

CLEAN TRANSPORTATION

FOR ALL

Improving Access to New Jersey
Public Transit Information



SIERRA CLUB
NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

Clean Transportation for All: Improving Access to New Jersey Public Transit Information

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I. Introduction

The Transportation sector is the largest contributor of Greenhouse Gas emissions in New Jersey, contributing just under 50% of the total emissions each year. Increasing the use of public transportation for commuting to work and for other trips is one of the key strategies needed to reduce our carbon footprint and forestall the dire impacts of global warming. Finding what transit services are available is the first step that residents and visitors need to take before they can substitute public transit trips for trips currently taken by private automobile or expensive car services such as Uber, Lyft, and taxis. Our analysis and recommendations are based on a review of the NJ Transit website and transportation agencies elsewhere in the United States, as well as suggestions from our members and other New Jersey residents.

While New Jersey has a large and heavily used public transportation system, it was mostly developed prior to the creation of NJ Transit in 1980. It is composed of a disjointed mix of public and private bus, rail, and ferry companies. In addition to NJ Transit, there are forty-four other public transit providers listed on the NJ Transit website which provide service in the state. These are listed in at least three different places on the website and the lists are not identical.

The first step for any resident or visitor is to discover which providers best connect the origin and destination of a needed trip. The NJ Transit website doesn't provide this information when NJ Transit is not the provider. We think it should. And beyond the content on the website is the manner of its presentation, that is, its user friendliness. We discuss issues we have identified in accessing information from mobile apps and njtransit.com.

In this report, NJSC makes recommendations in the categories cited above based on our website audit and a review of the websites of other transit properties. They are summarized here.

1. NJ TRANSIT'S website and Customer Information Center should be the primary source of all public transit related travel information in the state, accommodating all service providers. This should include routes and route numbers, maps, schedules, fares, trip planning, and other appropriate tools and information.
2. The website offers a confusing hash of pull-down menus at the top of the home page, in the body of the home page, and at the bottom of the home page. Seemingly similar topics do not always lead to the same information. These sets of different information need to be consolidated and all appropriate links should lead to the same set of information.
3. The website should provide county-wide and metropolitan area maps showing all public transportation services regardless of mode or operator. These maps should distinguish routes serving key destinations outside of the county, such as New York City or Philadelphia and major destinations in New Jersey. Such maps should also identify frequent service corridors, as discussed in our companion study, ***Building a Frequent Service Bus Network in Northeastern NJ.***
4. The Trip Planning function on the NJ Transit website presents inconsistent results based on how it is accessed.
5. The NJ Transit website makes a confusing distinction between Travel Alerts and Service Advisories which is not understood by the average website user. The distinction between the two is not consistent.

6. Alerts and Advisories are not linked to the trip planning tools. Alternate travel options are not provided when an alert/advisory could impact a specific trip that meets a customer's needs.
7. Alerts and Advisories are too often lacking in accuracy and clarity. They often omit information the user needs while including irrelevant information. They are often not updated in a timely manner. They often omit information about bus routes contracted out by NJ Transit. Different paths to this information give different results.
8. Navigation through the NJ Transit website is inconsistent between the PC, tablet, and smart phone platforms.

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II. Alerts and Advisories

Travel Alerts appear to be a way to inform NJ Transit's passengers of currently active disruptions to travel. Service Advisories appear to be advance notices of future disruptions or notices of non-vehicular issues such as future scheduling changes, out-of-service elevators, and other issues. Alerts and advisories are important tools in advising customers who use transit of information they need for current and future travel. In some cases, advance knowledge of these alerts and advisories would allow a customer to adjust a trip time, switch to a different route, or even change a date of travel. Therefore, the information in these alerts and advisories should be both clear and correct from a customer perspective. Yet, many of the alerts and advisories reviewed by The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club had serious problems. We give both rail and bus examples below taken from the web in November and early December 2019.

A. DEFINITION OF ALERTS AND ADVISORIES

The uses of Travel Alerts and Service Advisories seem to overlap. NJ Transit posts numerous Service Advisories on the web; but usually not on the Home Page. On the rail side, these can include trains operating on the opposite direction track due to track work, platform issues, elevator and escalator issues, and other service issues. On the bus side, these include bus stop changes and known future detours because of roadwork or community events. For all modes, schedule changes are posted as advisories, whether for holidays or a general schedule change.

Travel Alerts do appear on the Home Page except when there is insufficient space for all bus alerts. (See discussion that follows in II. D.) Travel Alerts appear to be used to announce current or imminent issues, whether they impact a single trip, an entire line, or the entire system.

Often, there are both Service Advisories and Travel Alerts addressing the same operational issue. They do not always agree with each other.

RECOMMENDATION:

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club recommends that service advisories directly impacting current service or where a customer boards or disembarks a train or bus be elevated to alerts when imminent or in effect (that is, not an advance notification.) In some cases, only the nature of the Alert is needed. Directly impacted customers could be instructed to click on the line or route to read the more detailed advisory. Here are three hypothetical examples that illustrate our point.

EXAMPLE - RAIL:

A notification of single tracking on the Raritan Valley Line on a specific date has been posted as an advisory for one week. On the actual date(s), we recommend that the following alert appear:

"From 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM eastbound trains to Newark/New York will stop on the westbound platform at Netherwood, Fanwood, and Westfield. See advisory for details."

EXAMPLE - BUS:

An advisory reported that a parade in Somerville would affect bus routes x, y and z on the weekend. We recommend that the following alert appear:

"114 will operate on a detour in Somerville from 10 AM to 3 PM today due to parade. See advisory for details." The advisory would have the actual detour routing and information on impacted and alternate bus stops.

EXAMPLE - BUS:

There is a detour in Millburn due to roadwork. We recommend that the following alert appear:

"70 towards Livingston Mall will operate on a detour in Millburn until 4 PM due to roadwork. See advisory for details."

The advisory would have the actual detour routing and information on impacted and alternate bus stops.

Note that by not giving the details in these alerts but instead focusing on the stations/municipalities impacted, only the customers in the impacted areas need to seek out the specific details; but all customers will get the idea that there might be some impact to the on-time performance of their trips.

B. DIFFERENT PATHS LEAD TO DIFFERENT INFORMATION WHEN VIEWING BUS ALERTS AND ADVISORIES

There may be multiple alerts and advisories on a single bus route. If one knows the bus route he or she wants and just wants to check trip times, one can use Services/Bus/Bus Timetables/Select Bus Route/Get Info and then either View Timetable or (if there is one) View Advisory. The problem: This path never gives travel alerts and never gives more than one service advisory even if there is more than one.

On the other hand, if one clicks on Check Status for All Lines on the Home Page or one clicks on Services/Bus and then Alerts and Advisories in the Additional Info box on the right, all alerts and advisories for a route appear; but one has to scroll down until one reaches the route wanted.

RECOMMENDATION:

The “View Advisory” option from any bus or rail service schedule page should lead directly to ALL alerts and advisories currently posted for that service.

C. MANY RAIL ALERTS REFER TO A TRAIN WITHOUT EXPLICITLY STATING THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

Our research indicated that many people do not know the number of the train they are using and may not even know that even-numbered trains are heading “railroad east” (to New York City, Hoboken, Newark) and odd-numbered trains are heading “railroad west”. (The Atlantic City Rail Line appears to be an exception to the “east/even, west/odd train number rule” as even numbered trains are traveling towards Philadelphia, further emphasizing the importance of direction of travel being specified.)

