Stopping the $10.7B Turnpike Extension Widening (I-78)

And why $24B in highway widenings around NJ are inefficient, outdated, and will damage the environment and the climate

John Reichman, EmpowerNJ
Jimmy Lee, SafeStreetsJC
United in Opposition

EmpowerNJ • Safe Streets JC • Bike JC • JC Mayor Fulop • Jersey City City Council • Hoboken City Council • Hudson County Complete Streets • Bike Hoboken • Bike North Bergen • Bike Weehawken • Bici UC • Harsimus Cove Association • Hamilton Park Neighborhood Association • JC Village Neighborhood Association • Journal Square Community Association Board • NJ Bike Walk Coalition • Clean Water Action • Environment New Jersey • Sierra Club NJ Chapter • Tristate Transportation Campaign
NJ’s Environmental Goals

By executive order, Governor Murphy has set a goal of 50% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and 100% by 2050.
Transportation is by far the biggest source of greenhouse gases in NJ (Not power generation)
Electric vehicle adoption is predicted to take decades

NJ has 2.5M registered vehicles and existing cars will last 10-20 years.

While growing, the number of EVs adopted each year is still only in single percentages of new car sales.

Study by ChargeEVC: https://chargevc.org/
NJ Turnpike Authority has an unprecedented and wasteful $24B/$30B capital plan

- Under the cover of Covid, tolls were hiked 36% (+3% annually) to raise $1B a year and fund an unprecedented $24B capital plan to build Turnpike widenings all across the state
- Last capital plan was only $7B
- Opposite of NY’s congestion pricing which raises $1B annually to invest in transit
GARDEN STATE PARKWAY
MAINLINE WIDENING BETWEEN INTERCHANGES 142 - 154
The project will widen the Parkway mainline from 3/4 lanes in each direction to 4/6 lanes in each direction with full shoulders. Within the total project length of approximately 12 miles, there will be 47 bridges that will be either replaced or widened.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL / AGENCY COORDINATION
The following environmental permits and agency coordination may be required for this project:
- NJDEP (wetlands, flood hazard, stormwater, SHPO, green acres and site remediation)
- Hudson-Essex-Passaic and Somerset-Union Soil Conservation Districts

NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE
INTERCHANGE 13, EXTEND FOURTH MAINLINE LANE
In the existing condition, the fourth (rightmost) Outer Roadway lane in the northbound and southbound directions ends just after the Interchange 13 exit ramp. Three lanes are carried through the interchange, and the fourth lane is re-added by the entrance ramp. It is planned to connect the existing fourth lane in each direction along the Outer Roadway through Interchange 13 to meet projected traffic needs. This would require reconstruction of an existing railroad overpass and several bridges associated with Interchange 13, including Relocated Bayway. The improvements proposed along this corridor project would impact 13 bridges. Seven bridges are local overpass structures that will need partial reconstruction or full replacement to accommodate the mainline widening. Four bridges would need to be widened to accommodate the corridor improvements.
GARDEN STATE PARKWAY

MAINLINE WIDENING BETWEEN INTERCHANGES 129 - 142
This project would widen the Parkway mainline from five lanes in each direction to six lanes in each direction with full shoulders along the entire length of the project. The project will replace or widen 36 bridges to accommodate the widening. The total project length is approximately 13 miles.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL / AGENCY COORDINATION
The following environmental permits and agency coordination may be required for this project:
- NJDEP (wetlands, flood hazard, stormwater, SHPO, green acres and site remediation)
- Freehold and Somerset-Union Soil Conservation Districts

POTENTIAL RIGHT-OF-WAY IMPACTS
Right-of-Way acquisitions are anticipated and estimated at $30 Million

LOCATION
Woodbridge Township - Hillside Township
Middlesex County - Union County

TOTAL PROJECT COST
$800 Million

SCHEDULE
Planning & Design:
72 months
Construction:
36 months

GARDEN STATE PARKWAY

MAINLINE WIDENING BETWEEN INTERCHANGES 98 - 125
This project would widen the Parkway mainline from 5/6 lanes to 6/7 lanes in each direction. The project would also provide full shoulders for safety. The total length of the project is approximately 27 miles and will include replacing or widening of 65 bridges.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL / AGENCY COORDINATION
The following environmental permits and agency coordination may be required for this project:
- NJDEP (wetlands, flood hazard, CAFRA, stormwater, SHPO, green acres and site remediation)
- Freehold Soil Conservation District
- USACE (Sections 10 and 404)
- US Coast Guard

