

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

**Northeast New Jersey Metro Mobility Study
Stakeholder Outreach Summary**

**Prepared For:
New Jersey Transit**

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1 INTRODUCTION

This technical memorandum presents the results of the public involvement plan carried out for the Northeast New Jersey Metro Mobility Study, conducted for NJ TRANSIT, North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) and Coach USA. The study corridor is defined as Bergen and Passaic counties, containing 86 municipalities, and an estimated total population of 1,387,028 people (895,250 in Bergen County and 491,778 in Passaic County, respectively)¹. The overall goal of this study is to examine existing and future intra- and inter-county bus transit services to identify innovative and effective improvements needed to get people where they need to go. Figure 1 shows the focus area of the study.

The overall goal of the public involvement plan and the stakeholder outreach is to gain an understanding of existing transit needs as described by representatives of all facets of the community affected by transit service, and through this understanding and with continual input from stakeholders, develop practical solutions in the form of long- and short-term service improvements. To accomplish this goal, the following objectives have been developed:

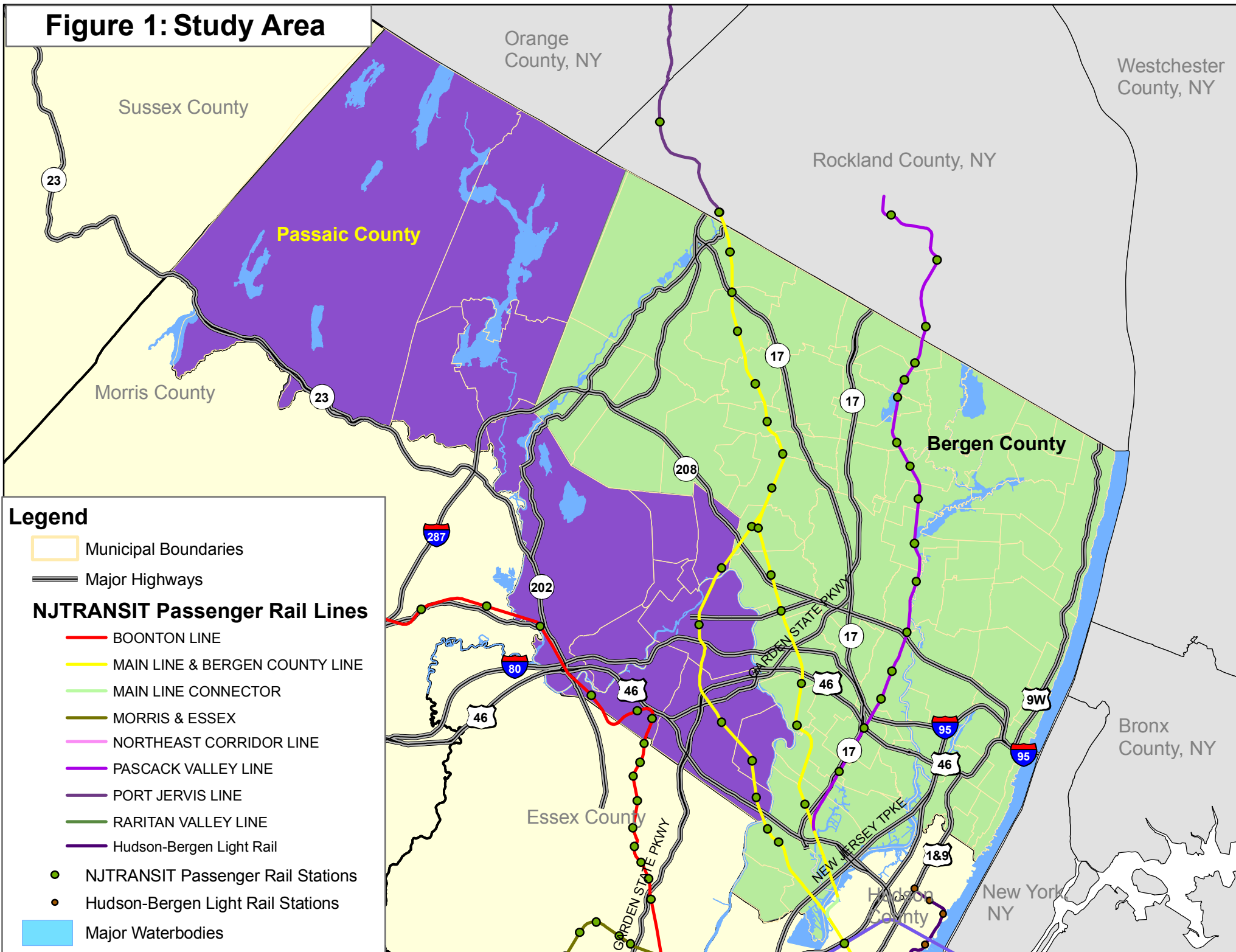
- Make the public aware of the project;
- Facilitate meaningful forums for the exchange of ideas;
- Provide one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders;
- Establish means to reach out to and inform the public about the project throughout the study period; and
- Elicit public comments and suggestions concerning the alternatives being considered.

The primary focus of the study includes stakeholder outreach to municipalities and major employers including hospitals and regional malls. In addition, an educator's summit was conducted to gather input from academic institutions within the study area whose student and employee populations may rely on public transit for their transportation needs.

This memorandum presents a detailed discussion of the public involvement process used for this study. The sections below provide background information on the stakeholder outreach process, a discussion of the stakeholder interview and public intercept survey questions, and the overall survey and interview results and trends/conclusions.

¹ US Census Bureau, November 2010

Figure 1: Study Area



2 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH TECHNIQUES USED FOR THIS STUDY

Several forms of outreach – a project web site, focus groups, face-to-face interviews, telephone surveys, and in-person travel preference surveys - were conducted as part of the stakeholder outreach task. The following sections describe the stakeholder outreach techniques.

2.1 Project Web Site

A project web site was developed in April 2009 by the Study Team. The web site, located at www.NENJMMS.com, consists of project updates, stakeholder meeting notes, FAQs, project-related documents and photos, and other downloadable content maintained by the Study Team. The web site also provides links to other transit- and bus-related projects currently taking place in the North Jersey region. A screen capture of the project web site is presented in Appendix A.

