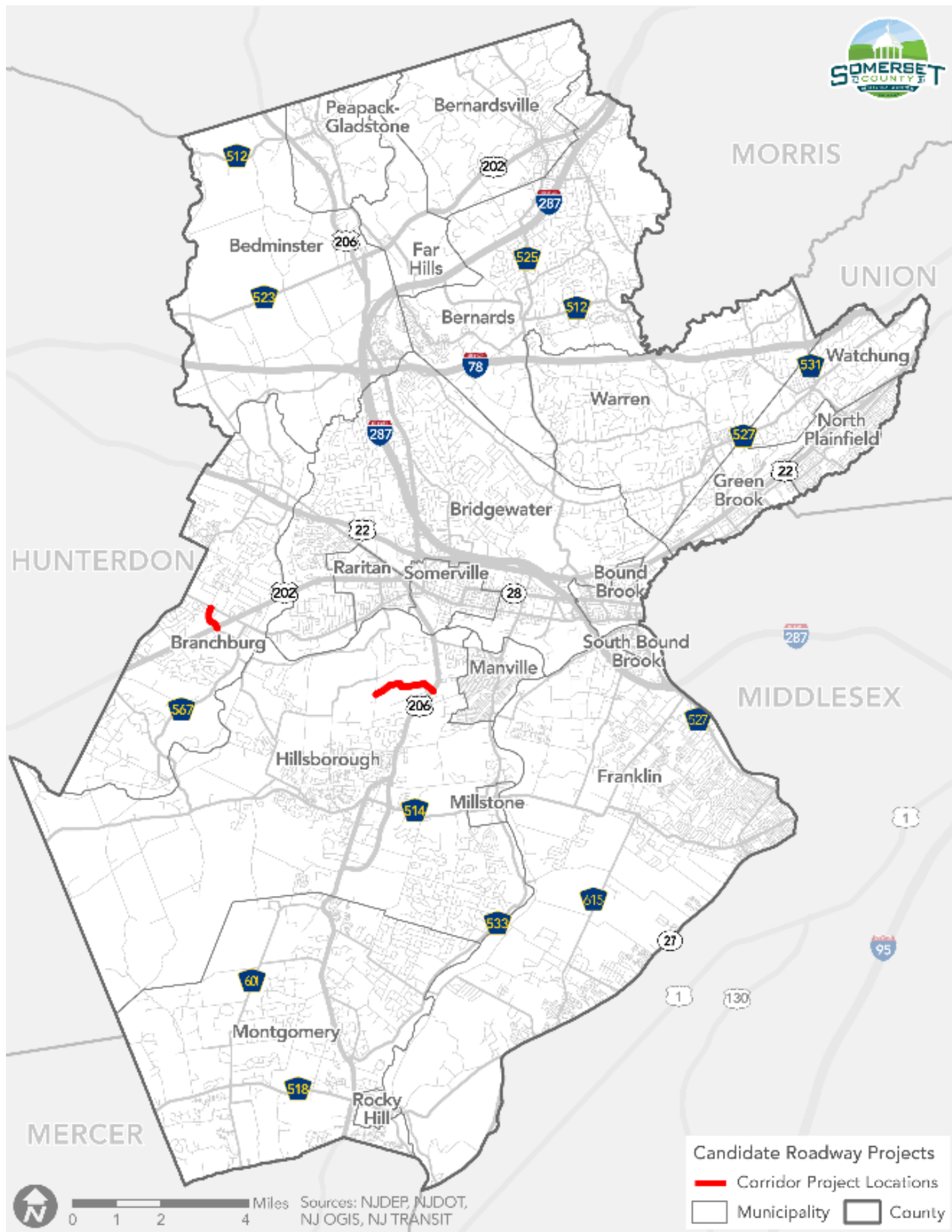


Figure 26: Future Somerset County Roadway Network



Table 7: Priority Bridge Projects, Somerset County-Owned Roadways

Project Number	Municipality	Major Street	Project Phase
B-1	Bedminster	Airport Rd	Design
B-2	Bedminster	Pottersville Rd (CR 512)	Design
B-3	Bedminster and Bridgewater	Meadow Rd	Construction
B-4	Bernards and Far Hills	Douglas Rd	Design
B-5	Bernards and Long Hill (Morris County)	Valley Road (CR 512)	Design
B-6	Bernardsville	Lloyd Rd	Design
B-7	Bernardsville	Lloyd Rd	Design
B-8	Branchburg	Burnt Mills Rd (CR 641)	Design
B-9	Branchburg	Readington Rd (CR 637) Sect 2	Design
B-10	Branchburg	South Branch Rd (CR 567)	Construction
B-11	Branchburg and Hillsborough	Picket Place (CR 567)	Design
B-12	Bridgewater	Cole Dr Ped Bridges & Pump House	Construction
B-13	Bridgewater	Morton St	Design
B-14	Bridgewater	Tullo Rd	Design
B-15	Franklin	Cortelyous Lane	Construction
B-16	Franklin	Easton Ave (CR 527)	Design
B-17	Franklin	New Brunswick Rd	Construction
B-18	Franklin	Skillmans Lane	Construction
B-19	Hillsborough	Amwell Rd (CR 514)	Design
B-20	Hillsborough	Raider Blvd	Design
B-21	Hillsborough and Montgomery	Zion-Wertsville Rd / Long Hill Rd	Construction
B-22	Montgomery	Bedens Brook Rd	Design
B-23	Montgomery	Great Road (CR 601)	Design
B-24	Montgomery	Mountain View Rd	Design
B-25	North Plainfield	Somerset St	Construction
B-26	North Plainfield and Plainfield	Geraud Ave [Hurricane Ida/FEMA]	Design
B-27	Peapack & Gladstone	Mendham Rd (CR 647)	Design
B-28	Peapack & Gladstone	Pottersville Rd (CR 512)	Design
B-29	Somerville	Davenport St	Design
B-30	Warren	Brookside Drive	Construction
B-31	Warren	Loriann Rd	Design
B-32	Warren	Stirling Rd (CR 653)	Design