EXAMPLE:

One person who occasionally uses the train from Millburn to New York Penn Station on weekends said “I know the train leaves Millburn on the :50 and arrives in New York on about the :40 of the following hour. For return trips, the train leaves hourly on the :11” He was unable to cite a single train number; but he did say he checked for advisories on the web a day or two before his trips and for alerts an hour or so before his trip.

This omission of direction of travel can be especially confusing when a train is delayed or annulled at an intermediate station.

Here are two examples where minor modifications to an alert would increase user friendliness. The alerts are in italics as transcribed from the web.

Dec. 01, 2019 02:17:09 PM

NJCL train #4745, the 2:43 PM (sic) from Long Branch is subject to a delay of up to 25 min. due to late connection with train #7245.

Dec. 02, 2019 12:57:21 pm

MBPJ train #62, the 12:33 pm from Harriman is up to 15 min. late due to Metro North track work.

December 1 and 2 were both cold, raw days with snow and rain depending on one's location. December 1 was also the Sunday at the end of Thanksgiving weekend, suggesting that there were many occasional customers not familiar with railroad operations.

For the December 1 example, if a customer were waiting in Matawan for a train to New York or waiting in Bradley Beach for a train to Point Pleasant Beach, would this alert have been helpful?

By adding to Bay Head after "Long Branch", the customer in Bradley Beach might be able to delay the trip to the station and the customer in Matawan would know that the train he or she was planning to board was on time and not impacted.

Note also that the train time for #4745 was posted incorrectly. 2:43 PM was the scheduled arrival of train #7245. Train #4745 was scheduled to depart at 2:46 PM.

A similar comment is offered for the December 2 example. Here if "to Hoboken" were added after "from Harriman", the direction of the train would be clear and some passengers further east could either adjust their arrival times at stations or, if at stations between Suffern and Ridgewood and traveling to Secaucus or Hoboken, take the Main Line train that normally trails the delayed train.

RECOMMENDATION:

When there are train alerts, the "To" direction of travel should always be added.

D. THE HOME PAGE SYSTEM STATUS DISPLAY CANNOT DISPLAY ALL BUS ROUTES WHEN THERE ARE A LARGE NUMBER OF ALERTS

The System Status display on the home page has a limited capacity to list bus routes with alerts. When there are a large number of alerts, such as when there are delays on all or most routes to/from the Port Authority Bus Terminal, there is no room to show routes with route numbers higher than the last route listed, even if said routes are in South Jersey or otherwise not related to the PABT delays. Instead, the message "Check Status of All Lines" appears. However, this is misleading as the message also appears when bus service is reported as "on or close". We note that all rail lines are shown, even if "on or close"; but many bus routes have higher patronage than some of the rail lines and are not shown when there are a large number of bus alerts, even when there is a bus alert impacting those routes. All routes with bus alerts should be displayed on the home page.

RECOMMENDATION:

When a group of bus routes is impacted, don't list all routes, but develop a shorthand, such as "PABT routes", "GWB routes", "Newark routes", "Phila. routes" and the like for other route clusters.

RECOMMENDATION:

Replace the phrase "Check Status of All Lines" with "Reminder: Check Alerts and Advisories for All Lines" to address the need to call users' attention to the fact that there are more than alerts they need to check or that there may be an alert or advisory for a route not shown on the Home Page.

E. BUS ALERTS AND ADVISORIES HAVE SERIOUS QUALITY CONCERNS

Bus alerts and advisories have serious quality problems. We evaluated numerous alerts and advisories from November and December 2019 that involved detour information, the majority of which contained serious problems. In the following examples, the alert as copied or transcribed from the web is in italics followed by The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club's analysis of the alert. One problem found in almost all alerts and advisories: If the alert/advisory involves a detour, the bus customer is not given information about where to board or disembark the bus when bus stops are bypassed. This is especially important when the detour is lengthy or when key stops, such as transfer points, are being bypassed.

CASE 1 - PATERSON

Detour for Nos. 72, 74, 190 & 704 in Paterson - Monday, November 18 to Tuesday, December 3, 2019

November 18, 2019

Effective immediately and continuing until Tuesday, December 3, between the overnight hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., Main Street will be closed between Broadway and Washington streets for roadwork.

During this time, NJ TRANSIT Bus Route Nos. 72, 74, 190 and 704 in Paterson will operate on a detour.

Buses traveling toward the Newark/Port Authority Bus Terminal will travel from Broadway Terminal, make a left on Broadway, right on Curtis Place, continue on Memorial Drive, right on W. Broadway, continue on Main Street, and then continue the regular route. We apologize for any inconvenience this detour may cause.

The detour notice illustrates almost all of the types of mistakes that regularly occur in alerts and advisories.

- 1. Reason for detour does not make sense:** "Main Street will be closed between Broadway and Washington streets..." Main Street is parallel to Washington St. Broadway connects Main St. and Washington St.
- 2. The detour is doable;** but it puts the buses directly onto the section of Main St. which is purportedly closed. The normal route is to leave Broadway Terminal by making a right on Broadway and a right on Main St. (for Nos. 72, 74, 190). The detour sends these buses in a loop ending on Main St. at Broadway; so unless the detour is

because buses cannot make a right turn from Broadway onto Main, the detour does not address a street closing on Main St. Thus, the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club analysis suggests that the street closing was most likely on Broadway between Broadway Terminal and Washington Street.

- 3. One route listed requires a separate detour:** The No. 704 does not operate into Broadway Terminal nor does it travel to Newark or New York. It requires a separate detour notice because it operates northbound on Main and turns right onto Broadway. (The southbound route is slightly different in this area and may not be impacted.) This supports the New Jersey Chapter Sierra Club analysis that it was Broadway that was closed, not Main Street.
- 4. Other NJT operated routes should be listed:** The No. 161 originates at Broadway Terminal and operates via the same routing as the Nos. 72, 74, and 190 in the impacted area. The No. 171 also originates at Broadway Terminal and makes a right onto Broadway continuing straight on Broadway across Main. This route would also be impacted by almost any construction in the area. The No. 703 serves Broadway terminal at night with the same operating pattern as the Nos. 72, 74, 161, and 190 leaving Broadway Terminal eastbound.
- 5. Contract carrier routes are not included:** No. 746 is a contract carrier route operates from Broadway Terminal, but it was not included in the advisory.
- 6. Alerts and advisories are not updated. Construction is complete or suspended:** On November 27 and November 29, 2019 (Thanksgiving week), The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club tracked buses (using MyBus Now*) leaving Broadway Terminal at varying times

between 7:00 and 9:00 PM. All buses followed the regular route during these spot checks; yet the travel advisory remained on the web.

****MyBus Now was not consistently available on November 29.***

- 7. Bus stops not served:** Whether the construction was on Main or on Broadway, there would be at least one bus stop not served. There was no information for passengers as to which alternate bus stops to use.

CASE 2 - OCEAN CITY

Detour for Nos. 508 & 509 in Ocean City - Wednesday, November 27, 2019

November 27, 2019

On Wednesday, November 27, 9th Street will be closed between Ocean and Evert avenues for roadwork.

During this time, NJ TRANSIT Bus Routes Nos. 508 and 509 in Ocean City will operate on a detour.

Buses traveling outbound will travel from 9th Street and Ocean Avenue, make a left on Ocean Avenue, right on Mooryn Terrace (sic), left on Atlantic Avenue, and then continue the regular route.

