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# NJ-ARP Annual Report

## 2005-2006

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## President's Message

"Loyal opposition" may best describe NJ-ARP's advocacy role in 2006, as the group found itself increasingly committed to parsing others' fantasy from reality -- ironic, given charges in the past that NJ-ARP relies on "blue-sky projections" and "wishful thinking," leaving others with the presumed burden of real-world problem solving.

NJ-ARP submits the reverse is the case. The much-hyped "one-seat ride to Midtown Manhattan" just can't be realistically offered to every New Jerseyan, on every line, every day in the foreseeable future. When we point that out, and offer even the outlines of an alternative, we're called "obstructionists."

So be it. NJ-ARP continues to call the shots as it honorably sees them, and will always strive for consensus when it honorably can. We tried to split the difference in 2006, with New Jersey Transit and others, with mixed results, but with no diminishing of resolve.

For at least the powers in New Jersey increasingly turn to passenger rail as a real alternative, a real (if partial) solution, to the pervasive Garden State gridlock spreading like kudzu. If plans are grandiose (*Trans-Hudson-Express Tunnel*) or misfocused (Northern Branch service), at least they're in the right modal ballpark.

That's NJ-ARP's ballpark, and as per past years we come to play. Numerous volunteers, including some new faces, joined the old warriors' club in 2006 as NJ-ARP took on issues across the state, from Bergen to Cape May County. This annual report highlights most of those efforts -- and **it's always a reminder of just how much NJ-ARP puts on the plate, and just how often our membership puts forth significant effort.**

Similar efforts a decade ago (or longer!) resulted in light rail additions for both Newark and Hudson County in 2006, a fact few public officials seem to recall. (A handful remembers, praising "rail activists" in general and Rose M. Heck, NJ-ARP's Government Affairs Director, in particular.) No matter. Whether it's one mile of LRT linking Newark Penn Station to Newark-Broad Street Station, or 1,000 feet of the Cape May Branch added to Richland Village-Tuckahoe service, it's progress -- and NJ-ARP helped to make it happen in 2006.

Indeed, our "loyal opposition" itself produced results in 2006 -- a more definite (if not definitive) pledge by New Jersey to make the Northeast Corridor a four-track railroad between Newark-Penn and New York. Revisionist cries of "it would have happened anyway" don't convince us, any more than the rejection by Morris & Essex communities of the proposed "loop-de-loop" rail service downgrade was a given, at least prior to those interests being informed of same by NJ-ARP (ably aided by the *Lackawanna Coalition*).

The protest to New Jersey Transit on its idea of a longer, more circuitous "one-seat ride" was strident, and NJT got the message at least on this portion of T.H.E. Tunnel project.

It is not, has not been, and should not be NJ-ARP's intent to deliberately make NJ Transit (or anyone else) look bad. But we do ask those parties to get our positions down right (and in good faith describe same). Twice in the past 18 months, that hasn't been the case; whether by accident or design, NJ-ARP's position on Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex (MOM) matters and T.H.E. Tunnel has been distorted by "creative interpretation." We've objected. Woe be unto NJ-ARP should we commit the same offense.

Fair or not, at least NJ-ARP is recognized as a factor, if at times a dissident one. During the year we were identified by one metropolitan planning organization (MPO) official as "the only group" that was "opposed to T.H.E. Tunnel" -- two errors in one sentence. When NJ-ARP noted we in fact were not alone in our publicly voiced concerns, one aide allowed, "Perhaps the only group that *matters*."

A backhanded compliment, we suppose, even if we don't believe that suggestion, either. But perhaps because of such additional misperception, others, including e-critics, believe it's fair game to accuse NJ-ARP of being personal and unfair in its advocacy. Fair game it would be -- if it were a fair charge. But we seldom identify individuals in charge of policy, and when we do question an individual stance (or an elected political official, for example), we make every effort to question the policy, not the individual in charge of enforcing same. We are political, but not partisan. We strive to address issues, not personalities.

To those who demand we offer detailed alternatives, we endeavor to do so to the best of our

limited, volunteer abilities. This year the numbers-crunching crowd got their fill from NJ-ARP's PowerPoint presentation (12 MB) of our preference for the Northern Branch, an extension of Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Transit (HBLRT).

Led by Ms. Heck and a top-notch NJ-ARP crew of Phil Craig, Jack May, Frank Miklos and NJ-ARP Bergen Liaison Lester W. Wolff, NJ-ARP unveiled its analysis and alternative to transport circles at the TransAction Conference in Atlantic City in April. On June 21, we showcased an updated version to citizens in Ridgefield. Numerous other smaller, local meetings between NJ-ARP and interested citizens, in locales such as Tenafly and Leonia, reflect NJ-ARP's ongoing commitment to offer Bergen County the best rail transport choice -- access not necessarily beholden to T.H.E. Tunnel.

Meanwhile, it's been harder -- much harder -- for NJ-ARP Director Al Papp, Jr. to advance NJ-ARP's case re: T.H.E. Tunnel itself. NJ-ARP here has the unenviable task of supporting a concept it was among the first to endorse -- Access to the Region's Core -- while questioning the actual access offered and the designs for doing so.

But even here, struggling to bridge the "Hudson Ocean" of bi-state schizophrenia, NJ-ARP has worked to answer the petulant demand, "What's your alternative? Show me." NJ-ARP has co-funded a two-month display, with complementary panel session dates, led by the *Institute for Rational Urban Mobility* (IRUM) in New York; the display debuted Sept. 7 at the Municipal Art Society's Urban Center at Madison Ave. and 51st Street in Manhattan. IRUM and NJ-ARP are joined by NJ-ARP sister organization *Empire State Passengers Association* (ESPA), as well as industry names such as Bombardier Transportation North America and Siemens Transportation Group.

Harder though it may be, we have remained honorable, and true to an honest vision. Some question this resolve. Some say we should oppose the whole project, dismiss everything and start over. (How NJ-ARP would accomplish this, they don't quite say.) Others argue with equal vigor that we should sign off on what's being offered as a fait accompli. We maintain our middle ground as "moderates" -- pointing to our impact on the issue already ("loop-de-loop") as justification enough for "loyal opposition."

Beyond its debated merits, T.H.E. Tunnel project is so big, so complex, and admittedly so costly (regardless of whose version prevails) that it has captured the little media attention routinely designated to transit matters -- leaving other worthy rail and transit projects to fend for themselves. NJ Transit insists everything rail hinges on T.H.E. Tunnel.

NJ-ARP disagrees; New Jersey need not base everything on T.H.E. Tunnel's fate and future. MOM may benefit from access to New York, but New York is not the only or even primary prize. The Cape May Branch can be upgraded regardless of Midtown access issues. The RiverLINE can grow its intrastate market share without T.H.E. Tunnel holding it hostage.

Those three issues, and others cataloged in the reports below, reflect **NJ-ARP's philosophy of improving rail and transit on a statewide basis, and not on any perceived "laundry list" to be followed in some hypothetical descending order.** The stark truth is that all New Jerseyans -- not just "commuters" or "those people" -- need transportation choices, transportation options, sooner rather than later, rising oil and gas prices or no, budget shortfalls or surpluses aside.

