



<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Milton	Itell	Central Jersey Rail Coalition
Charlie	Jacobowitz	Beth Medrash Goroha
Martin	Karasick	Marlboro Township Public Schools
Marcia	Kastan	Interested Party
Daniel	Kerwin	New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers
Charles	Kim	Greater Media Newspaper
John	Koechlev	USEPA
Otto	Kostbar	Jamesburg Borough
James	Lacey	Ocean County Freeholder
Anthony	LaMantia	Mayor Jamesburg Borough
Beth	Lippman	Downtown New Jersey, Inc.
Jane	Maloney	Ocean County Office of Senior Services
Jeanette	Mar	Federal Highway Administration
James	Mark	New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers
Regina	Mauer	Jersey Shore Group Sierra Club
Christina	Montorio	Assemblyman John Wisniewski (19 <sup>th</sup> District)
Mark	Muraczewski	Remington, Vernick & Vena Engineers
Henry	Nicholson	Monmouth County Division of Transportation
Ralph	Patterson	Ocean County Administration
Tara	Peterson	Greater Media Newspaper
Dorothy	Peterson	Naval Air Engineering Station (Lakehurst)
Sal	Petoia	Ocean County Transportation Advisory Board
Julz	Raichle	Ocean County College
James	Raleigh	Friends of Monmouth Battlefield
Ron	Schmalz	South Brunswick Township
Bruce	Shapiro	Assemblyman Panter and Morgan (12 <sup>th</sup> District)
Emilia	Siciliano	Mayor of Shrewsbury
Barbara	Steele	Ocean County Public Affairs Department/Tourism
Al	Stokely	Central Jersey Rail Coalition
Ron	Tindall	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
Thomas	Tunney	Manchester Township
John	Van Dorpe	Maser Consulting
Jeff	Vernick	Monmouth County Planning Department
George	Ververides	Middlesex County Department of Planning
Herman	Volk	Department of Community Affairs – Office of Smart Growth
Benjamin	Waldron	Monmouth-Ocean Development Council
Richard	Walling	Friends of Monmouth Battlefield
Thomas	Worsdale	Naval Air Engineering Station (Lakehurst)

### ***NJ TRANSIT and Consulting Team Attendees***

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
James	Schwarzwalder	NJ TRANSIT
Tom	Clark	NJ TRANSIT
Ruby	Siegel	SYSTRA Consulting, Inc
Bert	Wescott	SYSTRA Consulting, Inc.
Lisa	DiTaranti	SYSTRA Consulting, Inc.
Geoff	Fetner	SYSTRA Consulting, Inc.
Herb	August	SYSTRA Consulting, Inc.
Marlene	Daniel	SYSTRA/OLA
Melinda	Vega	SYSTRA Consulting, Inc.
Jim	Dowling	Edwards and Kelcey

### **Highlights:**

The purpose of the meeting was to give CLC members an opportunity to learn about and comment on the candidate station sites that are proposed for inclusion in the DEIS analysis.

### ***Meeting Format and Attendance***

In order for NJ TRANSIT to best inform CLC members about project progress, an open house format was used for the meeting. This format allowed ‘hands-on’ review of project technical elements such as alignment drawings, station plans, environmental conditions maps, traffic analysis areas and other data. It also enabled one-on-one discussion with project team members. CLC members arrived between 6:00 PM and 9:00 PM. Members were guided through a series of display booths, each of which depicted a rail alternative segment and the candidate station sites included along that segment. A packet of materials was provided to each member. CLC members were afforded the opportunity to provide written comments, in lieu of the formal question and answer period that has been provided in a presentation-style meeting formats of past CLC meetings.

Key issues/comments submitted by the CLC members are summarized below. A complete transcribed set of comments is provided as an appendix to the minutes.

### ***Key Issues/Comments***

Comments received from CLC members ranged from general statements of support for the project to dissatisfaction about one or multiple alignments being considered as part of the DEIS. CLC members also expressed concern about the DEIS process and potential outcomes.