- 1. Wrong route:** The No. 508 does not serve Ocean City. The Nos. 507 and 509 serve Ocean City.

- 2. Customer boarding location:** The regular and detour routings

consist of loops after the bus leaves the Ocean City Terminal. There is one stop on the regular route near side on Atlantic Avenue at Moorlyn Terrace. This stop is bypassed on the detour route. Should passengers wait for the Nos. 507 and 509 near side on Moorlyn before the bus turns left onto Atlantic or far side on Atlantic Avenue after the bus turns left from Moorlyn?

3. Irrelevant information: Where is Evert Ave? A search of Bing maps, Google maps, and an old paper map of Ocean City (Patton) failed to indicate an Evert anywhere in Ocean City. There is one block of E. 9th Street between Ocean and Atlantic Avenues. If this one block was closed for roadwork, the detour itself was appropriate.

4. Impact on inbound service: Both inbound and outbound Nos. 507 and 509 make this loop. While less relevant to inbound service from a passenger perspective as it is unlikely anyone boards at the one stop on the loop as the bus heads to Ocean City Terminal, there may be a customer who wishes to be discharged at the impacted bus stop.

CASE 3 - NEWARK

Bus 1

Travel Alerts

Nov 26, 2019 04:31:48 PM

Bus route 1 will operate on a detour in Newark between Mt. Vernon Pl & Kerrigan Blvd. due to an earlier motor vehicle accident. Buses traveling from Ivy Hill will use Netherwood Pl., Elery (sic) Ave and Mt. Vernon Pl. Buses traveling to Ivy Hill will use Kerrigan Blvd., Ivy

Hill Pl (sic) and Sanford (sic) Ave.

- 1. Description of impacted area:** The impacted area is not “between Mt. Vernon Pl & Kerrigan Blvd”. It is “between Mt. Vernon Place at Kerrigan Blvd.” and Sanford Ave. at Ivy St.”
- 2. Detour routes are reversed:** The “from Ivy Hill” and “to Ivy Hill” instructions are reversed. This is obvious to anyone familiar with the area both from the order in which the streets on the detours are listed and that three of the streets (Kerrigan, Ellery, Netherwood) are one way and the buses are being directed to operate the wrong way on those streets.
- 3. Where do customers board buses?** There is one key stop pair totally bypassed by this detour, at the intersection of Mt. Vernon Pl. and Sanford Ave. There are no instructions for customers who might wish to use this stop as to where to board buses.
- 4. Route missing:** This detour was posted on a weekday during the evening peak. The No. 361 was also impacted by the detour. The two routes travel the same streets in this area. Even though the No. 361 only operates towards Ivy Hill in the PM peak, and buses would be close to the end of their trips, it still would have been appropriate to include this route.
- 5. Street names incorrect:** The street names indicated with “sic” above have spelling or naming errors. While of little consequence here (though Ivy Hill Pl. is really Ivy St.), many cities (including Newark) have similarly named streets. For example, Newark has 18th St. and 18th Av. and both have bus routes operating on them. It is important to get street names correct.

CASE 4 - HILLSIDE

Travel alert

Dec. 17, 2019 06:32:45 PM

Bus route 66, the 6:26pm from Hillside, is currently delayed due to an accident.

- 1. Direction of travel is missing.**
- 2. Trip branch identifier is missing.**

Consider this wording:

"The No. 66V trip that left Newark at 5:53 PM (6:26 PM from Hillside) and was due to arrive at Union College at 7:03 PM is currently delayed due to an accident."

Now, anyone waiting along the route knows which trip is delayed. This is important because there are different branches of the No. 66 route.

CASE 5 - LYNDHURST

Travel alert

Dec. 18, 2019 03:59:01 PM

Bus Route No. 76 to Hackensack will operate via Polito Avenue, Garland Way, and West Wall Street due to flooding conditions at Lyndhurst Office Park.

1. There is no No. 76 service operating to Hackensack via the Lyndhurst Office Park in the afternoon. All Lyndhurst Office Park trips in the afternoon operate from Hackensack to Newark.
2. The information would be clearer if the route were labeled as No. 76P trips as not all No. 76 trips operate via the Lyndhurst Office Park.

CASE 6 - GLEN RIDGE / MONTCLAIR

Detour for Nos. 11, 28, & 29 in Montclair

August 05, 2019

Effective immediately on Monday, August 5 and continuing until further notice, Bloomfield Avenue, will be closed between Highland Avenue and Pine street for bridge and road construction.

1. **Alerts and Advisories are not updated:** Put simply, this was on the web on December 12, 2019, yet direct inspections by The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club members and tracking of buses on MyBus Now showed no detour. Indeed, all four lanes of the bridge had been open at least since early November and no construction was present. This notice (and the two accompanying temporary bus stop notices) should have been removed when construction was either completed or suspended for the winter.

CASE 7 - EAST ORANGE

Travel alert

Dec. 10, 2019 10:58:07 AM

Bus routes 94 and 97 will operate on a detour in Union due to fire activity.

Incorrect information:

1. The No. 97 does not serve Union
2. The detour that followed was in East Orange (where the fire was.)
3. It is South Clinton St. (Not Avenue).

CASE 8 - SECAUCUS

On December 6, there was an advisory for Routes No. 2 and 129 announcing an in-progress detour. The advisory was fine; but there was also an alert on the home page for the No. 129 (NJ Transit-operated); but not for the No. 2 (NJ Transit-contracted route). Thus, somebody accessing the home page would think there were no alerts for the No. 2. (See item that follows.)

- 1. Alerts for contract bus routes usually not provided:** Routes operated by non-NJ Transit bus companies but contracted for by NJ Transit are the responsibility of NJ Transit from a passenger perspective. These are routes for which NJ Transit is responsible. NJ Transit plans the routes and schedules, publishes the

timetables, incorporates the information into the Trip Planner, and handles information and complaints about these carriers through the customer service office. The buses are NJ Transit branded.

- 2. Alerts and Advisories for these routes are rare:** Indeed, The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club did not see a single alert or advisory for these contract service routes during our review period except when NJ Transit Bus Operations routes were also impacted by a delay or detour. Even then, there were many instances where an alert for a contracted route was not posted even when an NJ Transit Bus operated route had an alert. (Note: In contrast, NJ Transit did post alerts for contracted Hudson Bergen Light Rail and River Line services.)

F. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALERTS AND ADVISORIES

RECOMMENDATION:

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club appreciates that alerts need to be posted quickly. However, both the individuals first writing up the alerts and the people posting them to the web clearly need better training on how to write alerts and advisories that are both accurate and present the information that customers need when an alert or advisory impacts their trips.

RECOMMENDATION:

All bus alerts that involve a detour that requires bus stops to be bypassed should provide recommendations to customers as to where to board the bus.

RECOMMENDATION:

All bus alerts that involve a detour that causes bus stops to be bypassed should present the detour in the format of “between A Street at B Street and Y Street at Z Street” to make it clear which segment of the route is impacted.

RECOMMENDATION:

All bus alerts indicate correctly the municipality or municipalities in which the detour is in effect. If the detour only impacts one direction of travel or a particular trip, the direction of travel should be given.

RECOMMENDATION:

Contracted bus operators and NJ Transit need to develop ways to identify and report interruptions to service on contracted bus routes, whether single trip issues (operator availability, mechanical issues, accidents) or multiple trip issues (detours). Information must be posted to alerts and advisories. Ideally, all other transit providers in New Jersey should be included in the Alerts and Advisories postings.