2.2 Study Committees

The project's Public Involvement Plan recommended establishing two committees, the Technical Advisor Committee (TAC) and the Advisory Committee, aimed at engaging representatives of the entire study area in a meaningful dialogue about the key issues regarding mobility. Membership of both committees was determined by NJ TRANSIT and NJTPA. The following sections present a more detailed discussion of the roles and responsibilities of each of these committees.

2.2.1 Technical Advisory Committee

The goal of the TAC was to identify policy issues pertinent to the study and indicate general issues of concern to each member's constituency and expertise. TAC membership consists of representatives from the following agencies:

- NJ TRANSIT Bus Service Planning
- NJ TRANSIT Government and Community Relations
- NJ TRANSIT Capital Planning
- NJTPA
- Bergen County
- Passaic County
- Meadowlink
- New Jersey Meadowlands Commission
- Coach USA

The first TAC meeting was held on October 28, 2009 and included representatives of each of the member agencies or services. The meeting involved a presentation followed by an open discussion regarding transit issues and needs important to each of the members' constituencies. It became clear that the study area was diverse enough that group meetings, such as the TAC, would not be useful as the issues and concerns of one member were not pertinent to the others. For example, Bergen County's commuting population is oriented toward the New York City job market. Bus routes and reverse trip issues involving the Port Authority Bus Terminal (PABT) were of great importance to them. Passaic County, on the other hand, required a more detailed discussion of inter-city and local busing, as their transit-oriented population generally worked within their own city or in another nearby location. Relatively few commuters traveled to New York City, as compared to Bergen County.

The Study Team determined that future meetings would be most productive if they were focused on one specific constituency. As a result, rather than schedule additional TAC meetings, the Study Team revised the outreach approach to include individual meetings with each agency.

TAC meeting materials and minutes are included in Appendix B.

2.2.2 Advisory Committee

The Northeast New Jersey Metro Mobility Study Public Involvement Plan proposed the involvement of an Advisory Committee consisting of transit-user groups associated with different employment sectors. The Advisory Committee was intended to meet following the TAC meetings, but following the first TAC, the Study Team determined that meeting individually with each transit-user group/employment category would yield more useful data than a large meeting of various user groups and employment sectors.

The goals for the Advisory Committee were met through the various focus group and Stakeholder meetings discussed below.

2.3 Focus Groups

There are several colleges and universities located within Bergen and Passaic counties, each with their own set of unique needs for public transportation. Representatives from several of these institutions were brought together for a focus group meeting with NJ TRANSIT on January 22, 2010 at William Paterson University. The purpose of the focus group meeting, or Educator's Summit, was to gain a better understanding of:

- Each institution's present and future transit needs; and
- The ways in which NJ TRANSIT can better serve the student, faculty, and staff populations at each institution.

The Study Team worked closely with municipal leaders from Bergen and Passaic counties to identify the appropriate stakeholders from each institution. The Study Team began the meeting with a brief overview of the project and then turned the meeting over to the Stakeholders to discuss their specific needs for new service or improvements to existing services as well as ways of encouraging bus usage by students.

In addition to representatives from NJ TRANSIT, NJTPA, Bergen County, Passaic County, and the Study Team, representatives from the following colleges and universities attended the day-long meeting:

- Bergen Community College;
- Eastwick College;
- Fairleigh Dickinson University;
- Montclair State University (MSU);

- Ramapo College of New Jersey; and
- William Paterson University (WPU).

A complete listing of attendees, the presentation given by NJ TRANSIT and the Study Team, as well as the official meeting minutes are provided in Appendix C.

2.4 Stakeholder Interviews

To obtain additional input on existing bus service and future bus transit opportunities, the Study Team conducted a series of face-to-face and telephone interviews with municipal leaders, regional employers, and bus operators.

2.4.1 Bus Operator Interviews

Interviews were conducted with bus operators to provide insight into the practical issues facing bus transit. Bus operator interviews consisted of three-hour long interview sessions and were conducted with the operators from NJ TRANSIT, Coach USA and Academy in June, July and August of 2009. The number of sessions conducted at each garage is as follows:

- NJ Transit
 - Oradell Garage: Two sessions
 - Meadowlands Garage: Two sessions
 - Market Street Garage (Paterson): Three sessions
 - Fairview Garage: One session
 - Wayne Garage: One session
- Coach USA – one two-hour session at the Mahwah Coach USA garage
- Short Line – one two-hour session at the Short Line facility in Mahwah
- Rockland Coach – one two-hour session at the Rockland facility in Westwood
- Academy – one two-hour session at the Academy facility in Hoboken

The interview sessions were facilitated by brainstorming led by NJ TRANSIT Bus Service Planning Staff and assisted by the Study Team. These sessions used a questionnaire to facilitate the discussion and operator answers to the questionnaire remained anonymous. The results of the interview sessions are presented in Appendix D.

2.4.2 Interviews with Municipal Leaders

One-on-one interviews were conducted with city managers and/or mayors of municipalities within Bergen and Passaic counties throughout 2010. Mayors, city managers, and planning staff understand residents' needs and could provide key insight into issues with existing bus service, areas where improved service and/or connections could be provided, and based on redevelopment trends, where future service may need to be located within their communities.

Table 1 presents the municipalities interviewed and dates of these meetings. Minutes from each interview can be found in Appendix E. A summary of the findings from these meetings is included in Table 4 in Section 3 of this report.

Table 1: Municipalities Contacted During the Outreach Process

Municipality	County	Contact Name/Names	Date of Meeting
City of Englewood	Bergen	Kenneth Albert – City Planner/ Engineer	February 17, 2010
City of Fort Lee	Bergen	Mark J. Sokolich – Mayor	March 5, 2010
Pascack Valley Mayors Association	Bergen	Louis Lamatina – Mayor, Emerson Joseph LaPaglia – Mayor, Woodcliff Lake Joseph Scarpa – Borough Administrator, Emerson Jonathan DeJoseph – Councilman, Hillsdale	March 5, 2010
City of Hackensack	Bergen	Marlin G. Townes, Jr. – Mayor Stephen Lo Iacono – City Manager	April 7, 2010
City of Paramus	Bergen	James Tedesco - Mayor	April 27, 2010*
City of Clifton	Passaic	Albert Greco – City Manager	June 23, 2010
Township of Wayne	Passaic	John Szabo – City Planner Linda Lutz – Assistant Planner	June 23, 2010
City of Teaneck	Bergen	William Broughton – Municipal Manager	September 27, 2010

* Meeting scheduled with the Mayor and members of the Study Team were present, however, the Mayor did not attend.