The municipalities of Jamesburg, Monroe and South Brunswick remain steadfast in their objection to the Monmouth Junction Alignment. These municipalities reiterated that commuter rail service through their communities will serve only as a detriment by increasing noise, air pollution, and traffic. Safety concerns were also among the list of concerns.

In contrast, several CLC members representing Monmouth and Ocean Counties expressed support for the project, and in particular the Monmouth Junction Alignment.

Several CLC members wrote in supporting the project, but are concerned that NJ TRANSIT is not committed to selecting a Locally Preferred Alternative. These members believe the project has merit, but not selecting a LPA is fiscally irresponsible.

Marlboro Township Administration and Town Council remain opposed to commuter rail service along the Matawan Alignment, citing public health and safety as the greatest concern.

The following questions were raised:

Q1) The NJ TRANSIT scope of work for the Monmouth Ocean Middlesex passenger rail DEIS that was submitted to the federal government for approval indicated that a Locally Preferred Alternative would be selected as part of the DEIS for this project. Why has NJ TRANSIT changed the scope of the project to eliminate choosing a Locally Preferred Alternative?

A1) NJ TRANSIT has not changed the scope of work and has not made any decisions regarding the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative.

Q2) Why are there comment sheets provided for the Middlesex County meeting and not the Ocean and Monmouth meetings?

A2) The information prepared for this CLC meeting was voluminous and therefore not conducive to displaying using a standard presentation format. After careful consideration, NJ TRANSIT determined the best way for CLC members to comprehend the work accomplished was to allow hands-on access to the materials and staff provided by the open house format. The one-on-one review of these materials allows the CLC members to be informed of specific progress in their area of representation, thereby enabling them to communicate project specifics to their constituents. The project team provided comment forms in order to capture any questions asked or concerns raised by CLC members.

Q3) Were the minutes submitted to the FTA as part of the official DEIS record?

A3) Meeting minutes for this and previous CLC meetings are not submitted to the FTA. The comments received by CLC members are used to inform NJ TRANSIT, other CLC members and the project team of areas of concern or support. Technical concerns are considered in the conduct of technical analyses in the DEIS. Meeting minutes for this, and all previous CLC meetings, will be distributed as a single package to MOM CLC members.

*These minutes represent the recorder's understanding of the issues discussed. Please report any discrepancies to the recorder within seven days, otherwise the record will remain as written.*

**MEETING MINUTES ATTACHMENT**

Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex Draft Environmental  
Impact Statement (MOM DEIS)

Community Liaison Committee (CLC) Meeting Comments  
Meeting Date: June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004

**Comment:** The Borough of Jamesburg still feels that the MOM Line will be a major problem for the Borough. It will create safety, traffic and health problem. This project will have no benefit for the Borough of Jamesburg other than costing Jamesburg more in taxes. This project will greatly affect the quality of life in Jamesburg.

*The Honorable Anthony LaMantia  
Mayor Borough of Jamesburg*

**Comment:** Despite my Mayor's objection to MOM, passenger rail service to my town is needed. It is recommended that Mayor be made aware of all the funding, grants that the town can apply for by hosting a station. Second, A "SPIDER WEB NETWORK" of public/private Bus/Shuttle routes residential developments that feed into the station be considered. Third, more newsletters in the local media informing the public would be helpful.

*Daniel S. Kerwin  
Jamesburg Resident First, NJARP*

**Comment:** Ocean County has the highest percentage in New Jersey of persons 60+ at 27%. Many of these individuals moved to Ocean from metropolitan areas and are accustomed to other transit options (Rail). There are 88 adult communities. The office of senior services receives numerous requests for information on how to access transit options to northern areas for medical services and visits to friends/family. 12% of Ocean's population is 75 and although some drive locally long distance trips present a hardship rail service will greatly benefit older adult breaking down barriers.

