

CURRENT ONGOING TRAFFIC CIRCULATION STUDIES

Montgomery Township has continued to benefit from citizen participation and an outward expression of different views regarding the appropriate modification and changes which should be made to the "Traffic Circulation Plan". During 1986, four (4) separate committees met and offered their comments regarding the goals and policies felt appropriate as a basis for Montgomery Township's decisions regarding changes to the roadway system in the Township and, additionally, offered substantive recommendations for particular road segments. The four (4) committees included the Planning Board's "Traffic Committee", the Township Committee's "Ad Hoc Traffic Committee", the "Montgomery Year 2000 Task Force Committee" and the "Citizen's Advisory Committee On Traffic Circulation".

More recently, the Montgomery Township Committee appointed a "Transportation Advisory Committee" which, as indicated at its first meeting on June 6, 2001, is to perform the following duties:

- a. Familiarize itself with the terms and conditions of the Township's settlement with NJDOT with respect to Route 206 and the Traffic Circulation Plan Element of the Master Plan;
- b. Identify areas in the Township where traffic circulation is currently problematic, and where future problems are anticipated;
- c. Consider the location of internal destinations, such as neighborhood shopping areas, which may reduce internal traffic;
- d. Study means of improving traffic circulation within the Township, including: (1) improvements to existing roadways and intersections within the Township, provided same are consistent with the principles established by the items referenced in subparagraph a. above; (2) mass transit and public transportation options; (3) enhanced pedestrian and bicyclist routes; (4) van-pooling, staggered work shifts at off-peak hours, and other traffic management tools; and, in so doing, (5) identify purported means of improving traffic circulation that have been unsuccessful;
- e. Investigate the availability and requirements of grants for transportation projects;
- f. Research the implementation of traffic calming devices in other communities, and their viability for traffic conditions in Montgomery Township;
- g. Be available to and cooperate with development boards and master planning subcommittees as they evaluate development applications and consider master plan and zoning alternatives; and

- h. Perform such other tasks as may, from time to time, be requested by the Township Committee.

The designated Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) has been meeting and has been studying locations within Montgomery Township where traffic circulation is problematic and where additional future problems are anticipated. Additionally, the TAC is exploring possible ways to improve traffic circulation within Montgomery Township which, at the same time, will help to maintain the existing rural residential character of development which prevails throughout most of the Township. The TAC is receiving ongoing technical input from the Township's Traffic Engineer, John Rea, and from the Township's Special Projects Engineer, Donald Johnson.

To date, the Transportation Advisory Committee has formulated two (2) "Problem Statements", each of which defines the need for a connector roadway to divert traffic from Route 206. Additional statements may be formulated in the future as the ongoing work of the TAC continues.

The first "Problem Statement", which reads as follows, identifies the need for efficient vehicular access, with appropriate provisions for pedestrian access, between the State Route 206/Hillsborough Bypass and County Route 601:

"A major element in the traffic volumes presently evident on Routes 206, 518 and 601 is a southwest to northeast traffic flow desire line through central New Jersey, crossing Hillsborough, Hopewell and Montgomery Townships. Specifically, Route 601 from Blawenburg to Belle Mead and Route 518 from Blawenburg to the Borough of Rocky Hill serve as shunts for the portion of Route 206 in Montgomery Township. Approximately 25 – 30 percent, of the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) traveling south on Route 206 from Hillsborough Township utilize Route 601 as a means of bypassing the existing traffic congestion areas on Route 206 in Montgomery Township and to follow the northeasterly to southwesterly desire line through Montgomery Township.

With the expected completion of the Route 206/Hillsborough Bypass (Bypass), which terminates at Belle Mead/Griggstown Road, the traffic volumes through that portion of Route 206 are expected to increase by approximately 5,000 vehicles per day. The planned configuration of the Bypass terminus strongly discourages the use of Route 601 as an alternate to Route 206 in Montgomery Township. Without the direct connection to Route 601, the project, as currently proposed, will have a significant negative environmental impact on the historic Village of Harlingen and increased traffic congestion on Route 206, Dutchtown Harlingen Road, Sunset Road, Orchard Road and Route 518 in Montgomery Township. Presently, there are no roadway features planned to address the alleviation of the anticipated congestion. A comprehensive and viable plan is needed to disperse traffic at the southern terminus of the Bypass."