2.4.3 Interview with Passaic County

The meeting with Passaic County officials focused on access issues throughout Passaic County, which is very diverse geographically and demographically. In the older urban centers of Paterson, Passaic, and Clifton, parking availability is constrained and the county feels that the span of bus service hours does not meet the needs many bus-dependent workers. For example, the Clifton Commons parking lot is at capacity as a result of on-street parking restrictions in Nutley and Clifton, and there is need for additional service after 10pm in Paterson on some routes.

Increasing residential development in the suburban and rural areas also has resulted in new transit needs. The county is considering Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service along Hamburg Turnpike and recognizes the need for an up-county transit hub that would serve West Milford and Ringwood.

Overall, the county hopes to see better connectivity between existing transit services, greater geographical coverage, and improvements to the span of service so that the changing employment needs of the transit-dependent communities are better served. Detailed minutes are found in Appendix F.

2.4.4 Interview/Work Sessions with Bergen County

Two work sessions were held with Bergen County: the first session focused on BRT services and potential routes and the second focused on local and intercity bus service issues. NJ TRANSIT representatives were interested in the feedback from Bergen County on a number of issues including the potential for Sunday service to uses not affected by Bergen County's Blue Laws, improved service to existing uses including Secaucus Transfer and Bergen Community College, the role of EZ Ride service, designation of bus stops in municipalities averse to bus route signage, underserved areas, and the potential for connection hubs.

The County responded with several needs it had identified including a design manual for bus shelters, better access to bus shelters along highways, and new route service between Bergen County and Westchester County, NY. Detailed minutes are found in Appendix F.

2.4.5 Interview with the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission

The discussion with the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) ranged from potential transit needs resulting from the termination of the Access to the Region's Core (ARC) project and the re-investment in American Dream-Meadowlands (formerly Xanadu), to relocations of major employers into and out of the Meadowlands, to regional shuttle service. Detailed minutes are found in Appendix F.

2.4.6 Interview with Meadowlink

The discussion with Meadowlink explored the advantages and disadvantages of Meadowlink's business model and outreach/advertising ability. Meadowlink is very effective in marketing its services to employers, but not as effective in reaching the general public. The shuttle service Meadowlink offers can be rapidly altered to respond to ridership changes whereas NJ TRANSIT requires more lead time to alter existing service or add new routes, which an advantage for Meadowlink. The shuttle service offered by Meadowlink could be more widely implemented to supplement NJ TRANSIT service, but additional funding would be required to run more shuttle routes and effectively advertise the service to the public. Detailed minutes are found in Appendix F.

2.4.7 Interviews with Regional Employers

In order to determine whether existing bus services are meeting the needs of the employees of the larger, regional employers within Bergen and Passaic counties, the Study Team conducted one-on-one and telephone interviews with leaders and human resource personnel at the major regional hospitals, as well as with the management of large regional shopping malls. Additionally, if requested by the particular facility, the Study Team conducted a one-

on-one meeting to supplement the results and/or responses gathered during the telephone interviews.

Table 2 presents the hospitals and shopping malls that were contacted during the study and their level of participation.

Table 2: Employers Contacted During the Outreach Process

Employer Name	County	Telephone Survey	Interview with Study Team	Did Not Participate
Bergen Regional Medical Center	Bergen			✓
Englewood Hospital	Bergen		✓	
Hackensack University Medical Center	Bergen	✓	✓	
The Valley Hospital	Bergen			✓
Holy Name Hospital	Bergen	✓		
St. Joseph’s Hospital	Passaic	✓		
Preakness Healthcare Center	Passaic	✓		
Chilton Memorial Hospital	Passaic			✓
St. Mary’s Hospital	Passaic			✓
Willowbrook Mall	Passaic		✓	
Westfield Garden State Plaza	Bergen	✓	✓	
Paramus Park Mall	Bergen			✓
Shoppes at Riverside	Bergen			✓
Bergen Town Center	Bergen	✓		

The Study Team developed two questionnaires – one for hospitals and the other for shopping malls – that were used during the telephone interviews (see Appendix F for samples and completed questionnaires).

Human resources personnel at each hospital were contacted and asked to participate in the interview. Phone interviews with human resources personnel were generally successful; however, even with extensive follow-up phone calls and emails, none of the questionnaires distributed for completion by hospital staff have been returned.

A similar process was used for the shopping malls, and every effort was made to encourage the mall managers’ participation in the telephone interview. In some instances, the managers requested the questionnaire in lieu of the interview. Even with extensive follow-up calls and emails, none of the questionnaires have been returned.

2.5 Travel Preference Surveys

In November and December 2010, the Study Team conducted “table events” at the Willowbrook Mall and Westfield Garden State Plaza. The purpose of the table events was to obtain feedback from mall patrons on their current bus transit usage and to provide them with information on NJ TRANSIT’s online Trip Planner and “My Bus” Program. In general, NJ

TRANSIT wanted to target non-transit riders and determine why they were not currently using transit and what factors would encourage them to use transit.

The outreach/table event at Willowbrook Mall in Wayne, New Jersey was held on Saturday, November 13, 2010 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For this effort, the Study Team developed a travel preference survey questionnaire that focused on how patrons or employees traveled to the Willowbrook Mall that day, how they traveled around the region, and why they would not consider using transit if they typically drove to work and around the region. Respondents were also asked to provide their home and work zip codes. Members of the Study Team were on hand to administer the surveys. All responses were recorded on paper questionnaires and then entered into an electronic survey form (www.surveymonkey.com). Overall, the Study Team was able to complete 43 surveys.