RECOMMENDATION:

Advisories should be removed promptly when no longer in effect, including for construction detours on days (or seasons) when construction is suspended and the detour is not required.

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III. Trip Planning

TRIP PLANNING TOOLS AVAILABLE ON DESKTOP WEBSITE:

There are at least two advanced trip planning tools on the web. The TRIP PLANNER is prominent on the Home Page. One can also click on SERVICES, then PLAN YOUR TRIP. (This version also is accessible from SERVICES/BUS/Schedules & Fares/Additional Bus Info/Trip Planner).

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club tested these on December 3, 2019. The more prominent TRIP PLANNER failed in our two attempts to plan a simple one vehicle bus trip from Orange Station to two different addresses in Livingston. (This is also the trip planning tool available on the mobile applications.) The PLAN YOUR TRIP feature worked well, providing information on the two bus routes that would serve a stop both near our origin and non-identical stops near our destination.

A more complex trip, from Middlesex Borough to Orange Station involving two buses and a train worked well with both planners.

RECOMMENDATION:

The TRIP PLANNER button should be prominent on the home page; but it also must be able to provide correct information for trip requests. As the Plan Your Trip feature appears to be working well, the TRIP PLANNER should simply link to it.

INCORPORATING NON-NJ TRANSIT OPERATORS INTO TRIP PLANNING:

Some public transit trips can be made by using a combination of NJ Transit and other public transit operators or by using other public transit operators exclusively. The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club tested out some options. While PATH and the New York City subways were

incorporated into the trip planning tools on the web, other bus operators in New Jersey were not.

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club tested the trip planning tools for directions to Seton Hall University in South Orange and to East Orange General Hospital from downtown Newark. Both are on routes directly served by Coach USA, a carrier that participates in NJ Transit's Capital Assistance Program for bus operators. These routes also honor NJ Transit bus passes.

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club also tried to plan a trip from Livingston to the Port Authority Bus Terminal. The only options given were NJ Transit buses to Orange (with transfer to train) or Newark Penn Station (with transfer to train). Yet Coach USA operates a direct bus route from Livingston to Port Authority Bus Terminal. And this route is recognized by NJ Transit as part of the New Jersey public transportation network because it is eligible to receive buses and other capital assistance from NJ Transit. However, TRIP PLANNER only provided directions using NJ Transit owned routes.

RECOMMENDATION:

All non-NJ Transit public transit carriers operating in New Jersey should be incorporated into the NJ Transit web trip planning functions.

IV. Map Tools

A. SYSTEM MAP and COUNTY MAPS

A frequent complaint The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club heard in talking to people about the NJ Transit web is that there is no system map. Other large transit systems have posted on their web sites system maps in PDF format that allow people to explore what public transit in their area has to offer. Some very large systems have divided the system map into sectors. One can click on the sector of interest to learn about services in those areas.

Many transit properties also include the routes of other operators on their system maps. For example, Los Angeles Metro shows the various municipal and small regional bus systems and MetroLink Rail on their system map and includes these systems in their trip planning function.

RECOMMENDATION:

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly recommends that NJ Transit develop a system map for the web. The map should include not only NJ Transit operated and contracted bus, rail, and light rail services; but also other rail, bus, and ferry operators that provide public transit services within New Jersey or to New York City and Philadelphia and which are either publicly operated or with which NJ Transit has a relationship including PATH, PATCO, county and municipal bus systems, college bus systems, Transportation Management Association (TMA) operated bus routes, private carrier bus routes participating in the NJ Transit Private Carrier Capital Assistance Program, other recognized private bus carriers, and ferries.

If NJ Transit cannot produce a system-wide map, NJ Transit should develop comprehensive county-wide maps providing route and other information for all recognized public transit carriers as noted above. The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club notes that there are only three county maps (Atlantic, Camden, Mercer) currently on the web.

B. EXISTING MAPS ON THE DESKTOP WEBSITE

NJ TRANSIT's web site does include some maps. However, clicking on the word "map" in different places gives different results depending where you click.

If one clicks on SERVICES then on MAPS, one gets a Rail System Map. If one clicks directly on the heading MAPS, one can choose from a variety of different maps and station guides, haphazardly organized. (For example, the three available county maps are not grouped together.) Some of the station guides in this group do include county, municipal, and private bus services. This suggests that the recommendation for NJ Transit to include non-NJ Transit transit operators on a system map would not be difficult as it appears that NJ Transit already has this information. And if one clicks on SERVICES, then on TRAIN, BUS, OR LIGHT RAIL or one clicks on Check Status for All Lines, one comes to a page with a series of drop down headings, one of which is MAPS. Here is a list that is organized differently from the dropdown heading for MAPS on the home page. Here you discover that there are both station maps and station area maps for some locations.

RECOMMENDATION:

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club recommends that NJ Transit identify all links to maps on the web and consolidate them into one clearly organized and easy to find link. That should also include the map that is not included in any of the MAP areas of the web, MyBus Now (see section V.)

C. FREQUENT SERVICE MAP

As detailed in a companion report, The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club recommends that NJ Transit develop a frequent service map for use on the web as an addition to a system and county maps. Almost all large transit systems have such a map.

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V. MyBus Now

MyBus Now is buried under Rider Tools. And, while all transit maps are rider tools, not all rider tools are maps. MyBus Now is a hidden gem. The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club has recommended it to newcomers to an area to identify more clearly the routes of buses than can be done from the timetables and also to identify the bus stops. It should be included with the other maps on the web or as a direct link from the Home Page (see Recommendations for this section.)

However, as a tool to learn bus routes and for trip planning, MyBus Now has some deficiencies. We present them here:

1. If the route doesn't operate on a given day, MyBus Now either does not show the route or only shows one direction of the route. If one wants to identify the stops on the map in the direction not shown, one cannot easily do so.
2. If a branch of a route does not operate over the next few hours or on a given day, one cannot find that branch on the MyBus Now route map.

EXAMPLE 1:

A new resident of Freehold wished to determine where the No. 136 bus stopped in the morning and afternoon for a Monday trip to New York. (The spouse was going to drop off the customer in the morning and pick the customer up in the afternoon. The customer was also going to call the spouse with the PM bus number after leaving New York so that the spouse could track the homeward bound trip.) But MyBus Now only displayed the AM service stops on the Sunday when the resident looked.

Or, a person in Belleville needed to travel to Broad Street Station in Newark on a weekday using the No. 27. Checking MyBus Now on the previous Sunday, the branch of the No. 27 operating through Belleville did not display at all as there is no Sunday service.

One could argue that the Trip Planner would provide the closest stop information. But, in each of these cases, the customer had a special need that the Trip Planner could not address.

In the No. 136 example, the customer needed not the closest stop to the residence; but a stop where the spouse could wait with a car (and the actual closest stop was a more local No. 139, which the customer did not want). In the No. 27 example, the customer had a minor physical disability and a stop a bit further but with a bench (can be determined from Google or Bing Map aerial views and street views or local knowledge) would have been preferred.

Other reasons customers might want to know alternate stops to the stops recommended through the trip planner are topography between origin/destination and stop, the availability of curb cuts (especially if using walkers, wheelchairs, small carts, or baby strollers), the availability of traffic signals to assist in crossing busy streets, the availability of shelters or shade, and better street lighting or on-street activity (for safety).

MyBus Now would be even more valuable if it displayed the routes and stops of other recognized bus carriers (private, county, municipal, TMA) in New Jersey.