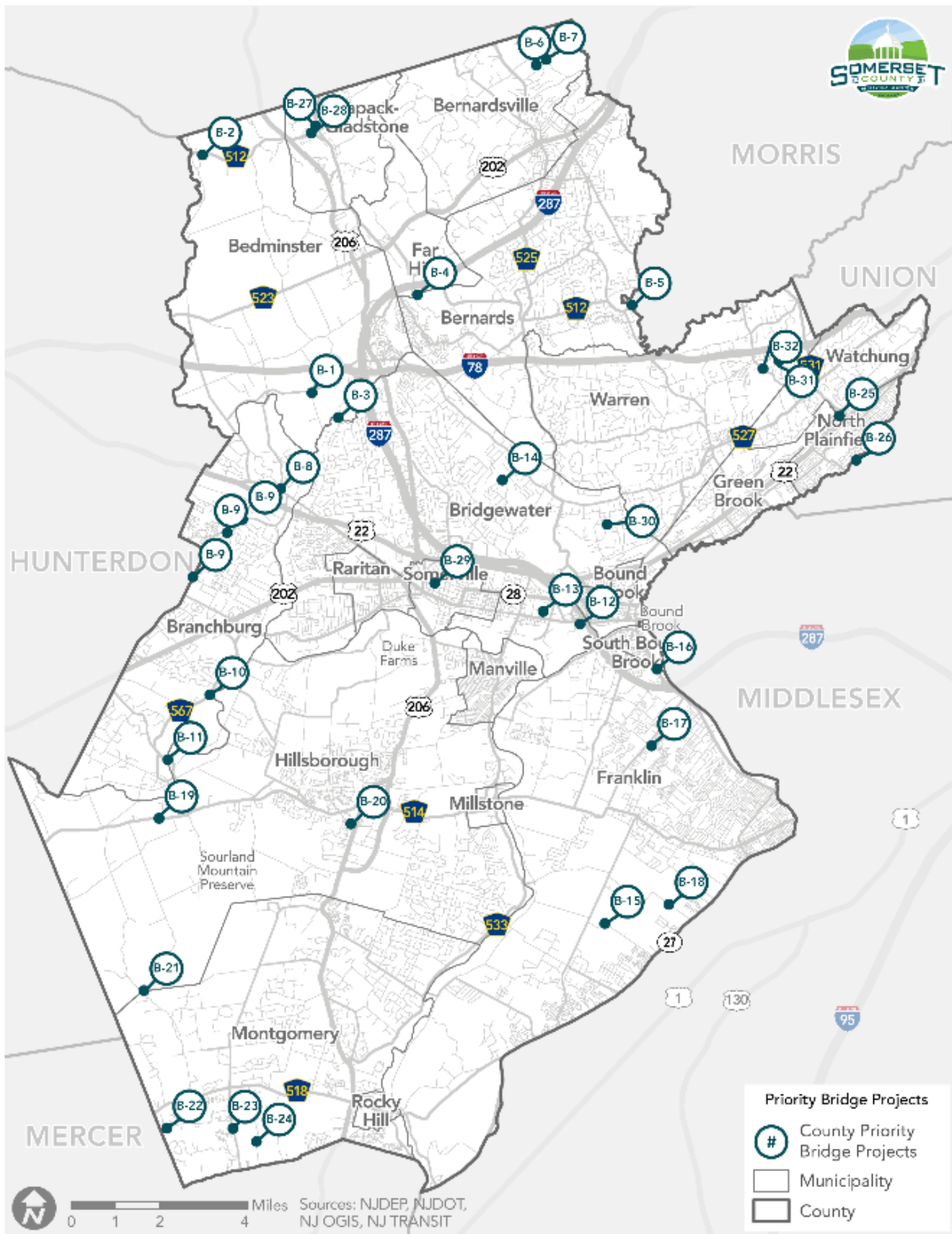


Figure 27: Priority Bridge Projects, Somerset County-Owned Roadways

## COMPREHENSIVE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

A comprehensive project development process is used by Somerset County Engineering and Planning to develop and advance projects to the Capital Improvement Program. This process includes such factors as equity, safety, resilience, and access to opportunity, and is a collaborative effort among County Engineering, Planning, and other County Departments.

This process will continue to use a data-driven approach, drawing from multiple data sources, plans, studies, and strategies to identify deficiencies, needs, and opportunities for improvement, and includes condition of pavement and bridges, safety, flooding, and others for county-owned roadways.

Recommended enhancements to the current process include incorporating a Complete + Green Street framework to build multimodal projects that address a diversity of needs and opportunities and achieve multiple goals, consistent with the Keep Somerset Moving vision statement. A first step would be to review and update the County Complete Streets Policy, prioritizing multimodal safety design with green infrastructure elements, and based on *New Jersey's Complete and Green Streets for All: Model Policy & Guide*.