Additional table events were held at Westfield Garden State Plaza in Paramus, New Jersey, on Saturday, December 4, 2010, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Monday, December 6, 2010 from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. Because of the number of bus transit riders who completed the survey at the Willowbrook Mall, the questionnaire was modified to gather information on what routes patrons/employees were riding, what they liked about the existing bus service, and what improvements could be made to the routes they currently ride. Again, members of the Study Team were on hand both days to administer the surveys. All responses were recorded on paper questionnaires and then entered into an electronic survey form (www.surveymonkey.com). Overall, between the two days the Study Team was able to complete 87 surveys.

It should be noted, however, that survey respondents often did not complete the full survey and provided limited information on how they traveled to the mall, how they travel around the region, and their home zip code. As a result, the total responses for each question does not always equal the total number of survey completed.

The overall results of the travel preference surveys for both malls are discussed in more detail in Section 3.3. Sample survey questionnaires and compiled survey results for both shopping malls are presented in Appendix H.

3 OUTCOMES OF STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

The following sections present the major outcomes or themes from the outreach conducted for this project including interviews with bus operators (NJ TRANSIT, Coach USA, and others), the Educator's Summit, and other stakeholder input conducted with community leaders, hospitals, and regional shopping malls within Bergen and Passaic Counties.

The issues highlighted in this outreach effort will be reviewed by NJ TRANSIT and will help guide future transit planning initiatives. Some issues raised may be addressed through short-term adjustments, while others, particularly those that relate to system-wide issues, are likely to require capital investment and would be part of a long-term transit planning program.

3.1 Educator Summit

As discussed in Section 2, an Educator's Summit was held at William Paterson University (WPU) on January 22, 2010. Table 3 presents a summary of key comments and trends heard at the summit. The official meeting notes and list of attendees are included in Appendix C.

As presented in the table, each institution has a unique set of needs when it comes to bus service. However, based on the feedback received from students and professors it appears that key issues include:

- Additional service is needed to/from area colleges and universities as well as health care facilities located within New York City;
- Additional connections are needed between the campuses and rail stations. Many students have classes, internships, or like to socialize in New York City. Because of existing service times and frequencies, students are sometimes unable to avail themselves of opportunities in New York City.
- Route times on some routes should be geared towards the students' schedules and not towards a typical 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. commuter schedule. More off-peak service and late night service is needed.
- Students are unfamiliar with the current routes and zone structure, which discourages use of the system. Area colleges and universities should work with NJ TRANSIT to develop a bus transit "User's Guide" to encourage students to use transit and feel more comfortable with the system.
- Student bus tickets and parking at park-and-ride facilities are too expensive which discourages many students from taking transit. NJ TRANSIT should investigate ways of further discounting the price of parking and monthly bus passes for students.

Table 3: Key Outcomes from the Educator’s Summit

Topic Area	General Trends	Specific Comments
<p>Span of Service/ Frequencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current service frequencies do not work for students. There is poor off-peak service, headways are too long, and there is little flexibility. • Bus schedules are geared towards regular commuters on a 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule. With classes and work, student schedules typically do not match commuters’ schedules, therefore more flexibility is needed. • Off-peak service is poor. There is a concern for the safety of those students who need to get back to campus from bus stops at night. • Lack of flexibility in scheduling and span of service are issues. The last bus from campus leaves around 10 p.m., which is particularly a problem during exam time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service frequency and current schedules are issues with WPU staff/faculty who live in New York City and do not drive; this is particularly a problem for faculty who teach night classes. • Ramapo College would like to see more frequent connections between area rail stations and the campus. Right now, Ramapo College pays Coach USA to provide shuttle service between the campus, area stores and the train station. This service begins at 2 p.m. and there is no service in the morning. • Routes 76/192 provide limited service to Bergen Community College. • The Meadowlands area suffers from a lack of service. Bus service reaches the area only four times each day. However, classes at Bergen Community College are scheduled between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m.
<p>Regional Access/ Connections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to connect with other universities. • The last trains from New York City are not late enough to get people back to New Jersey after hours. This must also be a problem for students who would like to socialize in New York City but do not because of the lack of transit service. • Students need to get to New York City for internships. Students will drive to WPU to park and use the #198 bus even if they do not have a class on campus. The current bus schedules, however, restricts students’ ability to take full advantage of possible internships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastwick College needs better connections to health care facilities in the Bronx for student training purposes. • There is difficulty in getting to WPU from portions of Essex County, particularly East Orange. Better or more direct connections to/from WPU to/from Essex County are needed. The #75 service does not operate frequently enough to serve this need. • Bergen County Community College of the Meadowlands expects its student population to double in the coming years. Access from other points within the region will become a bigger issue over time.

Topic Area	General Trends	Specific Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple bus transfers are required to travel from suburban residential areas to WPU; transfers involve a lot of waiting time. • At Farleigh Dickinson – 283 students use bus passes. It takes about 1½ hours to travel by bus from Manhattan to the campus, whereas driving takes less than half that time. There is no easy access by bus from Manhattan to the campus.
Amenities Needed to Encourage Transit Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking is a problem for students at their points of origin for catching a bus. Many communities have parking restrictions near bus stops, limiting the time cars can be parked, or charging expensive parking fees. Students cannot afford to park their cars near bus hubs as a result. • There is a need for cheaper bus tickets for students on a budget. A monthly pass is \$100; this price is still too high for students. • Affordability and confusing zone structure penalizes and discourages users. • Would it be possible to provide ticketing kiosk on campus? Can transit partner kiosk with ATMs and sell tickets through ATM's, like they do postage stamps? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastwick nursing students need to access hospitals and institutions from campus. Pedestrian connections from Route 17 bus stops are difficult and the walking environment is dangerous; relocate stops with pedestrian safety in mind. • MSU campus design has been changing as the campus expands. The present bus stop used to be the center of student activity, but it does not work as well anymore. The Student Center is now the campus hub. Can bus service be changed to reflect this change? • The last stop for the #28 bus is MSU. Drivers occasionally have a 20-minute layover. Idling buses create some issues with traffic movement on campus if the drivers layover in the wrong location.

3.2 Bus Operator Interviews

As mentioned in Section 2, NJ TRANSIT and members of the Study Team conducted one-on-one interviews with NJ TRANSIT, Coach USA, Academy and Rockland Coach during the months of June, July, and August 2009. The Study Team was looking to the bus operators to provide insight into the practical issues facing existing and future bus transit services and operations throughout Bergen and Passaic counties.