*Jane MaLoney, Director  
Ocean County Office of Senior Services*

**Comment:** Passenger Rail service to inland Ocean County is long overdue. The outcome of the DEIS must recommend a preferred alternative to move this project along. With the growth that the entire region has experienced and will continue to experience just constructing one of the proposed alternatives will not solve the regions congestion problems. Both the GSP and the Rte 9 corridors need an alternative to motor vehicle transportation. This rail passenger alternative must be provided as soon as possible, options for placement of stations and even the rail right-of-way are being compromised every day due to the explosive growth of the region.

*Bill Braden  
Ocean County Transportation Advisory Board.*

**Comment:** Monroe Township continues its opposition to the Monmouth Junction to Freehold Borough alternative as it provides no benefit to the residents of Middlesex County. We also question how many riders from Monmouth & Ocean counties would benefit when having to travel many miles to the west to ultimately travel north.

The most beneficial (re: attracting ridership and being cost-effective is to support the Lakehurst to Red Bank alternative. The northerly direction of travel would best satisfy the targeted commuters from Monmouth & Ocean Counties.

The Middlesex alternative has negative impact to Monroe Township effecting four railroad/highway grade (you show those in Jamesburg). Crossing wherein 275 school bus trips are made over these crossings daily and the close proximity of these crossings to existing homes. Quality of life would be impacted with noise and odor from high-speed diesel trains.

Keep the MOM line out of Middlesex County.

*Wayne Hamilton, Business Administrator  
Township of Monroe (Middlesex County)*

**Comment:** NAES LAKEHURST STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE MOM PASSENGER RAIL LINE

On behalf of the Naval Air Engineering Station at Lakehurst, NJ, and as the base public affairs officer, I would like to extend our wholehearted support for the implementation of the Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex Rail Project in our region.

Having an accessible rail line could enhance the ability to transport equipment, supplies, heavy machinery and other industrial materials into and out of the Fort Dix-Lakehurst-McGuire Joint Installation Partnership area. This ability will only serve to make the joint-partnership a more functional site that could attract additional Department Defense and other tenants to utilize the three bases as a permanent home for their operations.

Also, a rail connection to Lakehurst would provide a potential commuting option to the south for some of the over 10,000 people employed at the three military installations.

In all, opening up a corridor to Central/Southern New Jersey via a new rail line will offer both a convenient alternative to the daily commute for many existing residents and potentially spark the enhanced transport of commercial and industrial materials into the area. We at Lakehurst Naval Air Engineering Station are totally supportive of this rail project.

*Thomas Worsdale, Public Affairs Officer  
Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst*

**Comment:**

1. In December 2002, Marlboro Township Administration & Town Council submitted objection to the Lakehurst to Matawan Line.
2. When the project Team visited Marlboro Township in 2003 to site stations, the Administration voiced objection to the Lakehurst-Matawan Line and objection to construction any stations within Marlboro Township.
3. At the CAC Meeting in September 2003, upon viewing the aerials maps of the proposed Marlboro Station, I again reiterated the Township's objection. I had explained that Rt. 79 is a congested two-lane road. Traffic backs up, especially during rush hour, AM & PM, presently. A station on Rt. 79 & Stevenson Drive would only act as a magnet for commuters, making the already existing congestion even worse. Stopping traffic as the trains cross Rte 520 and Vanderburg Road will also negatively impact this area.
4. Our community is growing as is the traffic (transient) while comes through Marlboro daily.
5. Public health & Safety is of paramount concern. Many homes have been built along the right of way since trains last ran with more homes, comes more school buses on our roads.
6. The station proposed on Greenwood Road would also draw traffic onto two-lane local roads. Co. Rt 3 (Tennent Rd) and into the already congested intersection of Rte 79 & Tennent Road. (A tight, perpendicular intersection.)

Rt. 79

Tennent Rd.