Related plans and studies are also reviewed to identify additional project elements, including:

- Pedestrian, bicycle, and trails projects from the WalkBikeHike study
- Multimodal elements from the Priority Investment studies
- Recommendations from the County Preservation Plan

- Opportunities for green infrastructure
- Opportunities for EV/CAV infrastructure
- Proximity to affordable housing

Passaic County's Complete Street Process and the DVRPC/[PennDOT Connects](#) Bike-Friendly Resurfacing Program provide examples of similar methodologies for tracking project needs and developing comprehensive, multimodal projects. PennDOT Connects, for example, engages local partners by requiring collaboration before project scopes are developed, ensuring that community collaboration happens early, and that each project is developed in a comprehensive manner identify opportunities to improve safety, mobility, access, and environmental outcomes.<sup>xxx</sup>

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*Keep Somerset Moving recommends the County continue to build off of its project development process.*

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*Keep Somerset Moving recommends that development of bicycle and pedestrian improvements adhere to design criteria and speed limit guidance from the WalkBikeHike Design Book and New Jersey Complete Streets Design Guide (2019), to provide consistent and compliant designs across all facility ownership types and all jurisdictions: municipal, county, state, parks, and private.*

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## COMPLETE + GREEN STREETS POLICIES

Somerset County and its municipal partners would both benefit greatly from a comprehensive re-assessment of their Complete Streets policies with an emphasis on implementation: translating policy statements into projects, plans, and strategies that create safe, successful, equitable, healthy, and vibrant communities.

Adopted in 2019, New Jersey's *Complete and Green Streets for All: Model Complete Streets Policy & Guide*, is the new standard for integrating multimodal Complete Streets designs with green infrastructure to address resilience and sustainability goals.

Project planning and design should always be based on local and regional context, community demographics, presence of traditional underserved populations, travel needs and deficiencies, and stakeholder concerns and collaboration.

### Recommended Policy Updates

The following updates are recommended:

- Specify that the policy is applicable to all ages, all abilities
- Prioritize equity considerations, and emphasize the needs of vulnerable roadway users
- Integrate Green Street considerations to achieve a comprehensive range of planning and project goals
- Provide training for County decision makers and professional staff on a periodic basis
- Define steps for continued implementation

- Undertake periodic reviews and updates of the Complete Streets Policy (similar to Master Plan reexaminations which recommended at every six years according to New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law)

### Complete Streets Implementation

Several New Jersey Counties have undertaken the additional step of adopting a Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan, including both Essex and Sussex.

When adopted together, the Complete Streets policy and implementation plan advance the idea that for implementation to be successful, consideration of Complete Streets elements must begin at the earliest possible stages of project development and continue throughout each stage of the project development and design process.

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*Keep Somerset Moving recommends a review and update of both County and municipal Complete Streets policies based on the Complete and Green Streets Model.*

*Achieve 100 percent Complete Streets policy adoption among Somerset County municipalities*

*A Complete Street Implementation Plan for Somerset County is recommended.*

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## COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL MASTER PLANS AND POLICIES

### Municipal Master Planning

The municipal circulation element should focus on moving people and goods, not just vehicles, and be aligned with the land use, housing, and affordable housing elements to achieve strategic alignment toward common goals of equity, safety, mobility, and access to opportunity.

Most circulation elements or reexaminations reports for Somerset County municipalities have been updated recently and reflect progressive themes of Complete Streets, safety, walkable downtowns, resilience, and multimodal options. Several Somerset municipalities, however, have gone at least ten years since the last update.

Siting of affordable housing is a significant challenge in New Jersey, and one that is also guided by regulatory oversight to meet affordable unit obligations. The planning process, however, often does not assess whether proposed affordable units have adequate access and connectivity to safe multimodal travel options.

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*Keep Somerset Moving recommends that Somerset County take a lead role in working with the municipal partners to review and update circulation elements and assure compatibility with land use, housing, and affordable housing elements. Reexamination should occur every six years as recommended by New Jersey's Municipal Land Use Law.*

*Siting of affordable units should include adequate connectivity and accessibility to multimodal networks, and to education, employment, social services, and other destinations.*

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### Municipal Sidewalk Policies

The local land development review process creates built-in opportunities to systematically add new sidewalks and fill existing gaps in sidewalk networks by leveraging applications for new development, redevelopment, commercial and retail projects, and affordable housing. These actions can be undertaken by municipal planning boards and zoning boards to help expand sidewalk coverage.

Sidewalks should be provided in a strategic fashion – where they are most needed and where they can provide the most benefit. Similar to Complete Streets projects, sidewalks should be prioritized based on context, adjacent land use and activity generators, and in areas with high pedestrian crash occurrence or severity.

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*Keep Somerset Moving recommends a review and update of sidewalk policies for municipal roadways, during land development review, and capital improvements projects.*

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## STRENGTHEN THE LAND USE-TRANSPORTATION CONNECTION

Traditionally, Somerset County has played an important leadership role in coordinating decisions across government agencies and between municipalities, as well as educating the public on benefits of linking transportation and land use. Strengthening the connections between land use and transportation planning presents the opportunity to address many critical needs for Somerset County municipalities – safety, mobility, equity, work access, and better health outcomes among them.

**Strategy 1 - Zoning:** Establish or expand Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) centered around mixed-use zoning districts

### DESCRIPTION

Transit-oriented development (TOD) helps communities create pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods adjacent to transit stations and stops where people can live, work, socialize, and access goods and services without relying on cars for transportation.

Areas previously identified in the County Investment Framework and Priority Investment Studies are prime locations for the transit-oriented, mixed-use, walkable environments that many employers, workers, and households desire.

**Strategy 2 - TOD Design Guidance:** Consider developing transit-oriented development (TOD) design guidance to further advance implementation of Priority Growth Investment Areas, including a process supporting the coordination of land use and transportation decision-making.

### DESCRIPTION

Transit-oriented development design guidance helps explain the principles and goals of TOD as well as identify priority locations for implementation.

County-level guidance also serves to reemphasize these principles and goals, as well as to streamline the coordination of decisions at the nexus of land use and transportation.

### Strategy 3 - Leverage the Official Map:

Leverage the power of the Official Map to require dedication of rights-of-way for Complete Streets, trails, and roadway improvements during the site plan and subdivision review process.

### DESCRIPTION

Somerset County's Planning Board requires applicants to dedicate right-of-way on County or local roads that are identified on the Official Map, including improvements for traffic safety, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and stormwater systems. These practices can be adopted at the municipal level to achieve similar benefits.