In NJ-ARP's 27-year existence, we've never shied from that challenge. We've been one reason why that challenge, however imperfectly, is gaining attention and traction as New

Jersey wrestles with its transportation future.

Our membership knows such effort isn't always glamorous, isn't always rewarded with "first runs" or other perks. Through them -- through you -- we persevere and (most times, at least!) remain on message, even in seemingly "lean years" where progress appears minimal or uneven. It's better than it was. Thanks to your support and work, NJ-ARP remains one reason why.

-- Douglas John Bowen

## Bergen County Developments

Bergen County happenings in 2006 can be appropriately headlined as "The Battle for the Northern Valley."

### Northern Valley Line

The "Battle for the Northern Valley" (also see Hudson-Bergen Light Rail) involves trying to muster enough political capital to force NJT to change its plans about operating DMU shuttles to service the Bergen portion of Hudson-Bergen Light Rail line (HBLRT) from Tenafly to a new transfer station south of Tonnelle Avenue. In addition to depriving Northern Valley Line customers of quarter-hourly service, NJT will also force those customers to make a cross-platform transfer at a new transfer station to electric LRTs. This would result in a "three-seat" ride to New York City or a "two-seat" ride to Hoboken and the Gold Coast.

The rationale for this "solution" is that there will be substantial cost savings by not electrifying the line north of Tonnelle Avenue. (Of course, in the long term, operating costs will eat-up any of these so-called "savings.") Additionally, NJT has been disingenuous at best in promoting this "solution" by holding out the canard that at some time in the future once the "T.H.E. Tunnel" has been built, Northern Valley Line customers will have the coveted "one-seat" ride into New York City.

Government Affairs Director Rose Heck (along with members Phil Craig, Frank Miklos and Jack May) has been tirelessly spearheading NJ-ARP's efforts to get ambivalent Bergen County officials to face the fact that, in all likelihood, the Northern Branch will *never* see that "one-seat" ride. A PowerPoint presentation (12 MB) has been deftly assembled showing the fallacy of NJT's "facts." This presentation has been shown to many officials and citizens along the Northern Valley line as well as to those individuals attending our annual meeting. The presentation is available for download on our Web site. **We will continue to hold NJT's feet to the fire to make them deliver to Bergen County what they promised at the inception of the HBLRT project.**

### Xanadu

Despite the financial problems being encountered by Xanadu's developer (which could reduce the originally envisioned mega-entertainment complex to a glorified shopping center), the spur from the Pascack Valley Line to serve Xanadu, which was approved last year, is under construction. It will bring a new station to Carlstadt and a new combined

station in the Meadowlands serviced by both Pascack Valley Line and Bergen County Line trains. NJT still intends to provide DMU shuttle service at half-hour (or greater frequency) between Xanadu and Hoboken with an intermediate stop at Secaucus Junction.

## **Parking**

NJ Transit's Park & Ride Station, Ramsey-Route 17 with 1,251 spaces, is still being underutilized. (The upper decks are being leased to car dealerships for storage of vehicles.) Heavy marketing along the Bergen/Main Line, as well as institution of multi-month rate discounts has not been robustly successful so far. New Jersey Transit insists any underutilization will be resolved once the T.H.E. Tunnel project is completed and there will be a one-seat ride into New York.

Now that New Jersey Turnpike Interchange 15X at Secaucus Junction has opened, NJT is reversing its original promise and is pushing for parking facilities to be built. NJ-ARP still questions the wisdom of parking facilities at this location. We believe that it would only encourage many NJT customers to abandon using the train at outer stations for a car ride to Secaucus and then a short rail trip into New York-Penn. The only way NJT would not lose revenue is to operate the garage itself, and sell parking only in conjunction with a round trip rail ticket into NY -Penn. They would have to charge a hefty fee, which should be at least the average fee of a parking garage in midtown Manhattan, plus the Lincoln Tunnel toll rate plus the round-trip fare from Secaucus Junction to NY-Penn. There is precedence for doing this in that NJT now "collects", in conjunction with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, a surcharge of \$9.00 each way for New York-bound passengers using the Newark International Airport station.

## **Pascack Valley Line**

The long awaited sidings (originally due in 2000), which would allow two-way, all-day service on the Pascack Valley Line, now has a projected completion date in late 2007. The project is to be completed in conjunction with the Xanadu spur (see above).

The scare tactics used by NIMBY's, such as chemical tank cars (along a line that had no industrial customers and dead-ended in Spring Valley, N.Y.) that resulted in nine communities filing a lawsuit to block the sidings has backfired somewhat for those communities. Rather than waste millions of dollars and years of time fighting the lawsuit, NJT opted to build only four of the sidings. In NJT's draft schedule released earlier this year, there will be frequent service between Hoboken and Hackensack and frequent nonstop express service between Hoboken and Pearl River, Nanuet, and Spring Valley, N.Y. As the elimination of sidings preclude more frequent service, the communities north of Hackensack and south of the New York state line who instigated the lawsuit will, in effect, be getting only half the service -- and local service at that -- as New York State MTA express trains will bypass those stations. Perhaps this will serve as a lesson to other politicians to think things through a bit before acting to deprive their communities of rail service.

By the way, NJ-ARP still maintains that the siding project was not necessary to, at least, provide some limited reverse weekday service, and was totally unnecessary to provide 2 to 2-1/2 hour weekend headway service in the intervening 10 years that it will have taken to come to fruition.

-- Les Wolff

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## Cape May Branch Developments

Since the 2005 annual report, Saturday excursions between Tuckahoe (Cape May County) and Richland Village (Buena Vista Township, Atlantic County) were added following the 2005 NJ-ARP annual meeting. The trains were popular and the Santa trains were very well patronized. 2005 ended with the Cape May canal bridge out of service. Because of technical and state (NJT) bureaucracy problems, the bridge remained out of service causing the cancellation of the Cape May summer 2006 season.

*Cape May Seashore Lines* (CMSL) resumed the Tuckahoe-to-Richland Village excursions in July 2006, with a Saturday schedule running through Christmas. Select trains will again include "The Wine Experience" after its popularity in 2005.

2006 has been a year of accomplishments and issues, some new and some ongoing.

The accomplishments:

- CMSL took delivery of three P70 coaches -- built 1926 (2) and 1928. The addition of these cars brings active capacity to six locomotive pulled coaches, a cafe car and two RDCs.
- Track construction continued building access for Woodbine industrial sites.

Some of the chronic issues:

- Capital Infrastructure -- Funding the Gap: Even as the north end of the railroad progressed with track work between Tuckahoe and Woodbine in 2005, the gap is still 10 miles of railroad between Woodbine and Cape May Court House. It is waiting for funding to allow it to be rehabilitated. Such rehabilitation is essential before passenger service can run between Richland and Cape May City.
- County college construction is complete, yet the 4-H/Cape May Zoo station and its great parking lot remain closed by the County of Cape May. This hurts ridership with the loss of the zoo as a destination.