MyBus Now also has a "stops" feature (directly accessible from the Home Page and elsewhere called MyBus) where one can find a list of all stops on a route. There is a major problem with this feature. The stops

are in alphabetical order and do not have the municipality of the stop listed.

For a person not very familiar with the route for which they are looking for a stop, this can be a problem. At a minimum, the stops should be grouped by the municipality in which they are located. It could also be better to put the stops in route order; though this could be difficult for routes with branches.

EXAMPLE 2:

The No. 114 operates on and has stops on Mountain Avenue in Springfield, Mountainside, Scotch Plains, North Plainfield, and Somerville. (This is not one through street.) It also has stops on other roads in Bound Brook and Middlesex where Mountain Avenue is the intersecting street.

RECOMMENDATION:

The MyBus link on the Home Page should instead link to MyBus Now. That would allow individuals to identify a route on a map, search for current bus locations, or search for individual stops according to need.

RECOMMENDATION:

The MyBus listing of stops on a route should, at a minimum, identify each stop's municipality.

RECOMMENDATION:

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club recommends that our observations about how MyBus Now can be improved be studied carefully as to feasibility. Displaying all branches of a route 24/7 should not be difficult. (If there is no bus scheduled, that information would appear when one clicks on a specific stop). Adding routes and bus stops for non-NJ Transit carriers should be done. (NJ Transit works with many other bus operators and municipalities to identify bus stop locations and maintains the official bus stop inventory.)

VI. Other Carriers

A. TWO SIMILAR LINKS CONTAINING DIFFERENT INFORMATION

There are at least two separate links to non-NJ Transit transit information. One can be found at SERVICES/Transit Connections and the other at SERVICES/Bus/Schedules & Fares/Additional Bus Info/Private Carriers.

The information is not identical.

RECOMMENDATION:

The two sets of information should be combined into one comprehensive listing of non-NJ Transit public transit operators. In addition, for each operator, the route(s) for which the operator provides service should be individually identified with a link to the timetable for that route where available.

B. PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF PRIVATE OPERATOR-NJ TRANSIT

GOVERNANCE:

NJ Transit promotes itself as the statewide public transit agency. Based on The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club's interviews with New Jerseyans, many believe that this means NJ Transit controls the routes and schedules of non-NJ Transit public transit operators. When asked where they go to get information about public transit, most of these people say they go first to the NJ Transit web site.

While NJ Transit may not technically control the routes and schedules of these carriers, often NJ Transit does provide capital assistance, whether it be a ferry terminal in Weehawken or new buses. Therefore, it should be in the interest of NJ Transit and the State of New Jersey to include comprehensive information about these non-NJ Transit operators as part of its web presence.

RECOMMENDATION:

As recommended elsewhere in this report, NJ Transit should incorporate transit services provided by non-NJ Transit operators into trip planning functions, maps, and service alerts and advisories.

VII. Additional Materials

New residents, occasional users, companies interested in relocating, realtors, and others who want to get a broad overview of the system have no simple way of getting such an overview. The Rail System Map does so to some extent for rail; but there is no overall system map. As noted earlier, The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club recommends the development of a system map and county or regional maps that also incorporates non-NJ Transit public transit operators.

ADDITIONAL TOOL:

In 1986 NJ Transit issued the NJ TRANSIT STATEWIDE TRANSIT GUIDE (publication C-005 10-86 TRANSIT GUIDE), a booklet that provided a comprehensive overview of rail services, bus services by county, and much other useful information. To the knowledge of The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club, that booklet has not been updated. Photocopies of sample pages from the 1986 booklet follow.

RECOMMENDATION:

NJ Transit should update the NJ TRANSIT STATEWIDE TRANSIT GUIDE and also include non-NJ Transit transit operators. The booklet need not be in hard copy format, but only on the web with a download option. However, hard copies for libraries, municipal offices, workforce development (public job training) sites, state employment offices, realtors (both commercial and residential) and other key locations would be desirable.

COMMENTS BY GOVERNOR KEAN



I hope you find this New Jersey statewide transit guide a valuable resource for understanding how to take advantage of New Jersey's excellent public transit systems. New Jersey has one of the most modern, efficient and reliable statewide transit systems in the nation. In fact, NJ TRANSIT received the 1984-85 Outstanding Achievement Award for a large transit system from the American Public Transit Association. I am sure that your experiences on NJ TRANSIT, as well as the many private motor carriers in the state, will be pleasant. In the coming years, New Jersey will continue to commit resources necessary to ensure that the reliability of today's service will be continued.

Thomas H. Kean
Thomas H. Kean
 Governor
 State of New Jersey

COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONER GLUCK

As the Chair of NJ TRANSIT's Board, I am particularly pleased to provide you with this comprehensive guide to New Jersey's transportation systems. The guide will give you the information you need to understand the wide range of services provided not only by NJ TRANSIT, but also by private motor carriers in the state. I fully believe that your experiences with New Jersey's transit systems will be rewarding. Modern equipment, well trained and courteous employees and a commitment to reliability are the standards of NJ TRANSIT. I am sure your rides will be enjoyable.

Hazel Frank Gluck
Hazel Frank Gluck
 Commissioner of Transportation
 State of New Jersey

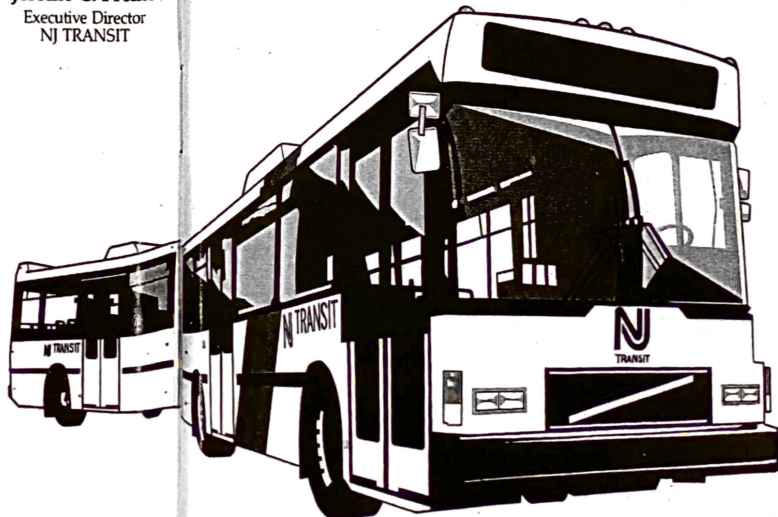
COMMENTS BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PREMO

New Jersey's public transportation system is one of the finest in the nation. The continuing and on-going support of Governor Kean and the State Legislature has ensured that New Jersey's citizens and visitors have a modern, reliable and comfortable ride on public transportation. NJ TRANSIT offers both modern bus and rail transportation systems and NJ TRANSIT employees are dedicated to providing safe and courteous service. I hope you read this guide and familiarize yourself with the wealth of public transportation services offered throughout the state.