### Strategy 4 - Accessory Dwelling Units:

Promote accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in all residential zoning districts to expand housing options and support aging-in-place strategies to reinforce coordination of land use and transportation decisions.

### DESCRIPTION

ADUs can provide zoning flexibility and expand housing opportunities within existing neighborhoods. These additional units help diversify the market for renters while providing supplemental income for homeowners.

ADUs support aging-in-place strategies, accommodating seniors and others who prefer to continue living in their long-established neighborhoods but who need less living space and smaller homes.



**Strategy 5 - Universal Design:** Encourage universal design for existing and new housing developments, and to public areas and transportation facilities.

#### DESCRIPTION

Universal design is an approach that works to ensure that buildings and exterior spaces can be used by virtually anyone, regardless of their age and level of mobility. Universal design supports the ability of residents to age-in-place, and promotes inclusivity and equity for people of all ages and all abilities.

#### Strategy 6 - Access Management Plans:

Work with NJDOT to develop Access Management Plans (AMP) for targeted locations, such as Routes 22, 202, and 206.

#### DESCRIPTION

Coordinating and combining roadway access and driveways can eliminate conflict points by reducing the number of driveways. The AMP is as a mutual agreement between the state and the municipality, and may include incentives for developers regarding shared parking, cross access easements, and driveway and access improvements.

Any municipality may request development of an AMP for a State highway segment, provided that such segment is located within its boundaries. Several PGAs in the Priority Investment Studies recommend corridor or subarea AMPs as a strategy to better manage local traffic flow and turning movements, mitigate crash hotspots, and improve pedestrian safety and circulation.

#### Strategy 6 - Affordable Housing:

The 2017 Somerset County Housing Element includes recommendations regarding the location and design of residential development

throughout the County, consistent with the County's Investment Framework.

Location selection and approval for affordable housing is a significant challenge in New Jersey – one that is guided by extensive regulatory and judicial mechanisms and implemented via the approved housing plans of each municipality. The process of identifying and selecting these locations, however, often overlooks the essential transportation and mobility needs of low-income residents and roadway users.

The following include three methodologies for identifying suitable locations for affordable housing.

##### 1. Demographics and Equity Factors

Demographic and equity actors influence transportation decisions and travel mode choice. Higher population densities support better services (retail, transit, etc.). Senior population, persons with disabilities, and households without access to a car often rely more on public transportation. In addition, underserved communities frequently lack access to adequate transportation services.

##### 2. Walkability

Prioritize accessible sidewalk coverage and crosswalks in the vicinity of affordable housing. Access to bus routes with more frequency and bus stop amenities (seating, shelter) attract more ridership. Buses equipped with easy-to-use bike racks provide greater options for transit users.

##### 3. Bike Network Access

Affordable housing locations should have direct access to safe biking networks. LTS analyses quantify the level of discomfort cyclists experience on each roadway, to prioritize areas which cycling will be safer and more accessible, and a viable travel mode.

## SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL (SS4A)

Somerset County is a partner in the NJTPA grant to prepare countywide safety action plans under the SS4A grant program. The SS4A program supports the development of a comprehensive safety action plan (Action Plan) that identifies the most significant roadway safety concerns in a community and the implementation of projects and strategies to address roadway safety issues. Action Plans are the foundation of the SS4A grant program. SS4A requires an eligible Action Plan to be in place before applying to implement projects and strategies.<sup>xxxi</sup>

The Somerset County application is based on similar data-driven assessments and conclusions such as Keep Somerset Moving: crash occurrence, severity, and fatality rates, particularly among vulnerable roadway users; and the presence of significant equity-priority communities.

### Safety Action Plan Components

- The Safety Action Plan will employ a Vision Zero-type approach to reduce and eliminate fatal and severe injuries.
- Planning structure and leadership commitment that requires both participation and commitment of Somerset County and municipal partners in the development and implementation of the Safety Action Plan through engineering, enforcement, and education.

- Data-driven systemic safety analysis and methodologies including geospatial identification of higher-risk locations.
- Engagement and collaboration with municipal and agency partners, advocacy groups, and local and regional stakeholders to ensure participation and consensus of recommendations and implementation.
- Ensure equitable investment in the safety needs of underserved communities.
- Policy and process changes recognize the need for new and innovative methodologies, low-cost, high-impact strategies, and project design elements to address safety and equity deficiencies.
- The Action Plan looks beyond traditional designs that prioritize congestion mitigation and vehicle throughput, based on data-driven and community-driven goals for reducing pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries.

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*Keep Somerset Moving supports the Somerset County Safety Action Plan grant application and the overall SS4A program as priority actions. Somerset County will actively create the Safety Plan and commit its implementation to reduce crashes and serious injuries.*

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## ELECTRIC, CONNECTED, AND AUTOMATED VEHICLE STRATEGIES

The following program of strategies will help to position Somerset County for accelerated EV and alternative fuel adoption by consumers and eventual widespread CAV deployment.

### Meet 2045 EV Charging Demand

Based on NJTPA projections, there will be 133,943 households in Somerset County in 2045. Using an estimate of 1.8 vehicles per household – the national average – and one charging port per 24 vehicles, there is a need for approximately 10,000 public electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE or charging ports) in Somerset County by 2045. With approximately 180 existing EVSE in the County per NJDEP records, there will be a need for an estimated 9,850 new ports.<sup>xxxii</sup>

### Assess the Role of Alternative Fuels

Alternative fuels may play a key role in moving away from conventional gasoline fueled vehicles, as alternative fuels such as hydrogen and ethanol, can be phased into existing gasoline stations, utilizing prime locations that gas stations currently occupy.

Some alternative fuels like biodiesel or natural gas are suited for medium and heavy-duty vehicles like trucks and buses. The medium and heavy-duty EV market currently trails behind the light-duty category in terms of range and charging capabilities.