Bus operators, relative to the routes they drive, were asked to provide feedback on the following:

- Bus stop design and location – are stops clearly visible by drivers? Are there stops where dangerous conditions are present? Can drivers safely execute turning movements? Have passengers recommended new or additional stops along a route? Do certain stops need amenities such as benches and covers?
- Fare system – do passengers understand the fare structure? Do passengers understand transfers and how they work?
- Schedules and routes – does the current service meet the needs of passengers? Has ridership increased or decreased on some routes? Does traffic on local roads cause you to run behind schedule? Is more service needed on weekends, later at night or earlier in the morning?
- Street conditions – do people park in bus stops on local streets? Does traffic near schools and businesses make it difficult for you to be on time? Are pavement markings (e.g., stop bars, cross walks) visible? Which streets are too narrow or intersection corners too tight for buses to maneuver?
- Network complexities – do passengers get confused by route numbering? How do you communicate with passengers who do not speak English? Do you handle a lot of transfers on your route? Should transfers be eliminated on some routes?
- Policy – are fare and other policies clearly reflected on schedules and other provider information? Do operators understand the policies and enforce them?
- Traffic signals – can you identify locations where signal timing needs to be changed to enhance the efficiency of your bus route?
- Vehicle condition – do your fareboxes work? Are buses properly cleaned and maintained when not in use?
- PABT/Lincoln Tunnel – are gate assignments consistent? What problems/issues do you encounter in accessing the PABT? Is there congestion entering the PABT gate? Can the Lincoln Tunnel toll booth be more efficient?

- Passenger communication – are there language barriers between operators and passengers? Do operators need more information on connecting routes? Is scheduling information available at all stops and/or hubs?

Detailed summaries of the operator interviews and potential recommendations are included in Appendix D. The routes and issues discussed during these interviews provides the Study Team and NJ TRANSIT with a starting point as many of the issues (e.g., providing more scheduling information, putting up new signage, or using cones to separate traffic at the Lincoln Tunnel toll booth) are minor and have minimal costs associated with them. The Study Team recommends that the feedback be used to develop a comprehensive list of short-, medium-, and long-term improvements so that when funding becomes available, NJ TRANSIT can act quickly to make improvements.

3.3 Municipal Leaders

The Study Team conducted one-on-one interviews with local officials including mayors, city managers, and planning staff from several communities located within the Bergen and Passaic County study area. The main issues with and opportunities for bus transit service heard from the municipalities in each county are summarized in Table 4. The official meeting minutes from each interview are presented in Appendix E.

“Next step” recommendations for NJ TRANSIT based on the feedback received from the participating communities in both counties includes:

- Coordinate with those municipalities undergoing significant redevelopment projects. Additional service will be needed to/from these residential and/or mixed-use areas. Additional coordination may also be needed with Montclair State University as the plan for increased dormitory space on campus moves forward.
- Commuter parking is an issue in most communities in Bergen and Passaic counties. New and/or alternative leasing agreements with underutilized parking lots should be explored.
- Additional buses and/or service may be needed on those routes serving Route 4 and Route 80 in Englewood.
- Additional intra-county service may be needed in Bergen County. Currently bus service is geared towards commuters traveling to/from New York City.

Table 4: Summary of Outreach with Study Area Municipal Leaders

Topic Area	Bergen County	Passaic County
<p>Existing Bus Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Englewood, there are currently more people than bus service. NJ TRANSIT buses are operating at capacity on routes serving Route 4 and Route 80. • Representatives from Hackensack stated that transit does not work well in the city. Currently people cannot get from train stations to the hospital, county complex, or other municipal complexes. Current bus service is geared towards getting commuters to New York City. More service needs to be provided within the communities in Bergen County. • Currently there is no way to get to downtown New York City from the bus stop located near the new developments on Route 4 in the southeastern portion of Englewood. Residents can get uptown from this stop; however, if they need to go downtown, they need to walk to a stop located on Broad Avenue. • Representatives from Fort Lee, Pascack Valley, and Teaneck stated that, to date, they have not received any negative feedback about bus transit services within their communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date, neither employers nor residents have reported any issues with bus transit or stop locations within Wayne. • The City Manager of Clifton often gets requests for additional stops along Broad Street and Van Houten Avenue, as well as for additional service along River Road and Delawan Avenue. • There is a new townhouse complex off of Colfax Avenue in Clifton. On the return trip, passengers/residents are dropped off two blocks further from where they were picked up in the morning, which is a pretty far distance at night or in inclement weather. • The City Manager of Clifton voiced his displeasure with the “Spanish” buses. He would like to get rid of them. These buses stop in the middle of the road for passengers to board and offload passengers, which ties up traffic.

<p>Regional Access/ Connections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several light rail extensions are planned in Englewood, Hackensack, and possibly Fort Lee. It was stated that more people would ride the light rail if it stopped near bus transit hubs or was located more conveniently to bus stops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Manager of Clifton supports the new train station/park-and-ride/bus station being planned for off of Route 3. (Routes 3/21 interchange)
<p>Commuter Parking Needs and Issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuters parking along local and residential streets were identified as a problem in Teaneck, Hackensack, and within the Pascack Valley. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teaneck is exploring posting time restrictions on weekdays during the a.m. peak hours as well as resident stickers. Teaneck has also identified the locations of several underutilized parking garages that could be used for daily commuter parking. ○ Hackensack has a residential parking decal program in place; however, nothing seems to be working. • NJ TRANSIT needs to advertise and promote the Vince Lombardi rest area as a park-and-ride location for commuters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuter parking is an issue in Clifton and Wayne. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The park-and-ride lot in Clifton just underwent significant expansion, however it is still over capacity for parking needs, and always full on weekdays. ○ New York City-bound commuters who park on residential streets have become a problem in Clifton. A permit parking program was introduced on Allwood Road at the request of residents. ○ The Transit 23 facility in Wayne is currently over capacity. NJ TRANSIT was supposed to put out an Expression of Interest for the design of a parking deck extension, but this has not happened yet; Wayne representatives mentioned that the Mayor is quite upset that no progress has been made on this by NJ TRANSIT. • There are several large grass medians along Route 3 that could be used for commuter parking areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ St. Claire’s Church on Main Avenue and Allwood Road has approached NJ TRANSIT about leasing or buying its