-- Paul Mulligan

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## Hudson-Bergen Light Rail

NJ-ARP assembled some of its best and brightest in 2006 to launch an informational counteroffensive to New Jersey Transit's disinformation campaign on light rail transit (LRT) in general and HBLRT in particular. It's early in the game -- but at least the game is in progress.

For it's become abundantly clear that, save for extending HBLRT to 8th Street in (pro-LRT) Bayonne, NJT has turned its back on a rail mode that is proving itself over and over nationwide -- on the theory that New Jersey "can't afford it" and that it's "for urban areas only."

Such posturing may explain why NJT continues to support a vague, ill-defined route from

HBLRT's current northern terminus in North Bergen west toward the Meadowlands Sportsplex, code-named "Xanadu," yet can't fathom why "suburban" Bergen County, and particularly Northern Valley towns, might prefer LRT to vague promises of a "one-seat ride to Manhattan" that, in truth, will initially involve more transfers and, at absolute best, is nearly two decades away.

Led by Bergen County resident and Government Affairs Director Rose M. Heck, NJ-ARP assembled some homegrown LRT talent in 2006 that has addressed local citizens, and upbraided NJT, on numerous occasions. NJ-ARP members Phil Craig, Jack May, Frank Miklos and Lester W. Wolff have worked tirelessly to defend and advance NJ-ARP's belief that, for the Northern Branch, light rail is better (see Northern Valley Line report above).

As we noted in 2005, official Bergen County doesn't get it. It thinks subtracting the "B" from "HBLRT" is just fine because it's been promised the "one-seat ride" to Midtown Manhattan. The good news in 2006 is that some local officials, and even some print media, have begun wondering if NJT truly can deliver its overarching promises.

It's a lot to sift through. The Northern Branch (and Bergen County) gets not a "one-seat ride" but instead, at best, a three-seat ride to Midtown Manhattan -- DMU to LRT to ferry. It also gets a two-seat ride to New Jersey's Gold Coast. **Put another way, everyone gets demoted.** NJ-ARP has and will defend transfers as a viable concept, but here the transfers are added under the guise of a "one-seat ride" that is nowhere in sight.

Meanwhile NJT says it's worth the \$1 billion plus to go 3-plus miles to the Meadowlands Sportsplex via Harmon Meadow (Secaucus), cutting across wetlands on brand-new right-of-way. (It conveniently doesn't pursue this with any ardor, however.) NJ-ARP won't necessarily dispute that; after all, we're the state LRT champions. But we question why \$1 billion is "just right" for Xanadu but "too much" for 10-plus miles to Tenafly, on existing rail right-of-way with a built-in passenger base.

**Almost lost in the mix is the reality of HBLRT's successful expansion -- yet again! -- on Feb. 25, 2006, as NJT extended service from Port Imperial, Weehawken, through the Weehawken Tunnel to Tonnelle Avenue (50th Street Station), North Bergen (Initial Operating Segment 2). Ridership jumped from 21,000 in early 2005 to more than 34,000 shortly after the 2006 opening.**

And give NJT credit for "tiptoeing" northward in increments; in late 2005 it first extended HBLRT service north from Lincoln Harbor to Port Imperial on weekends only. The market may have been limited but the service was offered when practical -- not at some mythical "point of perfection" that dogged the RiverLINE. Full service from Lincoln Harbor north commenced with the Feb. 25 inaugural.

The newly relocated Port Imperial ferry commenced operations May 23rd -- a less-than stellar, but still functional, intermodal transfer point that NJT simultaneously promotes (for HBLRT) and savages or slights as "inconvenient" when touting Northern Branch "alternatives" to LRT.

By contrast, NJT bus operations officials present on Opening Day ceremonies Feb. 25th uncharacteristically *talked up* LRT, noting its potential for both ridership and real estate values on Bergenline Avenue in Union City, literally above the namesake HBLRT station. Ridership, at least, has justified their optimism -- no surprise to NJ-ARP, when the population density of Union City is 50,000-plus people per mile. Even more satisfying, many

are riding not to work, but to Pavonia/Newport's shopping facilities. So much for the LRT critics who "knew" that "people won't take the train to go shopping."

If LRT critics can't grasp HBLRT's utility, growing numbers in nearby Staten Island sure can. Calls for extending HBLRT to Staten Island, first appearing with any regularity in 2005, gained momentum during the summer as local, state, and even federal New York officials prodded a reluctant **"We don't do New Jersey"** Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to offer bus-to-rail transport with HBLRT -- and then followed up by identifying study funds for LRT on Staten Island itself. No funding is yet targeted for an actual link to HBLRT -- it's in that other state across the watery divide -- but at the very least officials are talking about such a thing. NJ-ARP is pleased.

Elsewhere, Bayonne has offered little new information on pursuing true streetcar operations at the former Marine Ocean Terminal in Bayonne (MOTBY), now the Peninsula at Bayonne Harbor, a mixed-use development. Ex-PCC streetcars from the Newark City Subway (currently in storage at HBLRT's Communipaw maintenance facility) would ply the approximately 1.5 mile route on the peninsula, with a cross-highway pedestrian transfer to HBLRT at 34th Street Station.

But Jersey City officials have made noises about extending HBLRT there, either to or along state Route 440, to serve New Jersey City University. NJ-ARP member Leonard Resto, a trustee of the university's Foundation, has urged the facility to include LRT in its redevelopment mix, and even NJT's LRT officials, led by Joe North, have pledged to work with NJ-ARP to explore this possibility.

Indeed, NJ-ARP sincerely thanks Mr. North for keeping NJ-ARP abreast of HBLRT (and other light rail) developments throughout the year -- first as a host of NJ-ARP's Patron's Luncheon tour of the system May 20, then as a speaker at the NJ-ARP 2006 Annual Meeting Oct. 7th.

-- Douglas John Bowen

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## Lackawanna Cut-Off

The "New Jersey-Pennsylvania Lackawanna Cut-Off Passenger Rail Restoration Project" (as it is officially called) has as its goal the restoration of passenger rail service between the New York metropolitan area (Hoboken initially) and Scranton, Pennsylvania, operating over the fabled 28-mile "Lackawanna Cut-Off." This remarkable feat of engineering was opened in December 1911 by the then Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad as a low-grade alternative route from north central New Jersey to the Delaware water gap bypassing its then curving and steeply graded main line.

Some forward progress, albeit snail-like, occurred since the NJ-ARP Annual Meeting last year. Arguably, the most important meeting supporting the reinstatement of passenger rail service took place at the Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton, Pennsylvania, on Monday, May 1, 2006, when a host of New Jersey and Pennsylvania elected leaders met to discuss the project.

Senator Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), who arranged the gathering, reported that \$20 million had been appropriated from Washington for the currently expected \$350 million cost of the plan.

Specter thought that he could secure another \$120 million for the line but gave no further details. Half of the \$20 million has already been spent studying the feasibility of the restoration, and the remaining \$10 million will be directed toward preliminary engineering.

Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-11), while not present, asserted he was instrumental in obtaining the additional \$10 million from the federal transportation budget for the design work. Monroe and Lackawanna County (Pennsylvania) participants announced at this meeting that they will be merging their rail authorities -- to be Chaired by Bob Hay, a Pocono realtor and current chair of the *Monroe County Railroad Authority*. The combined entity would be composed of eight Board members with equal representation from each county. With 100 miles of track and \$28 million in assets, the joint agency believes it will be better be able to influence legislators in Harrisburg and Washington.

On an upbeat note, one Monroe County commissioner actually thought (believed, hoped?) that the Cut-Off could be running by as early as 2014, even though "official" New Jersey Transit announcements place the start of service closer to 2025. The optimistic county logic is based on a project schedule, which is thought to take one to two years to secure environmental approvals, one year to complete engineering, followed by four years to build the line.

Thanks to the Cut-Off being included in TEA-LU, there is now a further \$120 million authorized, as mentioned above -- but not appropriated -- for this work contingent on a satisfactory FTA rating. The FTA criteria include five subjective factors: 1) an improvement in the ability of a rider to reach his/her destination, 2) environmental benefits, 3) efficiency of operation, 4) a satisfactory cost/benefit ratio, and 5) the ability of the project to support existing land uses. However, despite all the "politicking", this rating has not yet been forthcoming.

-- Albert L. Papp, Jr.

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## Membership

Between November 2005 and August 2006, eight batches of renewal notices were sent. In comparison to the identical period a year ago, our membership has gone down from 319 to 311, and the renewal rate has gone from 90% to 89%. The late August renewals are still coming in, so the rate excludes that last batch.

The net loss of 8 members includes 1 death and 22 new members. Of those, 4 signed up via the Internet and 18 came randomly through US postal mail from sources such as brochure distribution or membership forms on the Web site. Of the 311 members, 249 (80%) reside in New Jersey.

Membership benefits are cumulative as status is upgraded. Patron as well as Sustaining members get the *OBSERVATIONS* newsletter, too. Since Family memberships can be of two or three interested parties in the household, and Sustaining and Patron members can be double- or triple-counted, but only if the renewal invoice slip says so in the name area. Our membership count thus is cautious and conservative.

Initial annual renewal notices are sent within two weeks of when the last such notice was sent, or when a new member joined, not when we received the last check. This matters

when the prior renewal check comes several months late. A "second chance" notice is sent from the Treasurer two months after the initial notice was sent to those that had not renewed. If there is no response to the "second chance" letter after a two month period, the member is dropped from our membership listing.

We have a \$10 membership category for seniors and students, and can handle an annual financial or personal hardship waiver on a case-by-case basis.

-- Joe Versaggi

## MOM

Below the media radar for most of 2006, Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex (MOM) rail passenger service returned to the spotlight in September, as the most recent study suggested big ridership potential, this time linked to the addition of the "one-seat ride" to Midtown Manhattan.

The study, commissioned by Monmouth and Ocean counties in conjunction with NJT, was released even as the federal Draft Environmental impact Statement (DEIS) languishes for yet another year. Any Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) is now at least two years (and counting) behind schedule.

Though the latest study shows stronger ridership for each of three (3) purported alternatives, the "true MOM" route via Monmouth Junction flexes some muscle. The NJ Transit head-fake of *"Oops! Where's Matawan?"* is treated respectfully in the study, but fortunately (in NJ-ARP's view) no place else in the real world. Even NJT remained mute on this in 2006, and "Oops!" has failed to identify a local champion of any kind, even as the Freehold-to-Matawan right-of-way continues to grow (with state tax dollars, no less) as a rail/trail.

Middlesex County MOM critics, of course, dismissed the latest study, as is their right, but their "reasoning" remains flawed, as they insist "no one" in the communities of South Brunswick, Jamesburg, or Monroe wants passenger rail. Year after year, in street fair festival after street fair festival, NJ-ARP talks one-on-one with numerous residents who say otherwise. **Middlesex County residents in favor of passenger rail continue to ask why their federal, state, county, and local representatives are missing in action.**

NJ-ARP continues to believe some of those officials, at least, are maneuvering to cover their political bases as it becomes ever more clear that MOM isn't going away -- and as MOM's opponents and obstructionists dwindle due to retirement, death, legal woes, or simple sheer fatigue. "You're here again?" is the annual question raised by this or that MOM opponent as NJ-ARP maintains its presence -- and voiced much more frequently now than the weakly defiant "It won't happen."

More than any other issue, NJ ARP makes MOM the focal point of numerous local festivals in Middlesex and Monmouth counties, and 2006 was no exception as NJ-ARP Director and Jamesburg native Dan Kerwin led the group's presence in the "NIMBY 3" communities of Jamesburg, South Brunswick, and Monroe in August and September. "Glad you're here" and "When?" were the two most spoken greetings NJ-ARP received at our Community Outreach tables this summer season. The question of "When?" is being asked by young couples with

babies in tow. They would like to be home at a reasonable hour to spend time with their families. Seniors also ask the question wanting mobility to get to the "hundred points" which would be served by MOM.

Monroe, in particular, is spinning its addition of bus services to local residents as an "alternative" to MOM or rail; initially, some officials tried to bait NJ-ARP to oppose such public transit options. To the contrary: NJ-ARP welcomes the additions as a *precursor and indicator* of MOM's worth and need.

Indeed, per a recent local survey conducted in South Brunswick, many, many residents say they want rail, not bus, and not just to New York or Newark, but also to New Brunswick -- a point acknowledged even by the anti-MOM mayor of South Brunswick. MOM serves New Brunswick. "Oops!" and the Red Bank options being studied do not.

This past summer, NJ-ARP Director Dan Kerwin appeared on the cable TV show "New Jersey Awareness" hosted by then state Assemblyman Joseph Azzolina. Director Kerwin appeared with a Monmouth County official to discuss the benefits of MOM and the status of the project.

We're encouraged by NJ Transit's own growing focus on delivering central Jersey residents to and from Trenton and Philadelphia-area job markets (and we praise NJT for the focus). MOM fits this desirable goal amply, highlighting yet another origin-destination advantage of passenger rail and, perhaps, prompting NJT itself to rethink its hitherto sluggish handling of MOM itself.

-- Douglas John Bowen

-- Daniel Kerwin

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## National Rail Passenger Advocacy

NJ-ARP continues to play a vital and necessary role in the area of national rail passenger advocacy. Indeed, NJ-ARP's mission is that of the promotion of rail passenger service not only throughout New Jersey, but also on the far broader level that is regional and national in scope. Originally conceived as an outgrowth of the national rail passenger advocacy group, the *National Association of Railroad Passengers* (NARP), the NJ-ARP concept was created not only to support and advocate rail passenger service on the part of New Jersey interests, but to provide additional local advocacy to surrounding areas and groups.