*Susan Levine, Director of Public Information  
Marlboro Township*

**Comment:** On behalf of the 30<sup>th</sup> Legislative District and the Borough of Lakehurst, kindly accept this form along with correspondence from the 30<sup>th</sup> District Legislators and the resolution of Lakehurst Borough indicating the continued support for rail service into and through Monmouth Ocean Counties. As the region continues to grow, the requirement to provide transportation alternatives to our residents and business becomes increasingly important. We believe this is a quality of life issue and the need for both inter and intra state travel with a rail alternative is imperative for the continued growth of the county and a necessity to encourage "smart growth" from both a residential and commercial perspective. Lakehurst particularly would benefit from rail travel as it is the proposed beginning of any studied line. Such a service would release development pressure from outlying municipalities and allow for planned development along the rail line. This would lead to increased economic utility and improved the quality of life for the entire region.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

*Sean D. Gertner  
30<sup>th</sup> Legislative district and Lakehurst Borough*

The government and citizens of Jamesburg continue to strongly oppose the construction of MOM line. It is impossible to run this line through our town without destroying the quality of our life. The traffic, noise, and safety problems are insurmountable. Our entire school population walks to school and crosses the tracks daily. It would be impossible to put a station in our town due to the traffic and parking problems. There are four main streets that would have to close every time a train comes through town. Our entire downtown area and numerous residential areas are directly abutting the rail line and could be destroyed. The amount of services we would have to provide, including police, would greatly increase putting more pressure on our municipal budget.

The best route for the line is through Matawan, where it would relieve the pressure in Route 9.

*Otto Kostbar  
Jamesburg Council*

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**Comment:** I have overheard tonight, more than once that the documents presented do not accurately reflect what the public has “ADVISED” in previous meetings.

I wish that service can begin tomorrow however is this all a waste of time if certain Municipalities negate the project?

*Mark DeGennaro  
Manalapan, NJ*

**Comment:** Supporting Monmouth Junction to Lakehurst

- 1) It is least duplicative
- 2) It opens a much needed e-w alignment
- 3) The Amtrak connection will be a great step toward making this area a destination rather than day trippers (who contribute less to the economy).
  - Will provide transportation for snow birds who are aging and now uneasy about flying to Florida
  - Destinations for tourism are enhanced by rail service
- 4) CRDA (Curtis Bashaw) is about to embark on a major campaign to “Brand the Jersey Shore” much as is now done with Cape Cod, the Florida Keys, etc. This will support rail service travel.
- 5) Ocean County has experienced tremendous growth, going from 7<sup>th</sup> largest to six largest county in the state which has created even more traffic – we are now the fastest growing county in the state in raw numbers.
- 6) The county has only two major N-S roads  
The state has said outright they will not widen Rt. 9 in Southern Ocean – consequently it is imperative to get as many cars off those routes as possible.
- 7) Ocean County has been named as one of the top 17 most ozone polluted counties in the nation. Rail service will provide an environmentally friendly alternative.
- 8) Ocean County has a willing host community and there is an existing link which would only need to be extended two miles to make a shore connection.
- 9) This alignment would open tourism to a new section of the state which now finds reaching the shore somewhat convoluted
- 10) It would provide a new source of labor to support the tourism industry
- 11) It would provide a new source of jobs for ocean county residents who reside in a county 2/3 in the restricted Pinelands & 1/3 along the CAFRA restricted coastline which inhibits business & industry parks within its borders
- 12) It would open educational opportunities for residents living in a county which has only a two-year county college and an expensive four year private college.

*Barbara W. Steele  
Ocean County Public Affairs and Tourism Advisory Council*

**Comment:** As supervising Transportation Planner for the Monmouth county Planning Board, our staff endorses the recommendation of the Western Monmouth Alignment (Monmouth Junction to Freehold to Lakehurst) as the locally preferred alternative to the Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex Draft Environmental Impact Statement. This proposed alignment; we believe, will provide the most practical and market effective service that will maximize the benefits of passenger market shed areas. Staff review has identified that continued rapid development, particularly in areas of Howell, Freehold, Manalapan and Neighboring Panhandle townships and Municipalities, as well as high growth areas in south Brunswick and Monroe in Middlesex County, will benefit strongly from the selection of this alignment, to address resulting significant growth in travel demand. We therefore urge the selection immediate prioritization of this LPA to allow the project to advance to the next steps needed for implementation of further design initiatives leading to construction and inauguration of passenger rail service.