Jerome C. Premo
Jerome C. Premo
 Executive Director
 NJ TRANSIT

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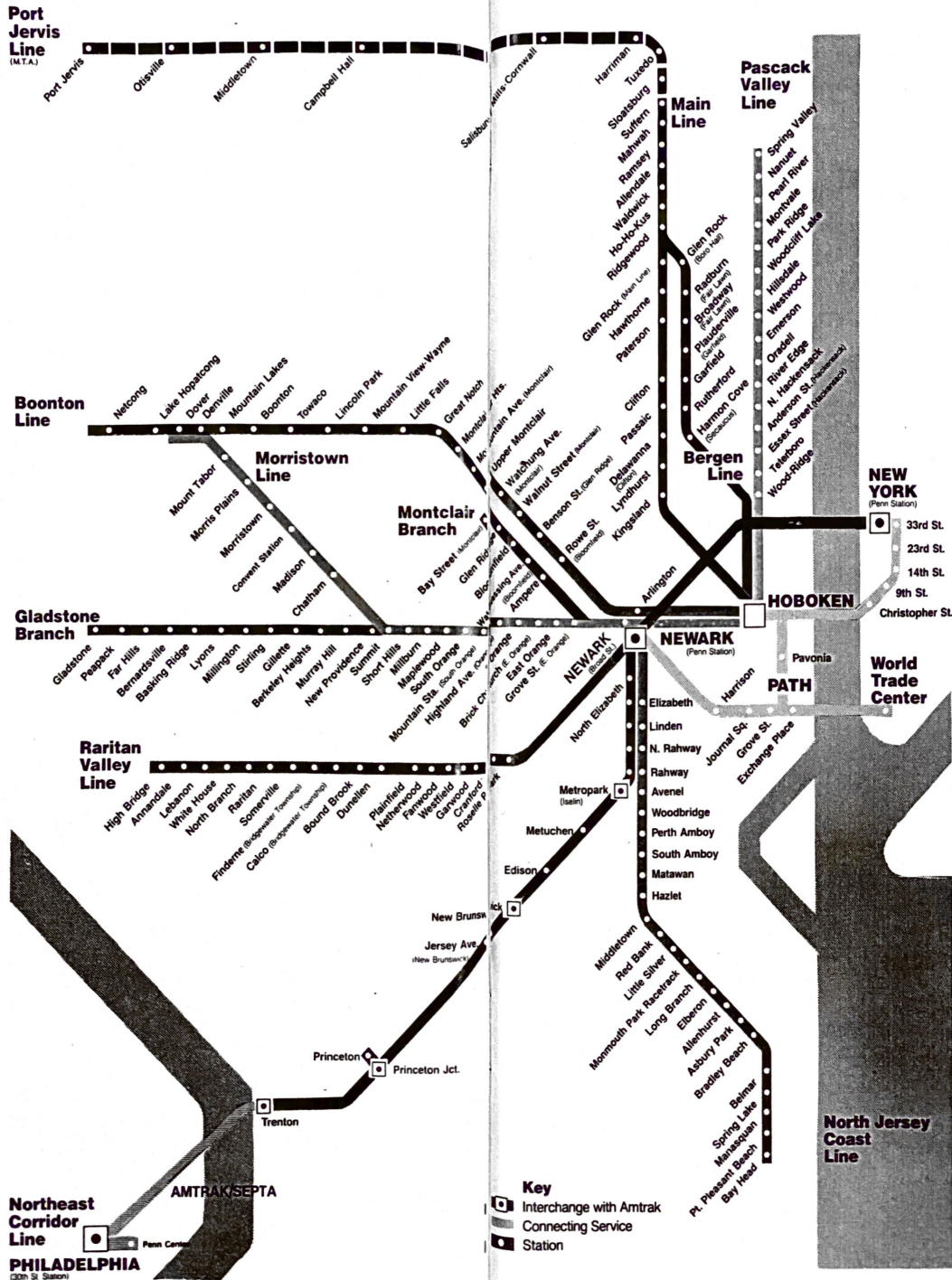
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NJ TRANSIT PASSenger RAIL SYSTEM

A complete map of the passenger rail system serving New Jersey. Lines serving Hoboken Terminal for PATH connections to midtown and downtown New York include: Pascack Valley, Main, Bergen County, Boonton, Morristown, Gladstone Branch and Montclair Branch. Lines serving Penn Station-Newark for PATH

connections to New York and Northeast Corridor direct rail service to midtown include: Raritan Valley, North Jersey Coast and Northeast Corridor Line. (For more information on PATH see pg. 16). SEPTA connections in Trenton provide service to Philadelphia (see pg. 40-41).



(See PATH page 16)
(See SEPTA information, pages 40 & 41)

Check individual rail schedules available at stations for exact train times. Tickets can be purchased at stations or onboard trains when station is closed. There is an additional charge for tickets purchased on trains when the station is open.

RAIL STATION GUIDES

MORRISTOWN LINE

	No Parking Facilities	Free Parking	Available at Other Local and/or Private Lots	Daily Parking — 50¢ and Under	Monthly Parking Over 50¢	Quarterly Parking Permit Over \$10	See Comments	Call For Further Information
HOBOKEN TERMINAL — foot of Hudson Pl., 2 blks past Observer Hwy. [6:45 a.m.-11:30 p.m.; 6:45 a.m.-10:30 p.m. (sat./sun.)]	●	●					e	no operator
NEWARK — BROAD ST. STATION — at University Pl. & Broad. [6:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.]	●	●						no operator
GROVE ST. — near corner of S. Grove & Orange Ave.	●							no operator
EAST ORANGE — City Hall Plaza — between Main St. & S. Arlington Ave.			●					215-567-0277
BRICK CHURCH — Brick Church Pl. — between S. Harrison Ave. & Prospect St. 1 block S. of Main St. [5:45 a.m.-2:15 p.m.]	●							no operator
ORANGE — between Lincoln Ave. & S. Essex St. [5:40 a.m.-2:10 p.m.]			●	●			b	215-567-0277
HIGHLAND AVE. — corner of Scotland Rd. & Highland Ave.			●	●				215 607-0277
MOUNTAIN STATION — intersection of Vose Ave. & Montrose 1 block off Scotland Rd. [6:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.]			●	●			b	215 607-0277
SOUTH ORANGE — Sloan St. — between S. Orange Ave. & 1st St. 1 block from Valley St. [5:35 a.m.-2:05 p.m.]			●	●			be	201-761-1997
MAPLEWOOD — Dunnell Rd. — between Dunnell and Maplewood Ave. [5:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.]	●						b	201-762-8120
MILLBURN — intersection of Essex St. & Lackawanna Ave. [5:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.]		●			●		bde	201-564-7083
SHORT HILLS — Chatham Rd. — between Old Short Hills Rd. & Forest Ave. [5:25 a.m.-1:55 p.m.]					●		d	201-564-7083
SUMMIT — Union Pl. — between Summit Ave. & Maple St. near Broad & Elm Sts. [5:25 a.m.-8:55 p.m.]		●	●	●			be	201-273-0051
CHATHAM — Front St. — between Washington & Fairmont 1 block off Main St. (Rt. 24) [5:15 a.m.-1:45 p.m.]			●		●		bde	201-635-0674
MADISON — Kings Rd. — between Green & Prospect Sts. [5:15 a.m.-1:45 p.m.]			●	●			de	201-377-0060
CONVENT STATION — Convent Rd. — near intersection of Madison Ave. (Rt. 24) [5:10 a.m.-1:40 p.m.]			●		●		bde	201-326-7440
MORRISTOWN — near intersection of Morris Ave. & Elm St. [5:05 a.m.-1:35 p.m.]			●	●			be	201-539-4810
MORRIS PLAINS — intersection of Rt. 202/Speedway/Rt. 53. [5:05 a.m.-1:35 p.m.]			●	●			b	215-567-0277
MOUNT TABOR — Station Rd. — near Rt. 53 & Station Rd.			●	●	●		cde	201-625-8310
DENVILLE — Esterling Lake Rd. — ½ mi. S. of Rts. 46 & 53			●	●			e	201-627-4900
DOVER — Dickerson Rd. — foot of N. Bergen St., ½ mi. from Rt. 46, 1 block from N. Blackwell. [5:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.]			●	●			e	201-366-0302

COMMENTS —

- a- Weekly permits sold.
- b- Lots fill early and/or possible permit waiting list.
- c- Resident permit fee slightly less.
- d- Some Non-Resident parking restrictions.
- e- Meters/slot box for daily parking.
- f- Pre-purchased daily parking permit required — call for details.
- g- Municipal street parking available.
- [] Ticket sales office open weekdays.