Alternative fuels may bridge the gap for heavier-duty fleets until full electrification becomes a viable option for all vehicle classes but are highly dependent on broader factors such as federal and state policies and incentives.

It is recommended the Somerset County develop and implement Countywide alternative fuels strategy.

### Countywide EV & CAV Strategy

A countywide strategic EV infrastructure study will help focus specifically on EV demand and needs, optimize EVSE siting, and establish an implementation and phasing timetable for charging port and capacity.

Somerset County could quantify EV demand and determine phasing, consistent with the NJ NEVI Deployment Plan.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

### ESTABLISH GOALS

Somerset County should establish actionable and implementable goals for transitioning its diverse fleet of vehicles –

passenger vehicles, light trucks, buses, vans, utility vehicles, and others – to electric. Goals should align with State policy phasing out sales of gas- and diesel-powered cars and light trucks by 2035. Somerset County's 2018 EV Readiness Plan should be updated to support this strategy.

### COLLABORATE WITH MUNICIPALITIES

Considering future at-home charging needs, the County could collaborate with or provide guidance to municipalities on changes to municipal ordinances, land development codes, residential building codes, and other local policies or directives that may preclude, prevent, or hinder the provision of adequate charging infrastructure.



### PUBLIC CHARGING LOCATIONS

Shared public locations, identified through a dedicated planning effort, will be needed to support future charging needs for many County residents, particularly those in underserved communities.

Somerset can play a vital role in easing “range anxiety” and encouraging the public to making the switch by helping to ensure that charging infrastructure is widely available. Somerset is already doing this through public EVSE installations at County-owned locations like the Somerset County Library and the Somerset County Complex area.

### PROMOTE WIDESPREAD EV ADOPTION

Somerset County EV Readiness Plan (2018) should be updated and include a strategy to promote EV adoption by Municipalities, Businesses, and Residents. Including businesses, especially those with large fleets, will align with the County’s Climate Change Policy to reduce emissions. The County can offer information on grants and incentives that fleet owners can apply for, and the County can also engage with business owners for EV charging site host opportunities.

One of the current barriers to EV adoption is the cost, not only to purchase EVs but installing the necessary infrastructure. The County should create an inventory of available grants and incentives, with regular updates, and utilize this information not only to apply for funding but also share with municipalities and residents and encourage that they apply as well.

Somerset County will provide letters of support to municipalities to apply for these grants.

### INITIATE CAV PARTNERSHIPS

While the timing of widespread deployment of connected and automated vehicle systems is somewhat uncertain, Somerset County can take steps to prepare for widespread deployment of CAV by working in partnership with NJDOT, USDOT, and/or public or private researchers or investors to identify pilot or test locations.

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*Keep Somerset Moving recommends that Somerset County take a lead role in the advancement of EV infrastructure and CAV technologies and implementation strategies. Actions to include conducting an EV Study; updating the County’s EV Readiness Plan; establishing goals; and collaborating with municipalities, federal and State agencies and other partners.*

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## SOMERSET COUNTY FREIGHT AND GOODS MOVEMENT STRATEGY

Somerset County's proximity to New York City, New England, the interstate highway system, major international ports and airports, and a dense network of highways and railroads, makes it a critical conduit for freight-related industry and goods movement. According to NJTPA's 2050 Freight Industry Level Forecasts, about one-third of Somerset County employment is in freight-related industries.

With the growth in warehouse development, e-commerce industries, and the local and regional impacts of both heavy trucks and local deliveries, Somerset County should continue to provide planning assistance and support to address local and regional concerns about the growth in warehouse development, and e-commerce industries.

The Local Freight Impact Fund (LFIF) Grant Program was established by NJDOT for the purpose of assisting counties and local municipalities with the mitigation of impacts on the local transportation system associated with the State's freight industry. The available funding for the FY2024 LFIF program is \$30.1 million.

### POTENTIAL FREIGHT STRATEGIES

A program of strategies could include improved collaboration and coordination; strengthening the land use-transportation connection including municipal review of new warehousing locations to better mitigate impacts; and drawing from recommendations of related studies including the 2023 Statewide Freight Plan, Port Reading Secondary Grade Crossing Elimination Study, and candidate freight railroad crossings improvements from the NJTPA's recent grade crossing study.

Additional strategies include:

- Shifting intermodal freight movements from trucks to rail where feasible
- Improved multimodal access for workers at new warehouse and e-commerce sites
- Providing sufficient wayfinding for truck movement to avoid local streets and residential areas
- Continue to require infrastructure improvements when planning and zoning boards are faced with an application that will result in a significant number of truck trips.

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*Keep Somerset Moving recommends that Somerset County continue to provide planning assistance to address local and regional concerns about the growth in warehouse development, and e-commerce industries.*

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## TRANSIT CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

Improved transit service options and intra-county connectivity were identified as critical needs during the Keep Somerset Moving planning, stakeholder, and community engagement tasks.

### Reimagine Somerset County Transit

Somerset County currently operates eight bus lines, in addition to paratransit services for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. This service is provided in limited areas and at limited times of day, and the routes were established prior to recent growth in locations with underserved communities. A recent assessment made by the Great Raritan Workforce Development Board identified mobility as the primary obstacle to better employment and education opportunities. The Raritan Valley Community College location in Branchburg is noted as a critical destination that lacks adequate transit access. Aligning the various investments in transportation, human services, education, etc. would help creating efficiencies at the County level.