		parking lot. This would provide convenient parking along Route 3 for commuters.
Redevelopment Areas Needing Bus Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are new residential development and redevelopment projects planned in Englewood, Fort Lee and within the Pascack Valley. Hackensack is currently rezoning parcels to create overlay zones within its downtown. All of these developments/areas would need to be better served by bus transit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Wayne is practically built out; however, in the near future they do see opportunities for redevelopment and possibly some transit-friendly and/or pedestrian-friendly development. • Montclair State University is adding a 2,000-student dormitory and a parking garage. The City would be interested in looking at a shuttle service between the University and Clifton retail centers. • International Delight (bakery) will be relocating its facility from Long Island City to Clifton; the plant will employ between 250 to 300 people. • There is the possibility of a transit village near Kingsland Avenue, as this location would be within walking distance to the train station and bus service. • Once the Meadowlands development is complete, there may be a need for service to that complex.

3.4 Regional Employers

Hospitals and shopping malls were identified as some of the largest employers within Bergen and Passaic counties.

3.4.1 Hospitals

As mentioned in Section 2, hospital outreach consisted of a telephone questionnaire and/or face-to-face meetings, if additional follow-up was required. Table 5 provides a summary of feedback on existing bus transit services obtained from each of the area hospitals. Completed questionnaires and meeting notes can be found in Appendix G.

3.4.2 Regional Shopping Malls

There are several large, regional shopping malls in Bergen and Passaic counties. Similar to the hospital outreach, the Study Team conducted telephone interviews with several of the larger shopping malls located in Bergen and Passaic counties. Although the Study Team reached out to the management of several malls within the study area, Westfield Garden State Plaza and Bergen Town Center were the only shopping malls to complete a telephone questionnaire. Completed questionnaires are included in Appendix G.

The key bus transit issues and opportunities identified by the surveys include:

- Most employees drive alone; however, a large percentage of the cleaning staff use transit.
- Most employees at the malls located along Routes 4 and 17 come from the Paterson, Englewood, and Fort Lee area.
- Customers arrive by buses #171, 753, 168 and the independent jitney service on Route 4 is also used. There is a dedicated bus “station” at Garden State Plaza but not at Bergen Towne Center.
- There are more than 5,000 free parking spaces at Garden State Plaza.
- Mall managers currently provide NJ TRANSIT bus routes numbers on their web site but do not advertise internally for MeadowLink or other bus/transit services.
- Mall managers would like to have a pedestrian overpass/walkway over Route 4.

Table 5: Summary of Outreach to Study Area Hospitals

Topic Area	General Trends	Specific Comments
<p>Basic Hospital Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital size ranges from 600 employees at Preakness Healthcare up to 8,000 employees at Hackensack University Medical Center (HUMC). • All hospitals have 3 main shifts on weekdays and weekends typically covering the hours of 7 a.m. to 3/3:30 p.m.; 3 p.m. to 11/11:30 p.m.; 11 p.m. to 7/7:30 a.m. The majority of employees work these shifts. • Other shifts include “12’s” where a few employees work 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. or 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. These are not considered major shifts. • All hospitals are currently expanding or have plans to expand their main facilities or medical offices in the future; however some were unsure as to whether the expansions would lead to an increase in employees. 	
<p>Employee Commute Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At all of the hospitals except Englewood, it was reported that between 70 and 90 percent of employees drive alone to work. • All hospitals stated that the environmental services or housekeeping staff take transit or carpool to work. • Most HUMC employees are averse to taking transit. (HUMC also provides free parking for their employees) • None of the hospitals reported hearing that employees wanted to take transit but could not do so because of scheduled/route limitations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Englewood Hospital reported that between 65 and 75 percent of its employees take some form of transit to work. • Transit services are not directly provided to/from Preakness Healthcare. • Holy Name Hospital reported that there is a small percentage of employees traveling from New York City to work at the facility. • Englewood Hospital reported that most of their “special populations” are coming from North Bergen and Hudson County. Bus connections to/from Hudson County

Topic Area	General Trends	Specific Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None of the hospitals have trouble recruiting due to their location and/or transportation issues. • All hospitals reported that most employees come from the same county in which the hospital is located. 	<p>need to be improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HUMC, Holy Name, and Englewood Hospitals reported that there is an out-migration of employees who live in New York City. • Holy Name Hospital also reported that a very small percentage of its employees come from the Poconos and Shore Points.
<p>Business/Commuting Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All hospitals reported that they do not receive feedback from employees on commute options. • Most hospitals currently provide bus schedules and other transit information in human resources offices and other employee/visitor areas. • None of the hospitals currently sell bus/transit passes on-site. • The hospitals do not participate in the Transit-Chek program. • St. Joseph’s Hospital currently provides incentives for carpooling but not transit. • Several times per year, Holy Name Hospital publishes directions on how to use the bus system and distributes them to employees. Some employees are intimidated by the bus system and are afraid of getting lost or taking the wrong bus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit service is currently not provided to/from Preakness Healthcare. They would like to speak with NJ TRANSIT about getting bus service. • St. Joseph’s Hospital would be interested in having someone come in and speak about transit options and programs at new employee orientation. • Preakness Healthcare and Englewood Hospital would be interested in having MeadowLink or NJ TRANSIT give a presentation to human resources about bus passes and other transit information. • St. Joseph’s Hospital would like the rail station next to the hospital re-opened. • Preakness Healthcare would like a bus stop and supporting pedestrian infrastructure near their facility.