LOCATION
Sayreville Township - Wall Township
Middlesex County - Monmouth County

TOTAL PROJECT COST
$1.35 Billion

SCHEDULE
Planning & Design:
66 months
Construction:
NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE

MAINLINE WIDENING BETWEEN INTERCHANGES 1 - 2
The project will widen the Turnpike mainline from two lanes in each direction to three in each direction. The 12-mile project will provide full shoulders on mainline and replace or widen 18 bridges.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL / AGENCY COORDINATION
The following environmental permits and agency coordination may be required for this project:
- NJDEP (wetlands, flood hazard, CAFRA, waterfront dev., stormwater, SHPO, green acres and site remediation)
- Delaware River Basin Commission
- Gloucester County and Salem County Soil Conservation Districts
- USACE (Sections 10, 404 and 408)
- US Coast Guard

LOCATION
- Carneys Point Township - Woolwich Township
- Salem County - Gloucester County

TOTAL PROJECT COST
$400 Million

SCHEDULE
Planning & Design: 60 months
Construction:

NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE

MAINLINE WIDENING BETWEEN INTERCHANGES 2 - 3
This project would widen the Turnpike mainline from two lanes in each direction to three in each direction. The project will also provide full shoulders on the mainline. The total length of the project is approximately 13 miles and 24 bridges will be replaced or widened.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL / AGENCY COORDINATION
The following environmental permits and agency coordination may be required for this project:
- NJDEP (wetlands, flood hazard, waterfront dev., stormwater, SHPO, green acres and site remediation)

LOCATION
- Woolwich Township - Runnemede Borough
- Gloucester County - Camden County

TOTAL PROJECT COST
$400 Million

SCHEDULE
Meanwhile…

NJ Transit has looming $1B shortfall in 2026 and annual transfers away from capital to operations.
Missing transit projects

- After 16 years, the Bergen still doesn’t exist as a part of Hudson Bergen Light Rail and the EIS has to be restarted
- Glassboro Light Rail in South Jersey remains an uncertainty yet proceeding with $2B in Turnpike Widening from exits 1-4
- Long segment of North Jersey Coast Line and many others remain unelectrified
- No bus lanes for the Holland Tunnel or GWB, no weekend or evening bus lanes for the Lincoln Tunnel

Many more projects are more cost effective, higher capacity, and environmentally friendly than highway widenings.

Lawmakers 'furious' after feds tell NJ Transit to start over on Bergen light rail project

4-minute read

Colleen Wilson
NorthJersey.com
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A proposed extension of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail into Bergen County has hit another hurdle that will delay planning on the project for at least two more years, outraging local politicians who have spent three decades fighting to expand the service north.

The Federal Transit Administration decided Monday to rescind a "notice of intent," which was granted in 2007 and gave NJ Transit the green light to begin working on a required environmental report for the project, known as an environmental impact statement.
Congestion Pricing will raise billions of dollars for transit, reduce traffic, create cleaner air and safer streets and directly benefit the vast majority of NJ residents who commute into NY.
Widening of the I-78 Turnpike Extension

$10.7B for just 8 miles leading to more pollution, more noise, and unsafe streets feeding into the Holland Tunnel bottleneck
What is the Project?

- $10.7B to tear down and rebuild wider the 8.1 miles of the Turnpike Extension. $1.3B per mile (subway money: 20X the capacity of a highway lane)
- Phase 1: $6.2B replacement of the Newark Bay Bridge, and build 2 new bridges for 8 lanes. But actually can be repaired for $260M and last 40 years. Begin in 2026.
- Phase 4 in Downtown Jersey City would be next a couple of years later
What is the Project?

- Repair/replacement of the structure due to age and wear ✓
- Reducing congestion ?
- Additional capacity for freight trucks coming from expanded port capacity in Bayonne/Greenville ?
- But truck traffic is only single digit percentage points of total traffic and Port Authority has switched to an appointment system
Several Problems

1. Highway widening doesn’t fix congestion and never has because of induced demand
2. EVs won’t save us especially in cities and freight truck electrification is even further away
3. Environmental justice is currently just lip service when it comes to highways.
4. We need a holistic approach to transportation
5. Trucks are not the only way to transport freight - New Jersey’s freight rail network is world class
6. Investments in public transit have worked and will work and can power the next generation economy of NJ
Induced Demand

https://www.wired.com/2014/06/wuwt-traffic-induced-demand/

- Time = Money so we can think of congestion on the highway as the price people are willing to pay
- Reduced demand and less traffic when highways are removed (Embarcadero in SF)