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*Keep Somerset Moving recommends the Reimagine Somerset County Transit Study as the critical first step to evaluate current services, assess needs and opportunities, and development of a strategic plan to better align bus transit with Somerset's changing demographics, affordable housing locations, and essential travel needs.*

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### West Trenton Line Reactivation

The proposed reactivation of passenger rail service on the West Trenton Line, which was deactivated in 1982, would add north-south rail service through the County, improve connections to Newark, New York, Trenton, and Philadelphia, and vastly increase Somerset County's access to regional passenger rail service (see proposed alignment in Figure 28). Proposed stations in Somerset County are in Hillsborough and Montgomery Townships. Both municipalities have investigated Transit Ready Development (TRD) planning guidelines in preparation for the new rail line.

Scenario planning conducted for Making Connections indicated, however, that new service alone will not attract the desired new ridership, but rather that land use changes such as the proposed Hillsborough Town Center are critical to achieving the full ridership and mode shift potential of the West Trenton rail investment.

### Raritan Valley Line One-Seat Ride

The Raritan Valley Line (RVL) is the only NJ TRANSIT line connected by tracks to New York Penn Station whose passengers for most trains must transfer to a second train at Newark to complete the ride into New York. The one-seat ride eliminates the transfer, saves time, and improves convenience for the traveler.

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*Keep Somerset Moving recognizes the West Trenton Line Restoration corridor as holding the potential to provide equity, safety, and mobility benefits, improve access to work opportunities, and support a shift away from Somerset County's traditional reliance on drive-alone commuting.*

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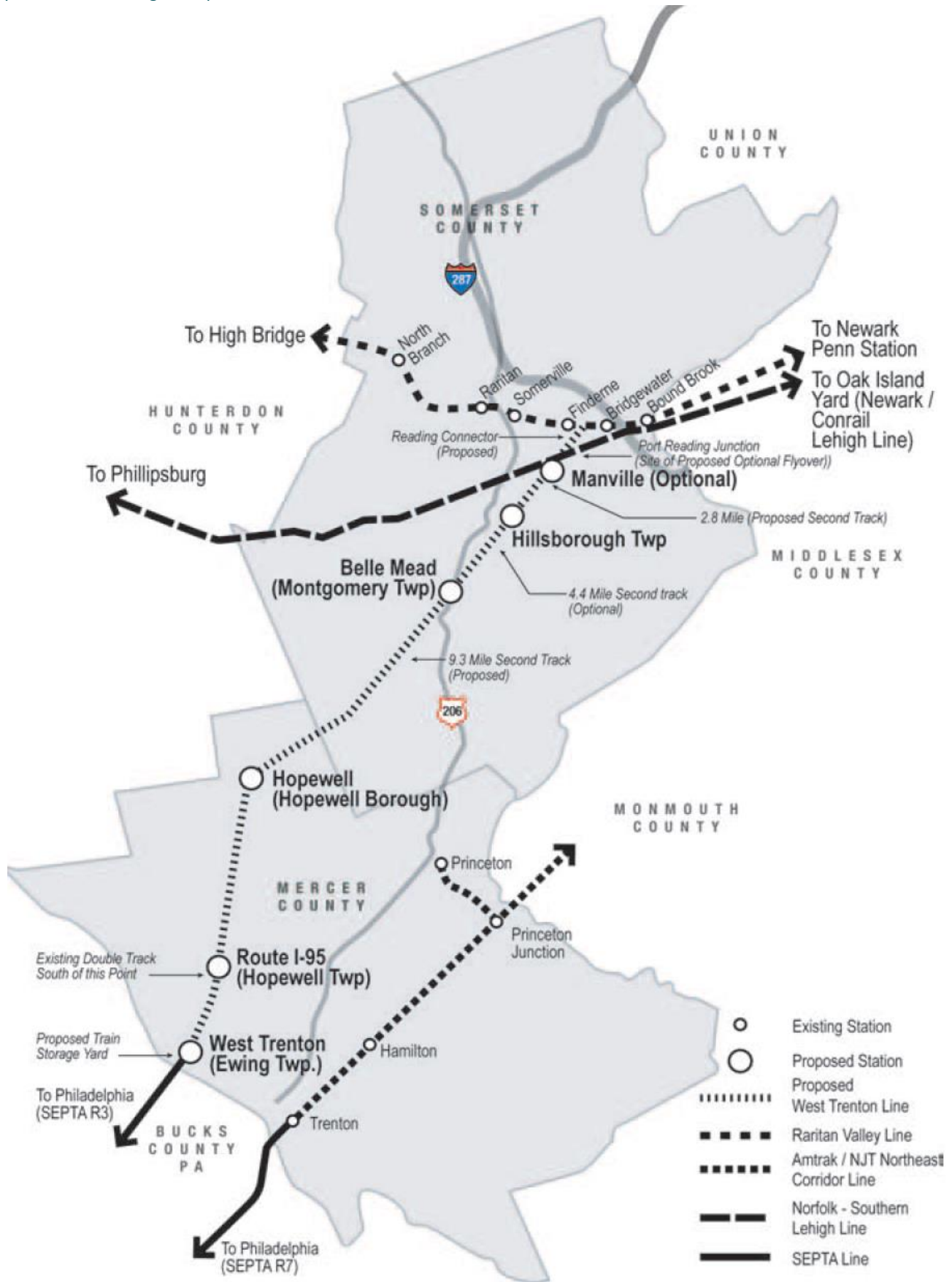


Figure 28: West Trenton Rail Restoration

Source: RPA-West-Trenton-Line-Station-Area-Design-Study, 2007

## PLANNING AND CONCEPTUAL STUDIES

The following planning and conceptual studies are recommended to examine in greater detail critical issues identified in the existing conditions analysis and through the community engagement activities. Each requires more detailed, and collaborative, assessment to better understand transportation system needs, deficiencies, and opportunities for improvement.

Each should have additional partners as applicable for review and collaboration, which may include NJDOT, neighboring Counties, NJDEP, and DRCC.