Topic Area	General Trends	Specific Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a parking shortage at all facilities except for Holy Name Hospital and Preakness Healthcare. HUMC currently provides shuttle services to/from satellite parking lots to/from the hospital. • Employees park for free at all hospitals. However, in the near future employees will have to pay for parking at St. Joseph's Hospital; the amount an employee pays will be based on his/her salary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Englewood Hospital needs more direct connections/service to/from Hudson County. Currently people need to make a transfer. • HUMC suggested providing connections to/from the hospital to/from key hubs in Hudson County. HUMC also mentioned that it could be beneficial to extend service from the Hackensack bus terminal to HUMC. • Holy Name hospital would like a bus to arrive at the hospital soon after the 11:30 p.m. shift has ended. Currently, employees need to wait thirty minutes or more for a bus since they do not run as frequently at that time.
Patient Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All facilities reported that almost all of their patients arrive by car. • Englewood Hospital reported that many of their patients come from Hudson County. They currently run private car service for cancer and dialysis patients since transit service to the hospital is limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HUMC is willing to work with NJ TRANSIT on providing bus/transit information and/or links on its web site for patients and visitors.

Both Willowbrook Mall in Wayne and the Garden State Plaza in Paramus provide regional employment opportunities and serve as regional activity/shopping destinations for residents of communities in Bergen, Passaic, Essex, and Hudson counties as well as for residents of New York City and its adjacent suburbs. The Study Team met with representatives from these two malls to discuss the state of existing bus service to/from each mall as well as opportunities for additional bus service and park and ride/commuter parking spaces at each location. Prior to the meetings, the Study Team developed a one-page flyer describing the study as well as NJ TRANSIT's online Trip Planner and the new "My Bus" program. The flyers were tailored to each mall and electronic versions were provided to mall management, for distribution to retailers, after the meetings with the Study Team. Samples of these flyers are included in Appendix G.

Willowbrook Mall

Members of the Study Team met with Gil Bankston, Manager of the Willowbrook Mall, on October 6, 2010. The official notes from this meeting are included in Appendix G. Key highlights of that meeting included:

- Mr. Bankston mentioned that parking is at a premium at the mall. During peak shopping times, there are no extra spaces.
- The NJ TRANSIT commuter parking lot located on the mall property near the Old Navy entrance is at capacity. Mall management had cameras installed to monitor commuters who try to park outside of the designated commuter parking area.
- Mr. Bankston stated that a commuter/employee survey had never been conducted at Willowbrook Mall therefore he was uncertain as to how many employees drive to the mall each day as opposed to taking transit.
- Communication with mall retailers/tenants was difficult. There is not one unique Willowbrook Mall email address and oftentimes top management of some stores is located in other states. If he needs information or to deliver something, he typically has to walk door-to-door within the mall.

Garden State Plaza

Members of the Study Team met with Ryan DeStoop, Assistant General Manager and James Kelly, Operations & Risk Management of the Westfield Garden State Plaza on September 8, 2010. Notes from this meeting are included in Appendix G. Key highlights of that meeting included:

- Mall management has not heard of any transit issues over the last year, only around the holiday season.

- The current bus schedule could be better for early and late shift – e.g. the mall office secretary arrives at 7:30 a.m. each morning, well before her scheduled work start time since the next bus would make her late for work daily.
- Options for covered pedestrian walkways and changes to the location and amenities of the mall transit stop were discussed.
- Spanish Transportation has an agreement with the mall for the next few of years to provide jitney service on mall property. Jitneys load in the same area as NJ TRANSIT. Jitney service is more frequent than NJ TRANSIT; however, if both pull up at the same time, patrons prefer NJ TRANSIT bus.
- The possibility may exist for a partnership between NJ TRANSIT and Garden State Plaza for improvements. Both entities could work together early in the process so that new development plans for structured parking could possibly accommodate enhanced transit access.

3.5 Travel Preference Survey Results

As discussed in Section 2, the Study Team conducted travel preference surveys at the Willowbrook Mall and Westfield Garden State Plaza in November and December 2010, respectively. The purpose of the surveys was to get a better understanding of how people are traveling through the region as well as some of the factors that would need to be present in order for them to consider taking transit. Survey respondents were also asked to provide their home and work zip codes so that the Study Team could determine key origin and destination points within the study area and whether gaps exist in the current bus service.

Table 6 below presents the results of the travel preference surveys for each shopping mall. A more detailed report of all survey questions and responses is provided in Appendix H. Based on the feedback received from the travel preference surveys, it appears that:

- Mall patrons/employees continue to drive their cars to/from the malls and throughout the Bergen and Passaic county region. They stated that they will take bus transit only if they can no longer afford their cars or if gas prices continue to increase.
- Employees at both malls are often left stranded at night since buses do not run late enough to cover the closing shifts. Increased service frequency at night and on weekends is also needed.
- Buses are consistently late. Most complaints were heard about the #700-level routes, which respondents stated are late almost every day.
- Transfers between routes and others modes are hard to make.

- While mall patrons and employees prefer to ride NJ TRANSIT buses, they will ride the \$1/Spanish Transportation jitneys because they come more often (every 10 to 15 minutes as opposed to every hour).

Table 6: Summary of Regional Shopping Mall Travel Preference Surveys

Question	Willowbrook Mall Responses <i>(# of respondents (% total) mode)</i>	Westfield Garden State Plaza Responses <i>(# of respondents (% total) mode)</i>
Travel to the mall – car or bus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 (72 percent) traveled to the mall by car • 10 (23 percent) traveled by bus. • 2 (4 percent) traveled by other means (e.g., walked or carpooled with friends). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 (70 percent) traveled to the mall by car • 25 (29 percent) traveled by bus. • 1 (1 percent) traveled by other means (e.g., walked or carpooled with friends).
Travel through the region – car or bus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 (67 percent) travel by car • 12 (28 percent) travel by bus • 2 (4 percent) travel by other means (e.g., walked or carpooled with friends). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51 (60 percent) traveled to the mall by car • 33 (39 percent) traveled by bus. • 1 (1 percent) traveled by other means (e.g., walked or carpooled with friends).
If you drive, would you consider riding the bus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – 12 (34 percent) • No – 8 (23 percent) • Maybe – (43 percent) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – 8 (15 percent) • No – 35 (66 percent) • Maybe –10 (19 percent)
Why would you not consider taking transit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are unfamiliar with the bus routes and where they travel. • They do not know the times that the buses run. • Bus service is not frequent enough to meet their needs. • They do not feel comfortable using public transit. • The bus stops are too far away from their house and/or destination. • The bus does not go where they need to go. • Bus drivers drive “crazy”. • They like their cars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They just like their car too much to consider riding the bus. • They need to have their cars during the day to attend meetings, make deliveries, or run work-related errands. • The bus does not provide service where they need to go. • They are unfamiliar with bus routes, schedules, and stops. • Bus stops are too far away from their home and/or destination. • The bus does not provide service where they need to go. • While they are able to drive they will never take the bus. • It is not convenient to take the bus with their children.
Factors that would make people consider riding the bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route and/or schedule information at bus stops. • Increased frequency of buses, especially at night. • Faster service to Willowbrook Mall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route and/or schedule information at bus stops. • Route and/or schedule information on their cell phone/PDA. • Increased gas prices. • Better connections to rail stations and