New Jersey is not an island unto itself, and the state relies heavily upon interlocking relationships between its sister states. New Jersey's unique geographic position of being situated between two major metropolitan areas affords the state to benefit immensely from intercity passenger rail particularly from the perspective that the Northeast Corridor is the very spine of New Jersey's statewide rail passenger system. Given this, it is imperative that a careful watch is kept on national rail policy initiatives, as Amtrak directly owns the Northeast Corridor. To that end involvement in regional as well as national rail matters is not only necessary, but is also required to ensure the continuation and enhancement of vital rail passenger service. Anything less jeopardizes New Jersey's future mobility and, it can safely be stated, the future of the state as well. As such, NJ-ARP's mission continues.

This past year has been especially trying for the rail passenger advocate. It's no secret that

Amtrak is under continual attack for, essentially, being existent. The current federal administration continues its seemingly never-ending mantra of ending federal monies for the nation's rail passenger system, which, as a result, has Amtrak repeatedly fending for its virtual survival. The total annual subsidy for a rail passenger system that is national in scope is paltry in comparison to other transportation modes, highway being the most glaring example. In addition to the constant fight for federal support, negative misinformation spread from the administration through the former transportation secretary sullied the value that the national rail passenger network has. Compound this with the direct firing of Amtrak president David Gunn, clearly a passenger rail supporter, and the year summed up to be one of the most trying within recent memory. Be assured that even in these difficult times NJ-ARP is on the forefront.

**NJ-ARP advocates the continuation and expansion of the nationwide rail passenger system, and continues to play an important part in advocating same.** As NJ-ARP enters its 27th year, we keep our commitment. As seasoned rail advocates, we recognize that rail is the most cost-effective, efficient and safest carrier of the public. It's up to us to impart that message in a meaningful and practical way in order to ensure that passenger rail remains an integral component of mobility within our already overcrowded state.

To that end, NJ-ARP continues to hold prominent positions within the NARP organization. Jim Ciacciarelli, current NJ-ARP Vice President, also serves as a NARP Director representing Region III (New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware). Likewise, Albert L. Papp, Jr. serves as an NJ-ARP Director as well as serving as a NARP Region III Director; he is also the NARP Secretary. Joe Versaggi, an NJ-ARP officer representing Raritan Valley and Membership interests, has been elected to the position of NARP Region III Director. As is evidenced, **New Jersey interests are well represented and are clearly significant at the level of the national organization.**

NJ-ARP also hosted the NARP Region III meeting, held in Bordentown in April of this year. While all four ARP's are represented at the Region III meeting, the NJ-ARP voice is clearly heard. This year's Region III meeting was particularly successful; we were pleased to have NARP President George Chilson speak on matters of national importance. A representative from Congressman Rush Holt's office also spoke giving us an insight on national rail matters at the level of the House of Representatives. While hosting such a meeting is no easy task, in traditional fashion NJ-ARP has stepped up to the plate and delivered a timely, effective venue for the cause of rail passenger service.

Our advocacy efforts are highly substantiated. NJ-ARP interacts with influential policy makers in Washington, DC as well as elsewhere in the country. For example, **we generally meet with all of the representatives that comprise the New Jersey Congressional Delegation on Capitol Hill during the year.** Years of experience have indicated that a straightforward, individual approach is necessary in this age of impersonal cyberspace.

Additionally, this method has allowed us to forge personal relationships with staff people that are in key positions to steer their respective representative in the correct direction while at the same time witnessing this to be a very effective process towards influencing legislators.

We also directly participate within the public domain. Press conferences, public appearances and interviews are typical of our efforts in order to convey our respective position on matters of rail importance. In addition, we also disseminate information on

crucial issues through position papers, press releases, and constant letter correspondence and meeting involvement.

Most important, NJ-ARP's *NEWSLETTER REPORT* plays a key role and solidifies NJ-ARP's stance. In short, experience has taught us that a constant presence be consistently maintained to be effective.

NJ-ARP also interacts with the various adjacent NARP affiliates such as the *Keystone Association of Railroad Passengers (KARP)*, the *Delaware Valley Association of Railroad Passengers (DVARP)*, the *Empire State Passengers Association (ESPA)*, and the *Delmarva Rail Passengers Association (DRPA)*. In addition, other pro-passenger rail groups, such as the *Central Jersey Rail Coalition*, the *Penn-Jersey Rail Coalition*, and the *Lackawanna Coalition* are frequently coordinated. Such interaction provides for expanded regional coordination and unified advocacy, both being necessary and essential tools in today's mobility environment.

Interstate projects such as the Lackawanna Cut-off proposal, the Trans-Hudson Express (T.H.E.) Tunnel, and NJ Transit's expansion into frequent Clocker Service vastly benefits New Jersey and its neighbors and also provides the riding public better mobility choices. In short, NJ-ARP always has been and continues to be interested in promoting unified advocacy, which can only strengthen our goals and mission for New Jersey and passenger rail as a whole.

Our organization's concern with national rail passenger issues is deemed part and parcel of the overall mission of NJ-ARP. While national transportation policy affects the United States as a whole, it also impacts compartmentalized regions to a greater degree. We're all aware that the existing national rail passenger system is skeletal, at best, and must not only be continued in its entirety but also further expanded. With gasoline prices at an all time high, the need for an efficient, frequent and encompassing rail passenger network is all too apparent. NJ-ARP continues to endeavor the promotion of our goals for such a comprehensive passenger rail system, a goal that we have consistently maintained over the past quarter century since our inception.

-- Jim Ciacciarelli

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## Northeast Corridor

Newark Light Rail service debuted on July 17, connecting Newark-Penn Station, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Atlantic Street behind the IDT building, the Newark Bears' Riverfront Stadium, Newark-Broad Street Station and Washington Park. Northeast Corridor, North Jersey Coast Line and Raritan Valley Line riders coming into downtown Newark from Penn Station can now connect to and from Broad Street Station to access the Morris & Essex and Montclair-Boonton Lines. The fare is \$1.25 for a one-way trip with a free transfer to the Newark City Subway at Penn Station. **NJ-ARP has asked NJT to program its fare machines for through ticketing using the Penn-Broad LRT in addition to Secaucus Transfer.** This continues NJ Transit's move towards better rail system connectivity which began (with lots of NJ-ARP encouragement!) in 1991 with the opening of the Waterfront Connection connecting Newark Penn Station and Hoboken Terminal and continued with Midtown Direct service in 1996 and Secaucus Junction in 2003.

For years, handicapped passengers have accessed all three commuter rail lines and the PATH trains at Penn Station, but not the Newark City Subway. Currently, the Newark Light Rail / City Subway stop at Penn Station is not handicap-accessible, but that will change in the coming months upon completion of the current construction. This will benefit not only those in wheelchairs, but also the elderly who struggle walking up flights of stairs.

In June, NJ Transit announced a three-year trial of express train service from New York Penn Station to Atlantic City, which will start in late 2007, with a limited number of intermediate stops. It will be a 2 1/2 hour ride between Manhattan and the Atlantic City rail terminal. Service will be on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays with fares still to be determined.

Princeton Junction was officially designated as a Transit Village, with plans for housing, retail and office space near the station along with a parking deck to increase parking capacity but use less land than the existing surface-level lot as a result.

Construction continues the Trenton Station expansion project, including new restrooms, waiting areas, retail shops and dining options. Construction should be finished by 2007.