Please note: parking regulations and fees may change without notice. Please use the phone numbers listed to obtain current fee and permit parking information.

GLADSTONE BRANCH

	No Parking Facilities	Free Parking	Available at Other Local and/or Private Lots	Daily Parking — 50¢ and Under	Monthly Parking Over 50¢	Quarterly Parking Permit Over \$10	See Comments	Call For Further Information
NEW PROVIDENCE — Old Springfield Ave. — 2 blocks from corner Old Springfield/ Springfield/ Passaic Aves.						●	d	201-665-1400
MURRAY HILL — Foley Pl. — between Floral Dr. & S. Gate Rd. [6:00 a.m.-10 a.m.]			●				bde	201-665-1400
BERKELEY HEIGHTS — at Sherman Ave. & Plainfield Ave.			●	●			df	201-464-1111
GILLETTE — Mountain Ave. — between Valley Rd. & Morristown Ave.			●				f	201-647-0550
STIRLING — Central Ave. — ½ mi. N. of Valley Rd.			●				f	201-647-0550
MILLINGTON — Long Hills Rd.			●				f	201-647-0550
LYONS — Lyons Rd. — off Finley Ave., next to Lyons Mall. [6:05 a.m.-2:30 p.m.]		●						201-766-2510
BASKING RIDGE — Corner of Ridge St. & Depot Pl.		●						201-766-2510
BERNARDSVILLE — Mine Brook Rd. (Rt. 202)			●				de	201-766-3850
FAR HILLS — near intersection Rt. 202 & Far Hills Rd., ½ mi. E. of Rt. 206						●		201-234-0611
PEAPACK — Holland Rd. — between Rt. 206 & Main St.		●						no operator
GLADSTONE — near Main St. & Pottersville Rd. intersection		●					b	no operator

MONTCLAIR BRANCH

	No Parking Facilities	Free Parking	Available at Other Local and/or Private Lots	Daily Parking — 50¢ and Under	Monthly Parking Over 50¢	Quarterly Parking Permit Over \$10	See Comments	Call For Further Information
HOBOKEN TERMINAL — at foot of Hudson Pl., 2 blks past Observer Hwy. [6:45 a.m.-11:30 p.m.; 6:45 a.m.-10:30 p.m. (Sat/Sun)]	●	●					e	no operator
NEWARK — Broad St. Station — at University Pl. & Broad [6:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.]	●	●						no operator
AMPERE — 4th St. — between Springdale & 4th Aves.		●						no operator
WATSESSING — at Watsessing & Orange St.	●							no operator
BLOOMFIELD — 1 block S. of Bloomfield — between Washington & Glenwood	●	●						no operator
GLEN RIDGE — Ridgewood Ave. & Bloomfield Ave.			●	●			c	201-748-5400
BAY ST. — between Bloomfield & Glen Ridge Aves.						●	cf	201-744-7404

COMMENTS —

- a- Weekly permits sold.
- b- Lots fill early and/or possible permit waiting list.
- c- Resident permit fee slightly less.
- d- Some Non-Resident parking restrictions.
- e- Meters/slot box for daily parking.
- f- Pre-purchased daily parking permit required — call for details.
- g- Municipal street parking available.
- [] Ticket sales office open weekdays.

Please note: parking regulations and fees may change without notice. Please use the phone numbers listed to obtain current fee and permit parking information.

HOW TO READ A SCHEDULE/TIMETABLE

- ① Look for the day of the week you will be making your trip.
- ② Look under the heading showing the correct direction you wish to go.
- ③ Find your rail station stop or bus time point. This will be a row for rail and usually a column for bus timetables. If there is no bus time point for your particular stop then check the time point listed just before your stop.
- ④ For bus — read down the column to find the most convenient time that the bus will be at your stop.
For rail — read across the row to find the most convenient time the train will be at your station.
- ⑤ Then follow the times listed (across the row for bus and down the column for rail) till you reach your destination point to find your arrival time.
- ⑥ Make certain that a time is shown at your destination point otherwise the bus or train does not stop at that location.
- ⑦ Make special note of any reference marks or symbols, they give important information about any possible changes or deviations in your trip.

SAMPLE BUS TIMETABLE

② TO EXCHANGE PLACE TERMINAL

① Weekdays

	Galva Ave. & Old Bergen Rd.	Dankoff & Power Aves.	Communipaw and West Side Avenues	Journal Square PATH Trans. Center	Exchange Place Terminal
W	4.10	4.15	4.22	4.32	4.50
W	4.50	4.55	5.02	5.12	5.30
W	5.30	5.35	5.42	5.52	6.10
W	5.55	6.00	6.07	6.17	6.35
W	6.10	6.15	6.22	6.32	6.50
W	6.20	6.25	6.32	6.42	7.00
W	6.30	6.35	6.42	6.54	7.14
W	6.38	6.41	6.48	7.00	-
W	6.42	6.47	6.54	7.06	7.26
W	6.48	6.53	7.00	7.12	-
W	6.54	6.59	7.06	7.18	7.38
S	7.00	7.05	7.12	7.24	-
S	7.04	7.09	7.16	7.28	7.48
S	7.08	7.13	7.20	7.32	-
S	7.12	7.17	7.24	7.36	7.56
W	7.16	7.21	7.28	7.40	-
S	7.20	7.25	7.32	7.44	-
W	7.24	7.29	7.36	7.48	8.08
W	7.28	7.33	7.40	7.52	-
WS	7.32	7.37	7.44	7.56	-
W	7.36	7.41	7.48	8.00	8.20
W	7.40	7.45	7.52	8.04	-
W	7.44	7.49	7.56	8.08	-
W	7.48	7.53	8.00	8.12	8.32
WS	7.52	7.57	8.04	8.16	-
W	7.58	8.03	8.10	8.22	8.42
W	8.04	8.09	8.16	8.28	-
W	8.10	8.15	8.22	8.34	8.54
S	8.16	8.21	8.28	8.40	-
W	8.23	8.28	8.35	8.47	9.07
W	8.30	8.35	8.42	8.54	-
W	8.36	8.41	8.48	9.00	9.20
W	8.42	8.47	8.54	9.06	9.26
W	8.50	8.55	9.02	9.14	9.34
W	9.00	9.05	9.12	9.24	9.44
W	9.11	9.16	9.23	9.35	9.55
W	9.22	9.27	9.34	9.46	10.06
W	9.33	9.38	9.45	9.57	-
W	9.44	9.49	9.56	-	-
W	9.55	10.00	-	-	-
W	10.06	-	-	-	-