### **NJ Route 28 Corridor Study**

Route 28 is an east-west state highway that connects U.S. Route 22 in Bridgewater Township eastward to Union County. Route 28 changes context, roadway profile, and posted speed limit frequently as it passes through Somerset County eastward. Concerns about traffic congestion, aggressive driving, and pedestrian and bicycle safety and access are frequent and growing.

### **U.S. Route 206 Corridor North**

Keep Somerset Moving recommends collaboration with NJDOT to advance a corridor study of Route 206 from Route 22 north through Bridgewater and Bedminster Townships and Peapack and Gladstone Borough to the border of Peapack and Gladstone Borough and Chester Borough.

The study should develop a uniform vision for a multimodal travel corridor.

### **U.S. Route 206 Corridor South**

Keep Somerset Moving recommends collaboration with NJDOT to advance a study of U.S. Route 206 from the Hillsborough-206 Bypass southern terminus in northern Montgomery Township to the Princeton-Montgomery border, including the entire Rocky Hill Borough in the south.

The area is experiencing significant new retail development and housing, with increasing traffic and safety impacts. This study is needed to address concerns about safety, traffic, and local community impacts in both Montgomery and Rocky Hill.

### **U.S. Route 206 Hillsborough Main Street Study**

After many years of construction, the U.S. 206 bypass in Hillsborough is now open to traffic, and additional widening is taking place north to Brown Avenue.

Several studies have developed concept plans for the existing alignment of U.S. 206, just to the west of the new bypass, including Hillsborough's Town Center plan, and a similar effect from the Priority Investment studies. The goal is to create a walkable, multimodal concept, one that is more consistent with a downtown, main street context, than the current multi-lane, high speed design. This study would develop a consensus concept in collaboration with both Hillsborough Township and NJDOT.

### **Addressing Climate Change**

Somerset County should continue to address the impacts from climate change by advancing the implementation of the County Climate Change Policy Statement. The County can implement projects to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions by promoting the adoption of electric vehicles or reduce vehicle miles traveled by developing more trails and dedicated bike lanes. Flooding can be addressed via the hazard mitigation planning process.

### **NJ Route 27 Multimodal Transportation Study**

Keep Somerset Moving recommends collaboration with NJDOT and Middlesex County to advance a multimodal transportation study that focuses on the Route 27 Corridor from the

Somerset/Mercer County border to the Somerset section of Franklin Township. This study aims to analyze Route 27 bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit infrastructure to improve accessibility and safety for all users.

## KEEP SOMERSET MOVING IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The strategic vision for Keep Somerset Moving implements the following goals for the future of transportation and travel in Somerset County.

### EACH RECOMMENDED PROJECT, PLAN, AND STRATEGY AIMS TO BE

- 1 - Safe
- 2 - Equitable
- 3 - Connected and Efficient
- 4 - Sustainable and Resilient
- 5 – Implement Smart Technologies and Performance Monitoring

**Time Frames:** Short (1 to 3 years). Medium (4 to 8 years). Long (9 or more years).

Table 8: Keep Somerset Moving Implementation Matrix

DESCRIPTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	TIME FRAME	STRATEGIC GOALS
<b>Roadway Corridor Projects</b>			
Talmage Avenue/ Columbus Place/ Main Street (County Route 533). FY 2022 Local Safety Project Tea Street to Middlesex County	County, Bound Brook Borough, NJTPA, NJDOT	Medium	1-5
West County Drive Extension (CR 646) Connect U.S. 202 to Old York Road (CR 637) in Branchburg	County, Branchburg Twp	Long	1, 3, 4, 5
U.S. Route 22 Long Term Improvements Safety, and capacity improvements to U.S. Route 22, between U.S. 202/206, and I-287 in Bridgewater	County, Bridgewater Twp, Somerville, NJTPA, NJDOT	Long	1-5
Easton Avenue (CR 527) Worlds Fair Drive to Landing Lane. FY 2023 Local Concept Development Phase	County, Franklin Twp, NJTPA, NJDOT	Long	1-5
Hamilton Street (CR 514) FY 2020 Local Safety project Berry Street to Mile Run Stream; includes design, and currently in Preliminary Eng Phase	County, Franklin Twp, NJTPA, NJDOT	Medium	1-5
Brown Avenue Extension (Municipal) Connect U.S. 206 to Roycefield Road	County, Hillsborough Twp	Medium	1, 3, 4, 5
U.S. 206 Bypass, and Section 15N Widening Complete bypass of U.S. 206, and widen section 15N from Old Somerville Road to Brown Avenue	County, Hillsborough Twp, NJTPA, NJDOT	Short	1, 3, 4, 5



## Highway Interchange Projects

I-78 / Diamond Hill Road Interchange Complete the missing connections including WB I-78 to Diamond Hill Road	County, Berkeley Heights (Union County), NJDOT	Long	1, 3, 4, 5
I-287 at Easton Avenue (CR 527) Interchange Improve connections between the two roadways, enhance the interchange, and surrounding roadways	County, Franklin Twp. NJDOT	Long	1-5

## Intersection Projects

U.S. 202 at 1st Avenue Intersection Widen intersection to 3 travel lanes on approaches; includes traffic signal, and striping improvements	County, Raritan Borough, NJTPA, NJDOT	Short	1-5
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## Bridge Repair, and/or Replacement (Somerset County-Owned Bridges)

In addition to Somerset County and Municipalities, each Bridge Project includes NJTPA and NJDOT as partners.