During the last two or three years before [the entrance of the United States into World War II], a few planners had...begun to understand that, without a balanced system [of transportation], roads would not only not alleviate transportation congestion but would aggravate it. Watching Moses open the Triborough Bridge to ease congestion on the Queensborough Bridge, open the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge to ease congestion on the Triborough Bridge and then watching traffic counts on all three bridges mount until all three were as congested as one had been before, planners could hardly avoid the conclusion that "traffic generation" was no longer a theory but a proven fact: the more highways were built to alleviate congestion, the more automobiles would pour into them and congest them and thus force the building of more highways – which would generate more traffic and become congested in their turn in an ever-widening spiral that contained far-reaching implications for the future of New York and of all urban areas.
Reduced Demand

In San Francisco, after the highway above the Embarcadero was damaged in 1989 after a major earthquake, the decision was made to demolish it. While traffic spiked for a short-time, in a mirror image of induced demand, afterwards, the traffic simply evaporated as different trips were made and some travellers decided to use public transportation.

Similar circumstances surrounded the closing of the Alaskan Viaduct. Predictions had been originally of “Carmeggedon”

http://www.preservenet.com/freeways/FreewaysEmbarcadero.html
Increased Congestion on Local Streets

http://www.betterinstitutions.com/blog/2013/07/freeway-expansion-doesnt-improve
**Clean Air, Safer Streets, Mass Transit**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Capacity (HR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Motor Vehicles</td>
<td>600–1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Traffic with Frequent Buses</td>
<td>1,000–2,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Way Protected Bikeway</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated Transit Lanes</td>
<td>4,000–8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Street Transitway, Bus or Rail</td>
<td>10,000–25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why invest in public transit?

A highway 20 lanes wide would be required to carry in automobiles the number of people now being served by Toronto’s Subway.
Holland Tunnel is only 3%
Why invest in public transit? Dedicated Bus Lanes, NJ vs NY
Truck and heavier vehicle contributions to road damage

Setting aside diesel exhaust, the vast majority of road damage is done by trucks because damage has been studied to vary to the 4th power of weight. Road expansions for trucks are a giveaway to one industry at the expense of another.

https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2017/06/22/murphys-law-how-trucks-destroy-our-roads/

In the equation, $W_1$ is the weight of an axle on vehicle 1, which we would compare to $W_2$, the weight of an axle on vehicle 2.

Let’s look at some numbers for comparison.

Consider a standard sedan with two axles and a total weight of 2 tons. Assuming an even distribution, each of its axles would bear the weight of 1 ton. Now consider a semitruck with eight axles and a weight of 40 tons — each of its axles would weigh 5 tons. The relative damage done by each axle of the truck can be calculated with the following equation, and comes out to 625 times the damage done by each axle of the sedan.

$$\left(\frac{5 \text{ tons}}{1 \text{ ton}}\right)^4 = 625$$
Freight rail: The antidote to warehouse sprawl

- U.S. freight railroads can, on average, move one ton of freight nearly 500 miles per gallon of fuel
- Strong existing network across NJ
- No tire dust and little brake dust
- Easy to electrify in the future
- Unlike roads, historically we have spent very little public money on freight rail
- NYNJ Railcar Float
- Cross-Harbor Freight Program needs New Jersey support

https://www.openrailwaymap.org/
Environmental Review and Issues
LA cancelled the widening of the 710 freeway in Long Beach and is investing $1.5B in freight rail for an inland port instead. If even LA has cancelled their worst highway widening project...

We can win.
NJTA’s strategy and why full review is needed

- State-level, no teeth EIS
- Segmentation strategy
- Lack of examination of mass transit and freight rail alternatives
Not just GHGs:
Growing awareness of particulate pollution from brake and tire dust

EU and UK are starting to regulate brake and tire dust pollution due to impact on health

Heavier vehicles, especially trucks cause greater amounts of wear

Tire additives were just found to have been killing half of salmon eggs in Washington State
Environmental Justice issues

“All New Jersey residents, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, color, or national origin, have a right to live, work, and recreate in a clean and healthy environment. Historically, New Jersey’s low-income communities and communities of color face a disproportionately high number of environmental and public health stressors and, as a result, suffer from increased adverse health effects. New Jersey seeks to correct these outcomes by furthering the promise of environmental justice.”
Conclusion

Q&A

Learn more and take action at: https://turnpiketrap.org

Contact:
hello@turnpiketrap.org
Resources: Vision Zero and Complete Streets in Jersey City