-- Gary Johnson

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## PATH

Weekend service regressed to a two-route system this year. Construction of the Freedom Tower and a permanent World Trade Center (WTC) station meant allowing for single-threading through one tube between Exchange Place, Jersey City (EXPL) and WTC. Due to the track layout, it means a maximum of four trains per hour and no service can come from Hoboken (HOB). The weekend routing pattern will be in effect until at least 2011.

But PATH still has problems in relaying information to the public on weekend service reductions:

- The above change got no more than two-weeks prior notice for a daytime WTC service cut of 50% and 33rd Street service cut of 25%,
- During roadbed and track reconstruction on the Hackensack Draw Bridge, Newark (NWK) service was cut from 15 to 20 minute intervals. If you were to go by the timetable and expect a 10:45 a.m. departure from Newark, you will wait until 11 :00 a.m., and be 15 to 20 minutes late arriving at your final destination.

Unlike New York City Transit posting its weekend General Orders on its Web site the prior Friday and on signs all over affected stations, PATH has no comparable notices about the bridge work. All of the above has exacerbated rush hour-like crowding on weekend trains. PATH does not even run 8-car consists on the Newark line at those times, which would help reduce the crowding and make for a more pleasant riding experience.

The only potential weekend improvement is that Journal Square (JSQ)-HOB-33rd Street service intervals could be stepped-up from 10 to 7-1/2 minute intervals next year. In going from a four- to a two-route system, PATH has gone from running 21 train sets to 11 train sets. If it budgeted for full train operation for all of 2006, it should have enough budget available to step-up operations now. But, special event weekends (i.e. the Marathon) could

see some 5-minute interval trains this year.

When service intervals between the two routes are incompatible, such as one being 10 minutes, the other 15, inconsistent connection times at JSQ result. It seems counterintuitive that the uptown route should terminate at JSQ, while the WTC-NWK route continue as is. But PATH believes transfers at JSQ are minimized by not having the two routes swap western terminals. PATH crews work six-hour shifts without a meal break. A NWK-33rd route means a crew would cover four round trips instead of five, hence poorer productivity. This explains PATH's historical dislike of that routing option, which was done briefly after 9/11/01.

Next year, weekday rush NWK-WTC service will likely go to all four-minute intervals, not the current mix of four and five minutes. That will require one additional 7-car trainset. Had they instead gone to 8-car consists on 13 trainsets, that would have used more equipment. Aging fleet and loss of a trainset on 9/11/01 means tight availability. PATH would not be able to put out the service levels today that they had prior to the terrorist attacks.

As the new PA5 cars arrive, the current fleet gets sold to the PA5's manufacturer for scrap or converted to work service. The new cars will be incompatible with old fleet, and only be able to couple physically. They will not be drawer-barred or in married-pairs like NYC subway cars. It would be too expensive to upgrade the 96 1986-era PA4's (about 28% of the fleet) for One Person Train Operation, Communication Based Train Signaling, and AC traction, and are past mid-life.

-- Joe Versaggi

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## Raritan Valley Line

While there are currently several projects and proposals for the Raritan Valley Line, probably the most important is the ongoing *North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's* (NJTPA) Route 78 Corridor study. To date, this has targeted mainly the causes and possible remediation of the highway's traffic congestion. This fall, the emphasis will shift to looking at how the Raritan Valley Line can be utilized to help solve the highway problems. The study will probably suggest that the rail line be extended again west to Philipsburg, and possibly into Pennsylvania. Stations would likely be added to the line at Hampton, near Bloomsbury and in Philipsburg. It may also recommend a new "park & ride" near Annandale where Routes 78, 22 and 31 converge with the Raritan Valley Line. There is considerable local opposition to this last proposal although we can expect the NJTPA and the DOT to do what is best for the public regardless of NIMBY objections.

The idea of a pocket track east of Newark Penn Station has been abandoned. Raritan Valley Line trains now mainly come in on track 1 and will be able to go into a small yard to be rebuilt east of the station in order to get off the main lines and wait to reverse west. It would be similar to the old Manhattan Transfer. This will allow same platform transfers for passengers headed to New York. Platform 5, the normal track for westbound Raritan Valley Line trains is to be extended so that two trains can await passengers at the same time. None of this is a "one seat" ride to New York, but it is far better than at present.

NJT is going to build high level platforms at the Somerville station. Also, the new White House passing siding is nearly complete. This will allow more service west of Raritan, which

is promised for the near future. This will include more rush hour trains as well as off peak, mid-day and late evening trains. Another significant benefit would be weekend service.

Dual-mode locomotives are being advanced for future use on the Raritan Valley Line ending the need to change trains in Newark. Their use will probably take place when T.H.E. Tunnel is built.

Ridership continues to grow, with the most growth at the outermost stations. All in all, there are many favorable aspects for the present and future of the Raritan Valley Line. The *Raritan Valley Rail Coalition*, a semi-official government body, is an effective watchdog over these lines.

## West Trenton Line

There has been no change and no progress on the reactivation of this rail line. We believe NJT has told the federal government not to push the issue, which is presently being held up on the environmental report. There is no money in the 2007 NJT budget for West Trenton.

-- Jack McDougal

## Rights-of-Way Legislation

In 2006, NJ-ARP's concerns for rights-of-way protection were highlighted by the looming threat to a portion of the ex-Camden & Amboy right-of-way south of Hightstown, as Conrail Shared Assets moved to abandon and possibly sell the historic route for conversion to strip-mall development. The threat has been postponed, but illustrates the state's inability to preserve its rail infrastructure (and, to be fair, NJ-ARP's inability to persuade the state to do so).

Such frustration takes place even where the prospect of more trains is very viable. As noted elsewhere, throughout 2006 NJ-ARP has struggled to reactivate the Cape May Branch, and particularly the Cape May canal bridge, to maintain rail passenger service to and from Cape May City. Coupled with a decrepit 10-mile stretch of the branch between Woodbine and Cape May Court House, the difficulties in upgrading right-of-way, **even that owned outright by New Jersey Transit Corp.**, becomes apparent.

NJ-ARP remains second to no one in fighting for a fully restored Cape May Branch, which already is owned outright and in its entirety by New Jersey Transit Corp. Safely secured, right? Not if that 10-mile stretch between Woodbine and Cape May Court House vanishes. We believe New Jersey Transit, to its credit, is now fully aware of this problem, and perhaps has been since last year's jointly sponsored inaugural run from Richland Village to Woodbine.

But NJ Transit isn't in control of many other rail rights-of-way that need protection, be it through Woodbury in Gloucester County, to Branchburg in Sussex County, or somewhere in between. Even where the state has moved to lock up a route -- Hudson County's ex-Erie Bergen arches, for example -- the property's fate as a continued rail option remains dubious at best.

**NJ-ARP remains committed to find a way to preserve and redevelop our state's**

**priceless rail transportation arteries -- New Jersey's abandoned, disused and underused railroad rights-of-ways.** We can note individual attempts and efforts do seem to be increasing. The latest example: Trackage in Ocean County south and east of Lakehurst, which NJ-ARP member Dan Green, along with the *Central Jersey Rail Coalition*, hope to convert into a diesel multiple-unit (DMU) shuttle feeder augmenting any MOM service.