The second "Problem Statement", which reads as follows, identifies the need for a flood free roadway connection between Orchard Road and County Route 518:

"A major traffic pattern that has developed on Routes 206, 518 and 533 (River Road) is a southwest to northeast traffic flow desire line through central New Jersey, crossing Hillsborough, Hopewell and Montgomery Townships. Specifically, Route 533 terminates at the intersection of Route 206 and Orchard Road. Existing traffic wishing to continue on the southwest to northeast traffic flow desire line must use Route 206 south to Route 518 or Orchard Road to Burnt Hill Road to Route 518. Approximately 1,210 vehicles utilize Route 206 south, 400 vehicles utilize Orchard Road west during the AM Peak hour, 920 vehicles utilize Route 206 north, and 120 vehicles utilize Orchard Road east during the PM Peak Hour. The existing Route 206/Route 518 intersection operates at a Level of Service "F" for extended periods during the day. Presently, no flood free crossing of the Bedens Brook exists in Montgomery Township, causing a stoppage of traffic during major storm events.

With the expected completion of the Route 206/Hillsborough Bypass, which will terminate at Belle Mead/Griggstown Road, the traffic volumes through that portion of Route 206 are expected to increase by approximately 5,000 vehicles per day. The planned configuration of the Bypass terminus strongly discourages the use of Route 601 as an alternate to Route 206 in Montgomery Township. Without a direct flood free connection to Route 518 from Orchard Road, the project, as currently proposed, will significantly increase traffic congestion on Route 206, Burnt Hill Road, Orchard Road and Route 518 in Montgomery Township. Presently, there are no roadway features planned to address the anticipated congestion and provide a flood free access. A comprehensive and viable plan is needed to disperse traffic at the southern terminus of River Road."

As noted in the November 2001 "Master Plan And Development Regulations Periodic Reexamination Report", "the efforts of the appointed 'Transportation Advisory Committee' may result in recommendations for modifications to the 'Traffic Circulation Plan Element', which should be considered by the Planning Board at that time."

Accordingly, during March 2002, the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended to the Planning Board that certain improvements be made to the Route 206 intersection with Cherry Valley Road and Princeton Avenue.

- The specifics of the recommendation and a documentation of the need for the improvements and the benefits to the public which would result are detailed in a March 8, 2002 report prepared by McDonough & Rea Associates, the Township's Traffic Engineer. The March 8, 2002 traffic report was attached to and made part of the "Traffic Circulation Plan Element, 2002 Amendment No. 1" report, which was dated March 15, 2002.

- The Planning Board agreed with the conclusion of the Transportation Advisory Committee that the proposed improvements to the Route 206 intersection with Cherry Valley Road and Princeton Avenue offered a viable means of improving the intersection's capacity and safety, and adopted the proposed improvements as an amendment to the Montgomery Township "Traffic Circulation Plan Element" on April 8, 2002.

Thereafter, during July 2002, the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended to the Planning Board that certain new roadways be constructed to help alleviate traffic congestion at the Route 206/518 intersection.

- The specifics of the recommendation and a documentation of the need for the improvements and the benefits to the public which would result are detailed in a June 4, 2002 report prepared by McDonough & Rea Associates, the Township's Traffic Engineer. The June 4, 2002 traffic report was attached to and made part of the "Traffic Circulation Plan Element, 2002 Amendment No. 1" report, which was dated July 15, 2002.
- The Planning Board agreed with the conclusion of the Transportation Advisory Committee that the proposed new roadways would help alleviate traffic congestion at the Route 206/518 intersection and were a viable means to accomplish that objective, and adopted the proposed improvements as an amendment to the Montgomery Township "Traffic Circulation Plan Element" on July 29, 2002.

Since the adoption of the two (2) amendments to the "Traffic Circulation Plan Element" during 2002, the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) has continued to assess additional alternatives available to satisfy the stated goals and objectives, has met with the affected property owners and has met with the Planning Board's Master Plan Committee which, as discussed later in this report, is in the process of formulating new land use planning recommendations for the development of the some of the major tracts of vacant land in the current study area..

As a result of these continuing efforts, this report presents a more comprehensive series of recommendations for improvements to the Route 206 intersection with Cherry Valley Road and Princeton Avenue, and for new roadways to be constructed to help alleviate traffic congestion at the Route 206/518 intersection. Therefore, it is intended that this "Traffic Circulation Plan Element 2003 Amendment No. 1" report, upon its adoption by the Planning Board, replace in their entirety the previously adopted "2002 Amendment No. 1" and "2002 Amendment No. 2" reports.

THE CURRENT TRAFFIC CIRCULATION STUDY AREA

As shown on the map on the following page of this report, the bounds of the current study area include the lands bordered by Orchard & Montgomery Roads to the north, by Cherry Valley Road & Princeton Avenue to the south, by Cherry Hill & Opossum Roads to the west, and by Rocky Hill Borough and Montgomery Road to the east.