SAMPLE RAIL TIMETABLE

SPRING VALLEY TO HOBOKEN ②

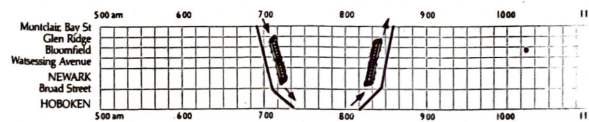
Weekdays except major holidays ①

EASTBOUND Train No.	1600	1602	1604	1606	1608	1610
Spring Valley, N.Y. Lv	A.M. 5:41	A.M. 6:23	A.M. 6:45	A.M. 7:02	A.M. 7:14	A.M. 7:30
Nanuet "	5:46	6:28	6:50	7:07	7:19	7:35
Pearl River, N.Y. "	5:51	6:33	6:55	7:12	7:24	7:39
Montvale, N.J. "	5:54	6:36	6:58	7:15	7:27	...
Park Ridge "	5:56	6:38	7:00	7:17	7:29	7:43
Woodcliff Lake "	5:59	6:41	7:03	7:20	7:32	...
Hillsdale "	6:02	6:44	7:06	7:23	7:36	7:47
Westwood "	6:04	6:46	7:08	7:25	7:37	7:50
Emerson "	6:07	6:49	7:11	7:28	...	7:53
Oradell "	6:10	6:53	7:15	7:31	7:43	7:56
River Edge "	6:13	6:57	7:19	7:34	7:47	7:59
North Hackensack "	6:16	7:00	7:22	7:37	7:51	...
Anderson St. (Hackensack) "	6:19	7:03	7:25	7:41	...	8:05
Essex St. (Hackensack) "	6:22	7:06	7:28	7:44	...	8:08
Williams Ave. (Teterboro) "	6:25	7:09	7:31	7:47	...	8:11
Wood-Ridge "	6:28	7:12	7:34	7:49	...	8:14
Hoboken Ar	6:46	7:31	7:52	8:07	8:17	8:32

SAMPLE RAIL VISUAL TIMETABLE

Occasionally you may see "Visual Timetables" included in some NJ TRANSIT informational material. These graphically designed schedules were developed to show service frequency at a glance. While "Visual Timetables" do not replace the need for numerical timetables they can be a handy guide to NJ TRANSIT services.

MONTCLAIR BRANCH



This train leaves Montclair Station at 6:55 a.m. for Hoboken. It stops at all stations listed on the left. The train arrives in Hoboken at 7:21 a.m.

This train leaves Hoboken at 8:10 a.m. for all stations. The train arrives in Montclair at 8:35 a.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you need more information about bus and train services, informational brochures and timetables are available at your local station or transportation terminal. If you need a specific schedule that is unavailable locally you can write to NJ TRANSIT, Custom Service Department, P.O. Box 10009, Newark, NJ 07101. For further information you can call (201) 762-5100 or (215) 569-375. Please let our operator know if you have this Statewide Transit Guide.

If you would like more copies of the NJ TRANSIT Statewide Transit Guide write to: NJ TRANSIT, Dept. C 005 Transit Guide, P.O. Box 6047, Elizabeth, NJ 07206.

VIII. Fares

The NJ Transit fare structure is complex. It is not The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club's focus in this report. However, there is no easy access to a discussion of fares and NJ Transit's distance-based fare structure from the home page. When one finds the fare charts, there is no explanation of how to use them. The TICKETS choice at the top and bottom of the home page lead to discussions of ticket types, not the fare structure.

RECOMMENDATION:

There should be a button on the Home Page that leads to a "Fares" page that discusses a wide range of fare-related issues such as fare media, use of cash, use of smartphone, ticket offices (including hours), ticket vending machines (including locations), senior citizen fares (especially on differences in how to utilize senior fares on private carriers), and other related information. There should also be links to rail, light rail, and bus fare information and how to get fare information from the trip planning tools or route timetables.

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide links to private carrier fares. It is important to make clear that private carriers have different fare structures. Links to this information are needed. (Private carrier fare information should also be provided in the trip planning function as private carrier services are incorporated into it.)

RECOMMENDATION:

NJ Transit should develop a unified fare medium and collection system that can be used for all public transit carriers serving New Jersey. Ideally, fare media should be compatible with connecting systems - MTA, SEPTA, LANTA, TOR.

IX. Bus Timetables

There are unnecessary steps to access NJ Transit bus timetables on the web. One needs to click on Services/Bus/Route Number/Get Info/View Timetable. Most systems require fewer clicks. And, as cited earlier, checking service advisories through the bus timetable option leads to different results than using other options to check service advisories and travel alerts.

When two routes overlap, there are no highly visible timetable cross-references to consult additional timetables, in most instances.

RECOMMENDATION:

The "Get Info" step seems particularly superfluous and should be eliminated. Other transit system web pages should be consulted for other ways to simplify access to bus timetables.

RECOMMENDATION:

Where routes overlap for distances greater than one mile but are displayed on different timetables, the availability of such additional service be clearly indicated on the bus timetable line in the listing of timetables on the web, on timetable covers, maps (including MyBus Now), and other resources.

This page is intentionally left blank.

X. Mobile App

Navigating through the various pages on the website is different depending on the platform one is using. The general consensus of those The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club interviewed was that the mobile applications were really only useful for ticketing and to set trip alerts for specific trips (though setting up the alerts was difficult). Those who only used the Mobile App for these purposes indicated that once set up, these functions were very useful and that they were quite happy with them; except when they received broad alerts such as "All buses departing NYC are subject to 30 minute delays due to heavier traffic than usual".

Trip planning was difficult unless one was planning a trip using pre-set favorite locations. Finding bus and rail timetables was difficult. Finding station and parking information was difficult. Finding Alerts and Advisories was difficult. Departure Vision led to rail information. MyBus led to bus information. No similar icon led to Light Rail information. Overall, the general consensus was that the mobile application was even harder to navigate than the desktop application.

Another issue regarding the mobile app is its lack of a clear and consistent design language across mobile and desktop applications. Below are observations of inconsistent iconography for various digital resources available both in NJ Transit's mobile app and desktop website.

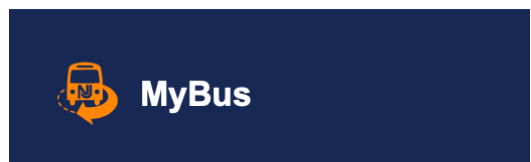
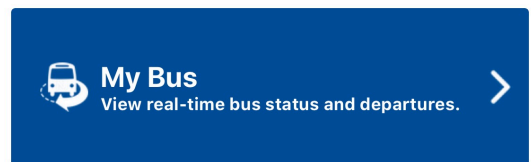
The top image found in the mobile app has a clock icon for DepartureVision, whereas the desktop website has a train icon for the same service. To maintain a cross-platform user experience, the train icon should be DepartureVision's icon for both platforms. The mobile view also includes a description of the DepartureVision function, but despite additional screen real estate, the desktop view does not include this.



The top image found in the mobile app has a street sign icon for the Trip Planner tool, whereas the desktop website has a pamphlet icon for the same service. To further complicate the user experience, that same pamphlet icon *is* displayed in the mobile app, but for the Schedules tab. Additionally, the mobile Schedules tab does not appear to have a direct desktop counterpart.



These two images, the top being a screenshot from the mobile app and the bottom being from the desktop website, are clear examples of consistent iconography across mobile and desktop platforms. However, as noted with DepartureVision, only the mobile version contains a description of the function.



RECOMMENDATION:

Both the desktop and mobile applications need a thorough overhaul to improve usability. Results should be identical regardless of which platform is used.



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