Per our 2002 Annual Report, NJ-ARP continues to ask members of the State Senate and Assembly to introduce two pieces of related legislation that would:

1. Direct the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) to prepare a comprehensive inventory of abandoned, disused or underused railroad rights-of-way suitable for preservation, restoration and/or service initiation to active passenger and freight commerce and to place the lines so selected on the state rail rights-of-way preservation map; and
2. Require the publication and dissemination of information regarding the rights-of-way so selected in order to facilitate adequate disclosure to counties, towns, real estate developers and agencies and potential buyers and sellers of said property such that a contract for any property so affected, within a pre-defined distance from a rail line, will, upon being offered for sale or transfer, be required to have a proximity notification embedded within indicating that the price, so agreed upon, reflects the presence of a rail line.

-- Douglas John Bowen

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## RiverLINE

NJ-ARP appreciates the input from New Jersey Transit's head of light rail operations, Joe North, who per our request reports:

This summer we provided a dedicated late night guaranteed bus shuttle between 36th St. and Rt. 73 Park & Ride six nights per week (Saturday is excluded because light rail service operates late). This was done to help promote waterfront venues. Approximately 1,000 passengers will have utilized this service between Memorial Day and Sept. 29, 2006, which was the last day of this service.

Effective, September 2, 2006, the 419 Bus (Philly-Camden-Burlington) was rerouted to serve the 36th St. Station with a bus stop immediately adjacent to the platform. The 419 connections extend the 10:00 p.m., 11:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m. RiverLINE departures from Camden all the way to Burlington Town Center via the RiverLINE to bus transfer at 36th. Street. This is shown on the new RiverLINE public timetable (eff. 9/25/06). These "new-look" public timetables are being distributed now and are also available via the NJT and RiverLINE Web sites.

The new schedule noted above adds earlier morning service to Trenton and Camden from Burlington South, as well as a new 9:30 a.m. departure from Trenton that ends at Burlington South Station at 9:54 a.m. before pulling into a new mid-line yard so we don't violate the 10:00 p.m. window for the start of

freight service. In total, 95 new minutes of service are being provided.

Looking to the future, we hope to have signal improvements finished that will allow us to extend our late night RiverLINE service from 36th St. to Rt. 73 on a permanent basis. We still need to have the FRA grant us approval for this change in operations. We hope to be ready by May 2007.

NJ-ARP thanks Mr. North for his comments and ongoing efforts.

-- Carol Ann Thomas

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## Sponsorships

### Light Rail Now!

The founders of *Light Rail Now!* visited New Jersey in 2006, their second visit in six years, and found NJ-ARP busy at work growing their product -- and saw for themselves that the product worked in the Garden State.

As the leading voice for light rail transit (LRT) within the Garden State, NJ-ARP is an "underwriter" to *Light Rail Now!*, a website and organization dedicated to aiding pro-LRT supporters in the United States (and often elsewhere). *Light Rail Now!* disseminates information, political strategy and options, and news to LRT supporters as they move to initiate or expand LRT systems.

Though NJ-ARP has been well-served by the organization, *Light Rail Now!* itself sometimes seemed ambivalent to New Jersey's LRT progress and -- in the case of the River Line -- actually questioned its viability.

NJ-ARP, in answer, arranged a tour of the line in mid-June for both Lyndon Henry and Dave Dobbs, two *Light Rail Now!* leaders from Austin, Texas, to demonstrate the line's success. (Ironically, Austin itself is embarking on a diesel light rail transit, or DLRT, line that's comparable to the RiverLINE).

NJ-ARP Director Carol Ann Thomas proved a competent guide, and as it happens was assisted by NJ-ARP member (and husband) Don Thomas, who happened to be the engineer of the train on tap! Cleared by authorities, the *Light Rail Now!* duo took turns accompanying the engineer in the cab to get a sense of the line's layout, its passenger loads and flow, and the RiverLINE's positive impact on economic development.

The two Texans also returned to Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Transit (HBLRT), admiring the extension through Weehawken, Union City, and North Bergen; they also got some close-up exposure to the new Newark Light Rail link between Newark-Penn and Newark Broad Street stations, just prior to the line's opening -- including the access tunnel to Newark-Penn Station advanced and advocated by NJ-ARP one decade ago.

Though NJ ARP was pleased to display our successes, we note that *Light Rail Now!*, in turn, has helped make those successes possible in New Jersey and throughout the United States; hence, our strong support for the organization's informational website and the LRN advocacy links it offers.

NJ-ARP's sponsorship of *Light Rail Now!* is funded by contributions from individual NJ-ARP members, and not from the NJ-ARP treasury.

### **Adopt-A-Station (Mt. Olive)**

Signage and other basic amenities were repaired and/or upgraded by New Jersey Transit in the early spring, including the acknowledgement of NJ-ARP as the station sponsor.

For NJ-ARP's part, most of its other activities are focused on maintaining the existing planting area, centered on the two islands located east and west of the Plexiglas shelter.

NJ-ARP Sussex County Liaison Tim Apgar heads up NJ-ARP's station sponsorship and maintenance role, assisted by other NJ-ARP volunteers. Mt. Olive Station is located within Morris County.

### **'Montclair Connection'**

Mark six years in which NJ-ARP sponsored the 'Montclair Connection' softball team to highlight the activation of the actual Montclair Connection -- as well as continue to remind everyone that more work on the Montclair/Boonton Line needs to be done. Our softball sponsorship in fact does keep the rail infrastructure improvement (and the name) visible to local residents (and potential New Jersey Transit customers) -- an important item as Montclair itself slowly begins to support the radical idea of weekend passenger rail service.

The team uniform incorporates NJ-ARP's white logo on the green baseball cap, and black NJ-ARP logo against a green and white dress shirt. The shirt logo also includes the words "New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers" in small letters -- large enough for the rail-curious but small enough to remain unobtrusive to those interested in baseball only.

The team's main shirt art includes a baseball diamond, with bases linked by railroad tracks, underpinned by the slogan, "The Fastest Way Home." That slogan or claim is disputed by some railfans "West Of Regal Montclair" who bemoan slower trains and less service to and from Hoboken Terminal -- a mix of complaints including the legitimate, intriguing, and downright misguided that, in turn, remind NJ-ARP and others that more and better service, and perhaps even electrification, is needed on the Montclair/Boonton Line beyond Bloomfield, Glen Ridge, and Montclair.

Overseeing the team is Manager Chris Isidore, a user of both the real Montclair Connection and competitor DeCamp bus services, and a valuable source to NJ-ARP of ongoing local political developments concerning rail passenger service.

NJ-ARP's sponsorship of the 'Montclair Connection' is funded by contributions from individual NJ-ARP members, and not from the NJ-ARP treasury.