Question	Willowbrook Mall Responses (# of respondents (% total) mode)	Westfield Garden State Plaza Responses (# of respondents (% total) mode)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buses need to be on time, especially at night. 	other modes.
Factors that would make people consider riding the bus <i>continued</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service to St. Joseph's Hospital. They currently need to transfer twice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased frequency of buses, especially at night.
What bus routes do you ride?	n.a.*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 percent ride routes #168 and #709; 10 percent ride routes #163, #165, #171, #758 and #780; 7 percent ride routes #145 and #175. Other popular routes include #156, #159, #167, #703-705, #744, #751, and #756
What do you like about riding the bus?	n.a.*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a cheap way to travel around the region and to/from New York City (43.8 percent). The stops are convenient to my house (37.5 percent). The stops are convenient to my place of employment (25 percent). The bus gets me to/from work on time (37.5 percent).
Improvements needed to the routes you ride?	n.a.*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More on-time buses. The #758 is never on time and riders need to "guess" what time it will come from day to day. Buses need to run more frequently during the morning and evening rush hours. Riders mentioned that there is oftentimes one hour in between NJ TRANSIT buses, but the \$1 Bus comes more frequently (every 10 to 15 minutes). Riders do not feel safe taking the \$1 Buses, however they will because they do not feel like waiting for NJ TRANSIT buses. Coach USA #780 and #753 drivers need more training. Oftentimes riders need to tell drivers how to drive the routes. More buses needed on the weekends

Question	Willowbrook Mall Responses <i>(# of respondents (% total) mode)</i>	Westfield Garden State Plaza Responses <i>(# of respondents (% total) mode)</i>
Improvements needed to the routes you ride? <i>continued</i>	n.a.*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #709 is never on time. The driver still takes a break even when running behind schedule. • Express lanes do not work – they are always congested. • Drivers are rude and have poor attitudes. • I am often stranded. More buses are needed to cover the late shift.
New/additional stop locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlawn Park; • Bloomfield and Prospect before Pompton; • Community College of Morris; • At the top of the hill in the Cedar Crest Community; and • Lackawanna Avenue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden State Plaza stop needs to be closer to the entrance of the mall. • Ridgefield Post office • Main Street/Fairlawn Avenue • Hawthorne Gospel and Russell Avenue exit • Oradell Avenue/Kinderkamarack Road • Nungessers (top and bottom of hill) • Burden Avenue, Wayne
Top 5 rider origins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paterson; • Newark; • East Orange, West Orange, Orange; • Belleville; and • Wayne. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairlawn; • Passaic; • Hackensack; • Teaneck; and • Paterson
Other comments heard about bus service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NJ TRANSIT needs to have a single fare card for the buses and trains. • NJ TRANSIT should prohibit passengers from using cell phones on buses. • Need better connections to #161. • Need better connections overall; transfers are hard to make and travel takes more time. • There are never enough buses on #712 and #704; always stranded. • Buses are late. There needs to be more service on #704, #748, #712. In addition, routes #34, #24, #94, #90, #11, #29 do not run on time. • Drivers are rude and not helpful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of #168 routing is not good. Riders have to take #83 and walk 4-5 blocks. • Drivers need to learn more English. • Buses are on time most of the time, however, it could be improved. • NJ TRANSIT needs to warm buses earlier. Every Monday during the cold weather the buses are late. • The cleanliness of buses is an issue. They need to be cleaner. • The bus terminal downtown switches platform numbers at night. This is very confusing. • Need a shelter near the Meadowlands in Seacaucus.

*n.a. – Questions were not included on the Willowbrook Mall questionnaire. These questions were added after the Willowbrook Mall outreach event to obtain more information on specific bus routes and bus service.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the input and feedback received from all of the stakeholders who participated in the outreach efforts for this study, it appears that many study area residents and employees prefer to drive their cars than ride the bus. Shift work and the lack of convenient transit services force the need to for residents, students, and commuters/employees to consider other commuting options. The unfamiliarity with the routes and zone structure, as well as the abundance of free, on-site parking make travel by car a more convenient choice. Many people feel that bus transit service is inconvenient, unreliable, and just not for them. For those who do ride and/or depend the bus as their primary mode of transportation, some had positive comments while others were frustrated with the driver attitude, the locations of stops, and service frequencies. Many of the negative comments centered on the #700-level routes, which are reported by riders to be consistently behind schedule.

Bus operators provided valuable insight on each of the routes that they drive. While the operators identified many issues, it appears that ridership is high on some routes and that the demand for weekend service throughout the region is increasing. Based on the feedback received, it appears that NJ TRANSIT is competing for riders with the “Spanish Transportation” and “\$1 Jitneys”. Since these buses run on 10- to 15-minute headways, many passengers will choose the jitneys rather than waiting an hour or more for a NJ TRANSIT bus.

Transportation will continue to be an issue in this region. The future growth and development expected Englewood, Clifton, Fort Lee, and other locations in the bi-county study area will add vehicles to existing congestion, making the need for bus and other transit services in Bergen and Passaic counties greater. While additional bus services could improve traffic operations and commuting conditions for many employees, several specialized groups of employees, especially environmental services and housekeeping staff at the region’s hospitals, will always need efficient and convenient transit services to and from the corridor.

It should be noted that additional marketing efforts for bus services in both counties could be undertaken to increase the visibility/public awareness of the bus services currently being provided, as well as to overcome the negative misconceptions that bus transit is unattractive, inconvenient, not a better value than driving, unsafe, and “not for me”.