Airport Road	County, Bedminster	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Pottersville Road (CR 512)	County, Bedminster	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Meadow Road	County, Bedminster, and Bridgewater	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Douglas Road	County, Bernards, and Far Hills	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Valley Road (CR 512)	County, Bernards, and Long Hill (Morris Co.)	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Lloyd Road	County, Bernardsville	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Burnt Mills Road (CR 641)	County, Branchburg	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Readington Road (CR 637) Sect 2	County, Branchburg	Short	1-5
South Branch Road (CR 567)	County, Branchburg	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Picket Place (CR 567)	County, Branchburg, and Hillsborough	Medium	1, 3, 4, 5
Morton St	County, Bridgewater	Short	1-5
Tullo Road	County, Bridgewater	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Cortelyous Lane	County, Franklin	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Easton Avenue (CR 527)	County, Franklin	Short	1-5
New Brunswick Road	County, Franklin	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Skillmans Lane	County, Franklin	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Amwell Road (CR 514)	County, Hillsborough	Short	1, 3, 4, 5

Raider Boulevard	County, Hillsborough	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Zion-Wertsville Road / Long Hill Road	County, Hillsborough, and Montgomery	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Bedens Brook Road	County, Montgomery	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Great Road (CR 601)	County, Montgomery	Medium	1, 3, 4, 5
Mountain View Road	County, Montgomery	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Somerset St	County, North Plainfield	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Geraud Avenue [Hurricane Ida/FEMA]	County, North Plainfield, and Plainfield	Short	1-5
Mendham Road (CR 647)	County, Peapack and Gladstone	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Davenport St	County, Somerville	Short	1-5
Brookside Drive	County, Warren	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Loriann Road	County, Warren	Short	1, 3, 4, 5
Stirling Road (CR 653)	County, Warren	Short	1, 3, 4, 5

### Comprehensive Project Development Process

Continue to implement Somerset County's project development process using an asset management approach

Countywide

Short

1-5

### Complete Streets Policy Update

Review, and update County Complete Streets Policy based on New Jersey's Complete + Green Streets model guidance

Countywide

Short

1, 2, 3, 4

Construct missing pieces and sections to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure

Countywide

Short

1, 2, 3, 4

### County, and Municipal Master Plan, and Policies

Municipal Circulation Element Updates

Recommend municipalities to review, and update Circulation Elements

Countywide

Medium

1, 2, 3, 4

Municipal Sidewalk Policies

Recommend municipalities to review, and update local sidewalk policies

Countywide

Medium

1, 2, 3, 4

Advance bicycle, pedestrian, and trail recommendations from the Walk, Bike, Hike Study and the Preservation Master Plan

Countywide

Short

1, 2, 3, 4

### Strengthen the Land Use-Transportation Connection

Establish or expand mixed-use zoning districts, and transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities consistent with the County Investment Framework

Countywide

Short

1, 2, 3, 4

Consider TOD design guidance to support implementation of PGIA recommendations

Countywide

Short

1, 2, 3, 4

Promote accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in all residential zoning districts

Countywide

Short

1, 2, 3, 4

Advance housing strategies from the 2017 Somerset County Housing Element

Countywide

Short

1, 2, 3, 4

Encourage universal design, and age-friendly planning approaches

Countywide

Short

1, 2, 3, 4

Leverage power of the Official Map to achieve multimodal mobility and safety goals

Countywide

Medium

1, 2, 3, 4

Develop Access Management Plan(s) (AMP) for targeted locations and corridors

Countywide

Medium

1, 2, 3, 4

Develop and implement methodology to review suitable locations for affordable housing

Countywide

Short

1, 2, 3, 4

### Safe Streets, and Roads for All (SS4A)

Support development of the County's Safety Action Plan grant application, and the overall SS4A program as priority actions

Countywide, NJTPA, NJDOT

Short

1-5

### Electric, Connected, and Automated Vehicle Strategies

Meet the projected 2045 Countywide electric vehicle (EV) charging demand

Countywide

Short

1-5

Develop and implement Countywide alternative fuels strategy

Countywide

Medium

1-5

Transition Somerset County vehicle fleets to electric and alternative fuels

Countywide

Medium

1-5

Support installation of public EV charging stations

Countywide

Short

1-5

Update the EV Readiness Plan to promote countywide adoption

Countywide

Short

1-5

Initiate CAV partnerships to deploy connected, and automated roadside infrastructure

Countywide

Medium

1-5

Develop and Implement a Countywide Micromobility Strategy i.e. e-bikes and e-scooters

Countywide

Medium

1-5

### Somerset County Freight, and Goods Movement Strategy

Provide planning assistance to address local and regional concerns about the growth in warehouse development, and e-commerce industries.

Countywide

Medium

1, 2, 3, 4

### Transit Concepts and Strategies

Conduct the Reimagine Somerset County Transit Study Increasing transit service to underserved communities to make better connections for people to travel to education, shopping, medical, employment and leisure trips.

Countywide

Short

1, 2, 3, 4

Work collaboratively to advance reactivation of the West Trenton Line

Countywide, NJ TRANSIT, Mercer County

Short

1, 2, 3, 4

Continue to advocate for one-seat ride service to NY Penn Station on the Raritan Valley Line.

NJTPA, NJ TRANSIT

Long

2, 3, 4, 5

Advocate capacity improvements to expand rail service into NY Penn Station.

NJTPA, NJ TRANSIT

Short

2, 3, 4, 5

Launch a real-time transit information service for Somerset County Public and Paratransit services.

NJ TRANSIT

Short

2, 3, 4, 5



## Planning and Conceptual Studies

In addition to Somerset County each study should have additional partners as applicable for review and collaboration, which may include NJDOT, neighboring Counties, local municipalities, NJDEP, and DRCC.

U.S. Route 206 Corridor North Study	Countywide	Medium	1, 3, 4
U.S. Route 206 Corridor South Study	Countywide	Medium	1, 3, 4
NJ Route 28 Corridor Study	Countywide	Medium	1, 2, 3, 4
U.S. Route 206 Hillsborough Main Street Study	Countywide	Medium	1, 3, 4
Addressing Climate Change	Countywide	Short	1, 2, 3, 4
Route 27 Multimodal Corridor Study	Countywide	Medium	1, 2, 3, 4

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## End Notes

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