-- Tim Apgar  
-- Douglas John Bowen

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## **Trans-Hudson Express (T.H.E.) Tunnel**

The past year has seen NJ-ARP, the *Empire State Passengers Association* (ESPA) and the *Lackawanna Coalition* rapidly accelerate their outreach activities and engage New Jersey Transit (NJT), the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and elected leaders in both New Jersey and New York concerning the pivotal lack of a direct rail connection between New York's Penn Station (NYP) and Grand Central Terminal (GCT) in particular, and the lack of an overall vision for regional rail planning in the New York metropolitan area in general.

To better inform and engage the public in this once-in-a-century opportunity, the *Institute for Rational Urban Mobility* (IRUM), along with the *Regional Rail Working Group* (RRWG) consisting of NJ-ARP, ESPA, the *Lackawanna Coalition*, the *Committee for Better Transit*, and *Five Towns Rural Transit, Inc.* held (and as of this annual meeting is still holding) a presentation at New York City's Municipal Art Society entitled, "Making the Connection: Moving Forward on Regional Rail" from Thursday, September 7, 2006 to Wednesday, November 8, 2006. Gallery hours are from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with the exception of Thursday and Sunday, at which time the MAS is closed. A gala opening reception, complete with refreshments was held on Wednesday, September 13th followed by a panel discussion on Wednesday, September 27th called "Making Regional Rail Work." Moderated by Paul Mosier, Vice President and Project Manager, Parsons Brinckerhoff, participants included Cruz Russell, Deputy Chief of Strategic Planning, PANYNJ; William Wheeler, Director of Special Project Development and Planning, MTA; and Richard Roberts, Chief Planner, Capital Program, NJT. On Saturday, September 30th, a working meeting of national and state rail advocates was held to advance the Regional Rail concepts described in this exhibit. Participants included NJ-ARP Director Albert L. Papp, Jr., Bruce Becker, President of ESPA, Richard Rudolph, Chair of the *Rail Users Network* (RUN), and rail advocates from New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. All events to date have been extremely well attended, a fact which was extremely gratifying to the events' sponsors.

**NJ-ARP continues to advocate for a regional rail connection in midtown Manhattan, known in ARC parlance as Alternative "G," between Penn Station and Grand Central Terminal,** which would have the effect of tying the three rail operating agencies together and providing for alternative trans-Hudson mobility to supplement or replace increased vehicular congestion at the three Hudson River auto and truck crossings.

NJ-ARP has said in prior published testimony that, "During the Major Investment Study (MIS) phase of Access to the Region's Core (ARC) project, three final options were selected for detailed examination... The third option, Alternative "G," would turn north and tie into existing tracks in the Lower Level of Grand Central Terminal. **This option is strongly supported by NJ-ARP and transit advocates because it would bring passengers to the East Midtown area, where a large number of NJT rail passengers are headed. In each case Alternative "G" outperforms that other options, and we believe, should be the clear choice. It produces the highest number of peak hour passengers and diverts the greatest number of auto trips from crowded trans-Hudson highways. It is the only option that saves travel time for passengers headed to the East Midtown area. Surprisingly, this superior performance is achieved with the lowest operating and capital cost, and with the highest projected passenger revenue.**"

The alleged reason for the rejection of Alternative "G," as has now been widely reported in the press, was that New York's *Metropolitan Transportation Authority* (MTA) has continually objected to Alternative "G" throughout the ARC study period. Clearly, in March 2002, in its "West of Hudson Quarterly Report," MTA recommended to the ARC Project

Director that Alternative "G" be eliminated from further consideration.

NJT's present plan envisions a Manhattan terminus consisting of a deep cavern twin 2 track over 2 track (8 tracks total, 6 to be built initially) beneath 34th Street in the vicinity of New York's Penn Station adjacent to Macy's department store. The "official" logic as to why NJT adopted the 34th Street Penn Station annex solution hinges on providing convenient IND and BMT subway connections at Herald Square on 6th Avenue (tail tracks extend to 5th Avenue) which will allow the rider to get to the 5th and 3rd Avenue stations on the "V" line and 59th and Lexington Avenue station on the "N," "R" and "W" lines, thereby fulfilling the ARC "promise" of East Side access for New Jersey's residents.

NJ-ARP takes strong exception to this explanation. The principle reason for our rejection of the 34th Street deep level terminus lies in **NJT's dismissal of one of the principal tenets the original ARC scoping document -- the provision of direct Manhattan east side rail access for New Jersey regional rail riders through an NYP to GCT track linkage. Absent the incorporation of this link, an increasing amount of New Jersey regional rail riders will now face being taken to and from a location in midtown Manhattan that they do not really want to -- or need to -- access.**

Yet, despite continuing and strident rebuttal statements by NJT management that the 34th Street alignment will permit a future expansion of trackage "north, east and south," or into a midtown loop concept as advanced by the *Regional Plan Association* (RPA), the indisputable fact remains that through running between Metro-North's Hudson and Harlem Divisions, and the Long Island Rail Road, to NJT's NEC operations will be put aside for at least another generation, most likely many more.

NJ-ARP concludes that this is a grave and irreparable mistake, especially in the light of rapidly rising motor fuel prices, ever increasing vehicular congestion and continuing environmental degradation. Out of an admitted forced expediency, New Jersey Transit has selected an alternative that does not require the full active cooperation of the York State's Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Going it alone, we offer, results in a costly and inferior plan.

-- Albert L. Papp, Jr.

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## Web Site

NJ-ARP has just opened an online store, where members and non-members can buy merchandise with the NJ-ARP logo. The store is run by CafePress.com, which specializes in on-demand printing of items. CafePress.com handles the orders, printing, shipping, customer service, and returns. All items have a 30-day money back guarantee. Initially, a selection of shirts and a hat is being offered. More items may be added in the future. Selling NJ-ARP merchandise will help increase NJ-ARP's visibility and result in additional revenue.

NJ-ARP's Web site has been online for 11 years. The Web site contains membership information, position papers, press releases, and the weekly Hotline. NJ-ARP obtained its own domain name, nj-arp.org, in November 1999. The Web site is also accessible via an additional domain name, njarp.org (without the hyphen). NJ-ARP began accepting credit cards on the Web site for payment of new members' dues starting in March 2004.

Since November 1999, the NJ-ARP Web site has been hosted by pair Networks, Inc., located in Pittsburgh, Pa. Pair Networks operates more than 1,000 servers in its datacenter. NJ-ARP's site is hosted on an Athlon XP2800+ 2.6 GHz computer with 1024 MB of RAM and a 120 GB disk. (This server is shared with other pair Networks customers.) The Web hosting cost is \$16.51 per month, and the domain names are \$19 per year each. These costs have remained constant during the past year. The service provided by pair Networks is excellent, with no significant outages.

The NJ-ARP Web site is currently averaging more than 46,000 "hits" and 11,600 "page views" per month. Each Hotline is viewed an average of 450 times. The Hotline Mailing List, which allows people to be notified by e-mail when a new Hotline is available, currently has 186 subscribers.

Bob Scheurle maintains the Web site. NJ-ARP President Douglas John Bowen writes the Hotline.

-- Bob Scheurle

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