*Jeff Vernick,  
Monmouth County Planning Board*

**Comment:** As an IT consultant. I frequently use the NEC at Princeton Junction & Hamilton Twp. to commute to New York City & Philadelphia. If I take an assignment in New Jersey and forfeit my parking permit, I have to get on a 3-4 years waiting list for a new permit. I am in favor of the return or passenger rail via Monmouth Junction & Jamesburg. To recognize the need for this service, one need only consult the amount of “dark territory” between the NEC and N.J.C.L. This area, one of the fastest growing in the state and known as “the wealth belt” needs passenger service. I can’t count the number of times I would have been in my car instead of standing in the NJT train waiting for Amtrak to leave Princeton Junction on the way home. If there were a station on the Jamesburg Bridge (Route 130) or Rt. 535 the train could be routed here and we would be in our cars on the way home. I suggest the BASF property on the South River RR as a possible station site once that plant shuts down.

*James C. Mark  
New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers*

**Comment:** This study without a recommended alignment is a horrible waste time and money. We all expect a recommended alignment. We favor the Monmouth Junction alignment to allow for the next ridership to correspond with the development occurring in Northern Ocean and Western Monmouth County.

The Howell station alternative is part of Lakehurst adequate road access.

The format of this meeting was poor. Little additional information was provided and believe the staff was not attentive to finding solutions.

*Henry Nicholson  
Monmouth County DOT*

**Comment:** I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on what our organization views as a critical need to facilitate mobility and connectivity for the present and future residents, companies, students, senior citizens, tourist & visitors to the fast growing & most desirables region in New Jersey. As identified in the state plan and even in the first iteration of the big MAP –green areas surround the route 9 western Monmouth/Northern Ocean County) corridor. Connectivity rather than through put to Newark and New York is paramount in understanding the future mobility of the Central New Jersey workforce. As smart growth initiative transit village philosophies of executing higher and more urban densities prevail it will require an increasing services sector employee base that will locale (live & work) in these gentrified urban areas. This necessitates non-automobile mobility. Connecting service heavy towns to Trenton and New Brunswick to Freehold and Lakewood provides both east-west connectivity with the full complement of NE corridors options. There can be no question that public support and needs of the area dictate that the Monmouth Junction alignment should not only be the LPA , but justifies the money spent for this DEIS.

The inevitable proper choice should be realized and acting upon now.

*Gregory T. Aikins  
President-Monmouth-Ocean Development Council*

**Comment:** I support the Monmouth Junction to Lakehurst Commuter rail alternative. Currently, the Townships in Ocean County do not have adequate public transportation service to cities in North Jersey and then on to New York. This results in terrible congestion along the highways heading towards North Jersey and New York City, particularly the garden state Parkway.

The MOM line will allow thousand of commuters to commute by rail and leave their cars at home. By linking with one Northeast corridor line, the Monmouth junction to Lakehurst alignment will give residents of Ocean and Monmouth County greater intra-city access to locations along the Northeast corridor line. These include potential sites for jobs and education that many residents are currently unable to access easily, and those who to access them use cars. As one population in the target area continues to increase at an exponential rate, it is crucial to provide strong, viable alternative to commuting by automobile.

*Chanie Jacobowitz  
Representing Rabbi Yisrael*

**Comment:** Questions/Issues concerning the DEIS:

- The NJ TRANSIT scope of work for the Monmouth Ocean Middlesex passenger rail DEIS that was submitted to the federal government for approval indicated that a Locally Preferred Alternative would be selected as part of the DEIS for this project. Why has NJ TRANSIT changed the scope of the project to eliminate choosing a Locally Preferred Alternative? The Monmouth County Board of chosen Freeholders and Planning Board strongly believe that a Locally Preferred Alternative must be chosen as part of the DEIS. Otherwise the millions of dollars spent on the Major Investment study and the DEIS will be wasted and this vitally needed project will not be ABLE TO MOVE FORWARD. Monmouth County strongly supports the Lakehurst to Monmouth Junction line as the Locally Preferred Alternative.
- Why are there comment sheets provided for the Middlesex County meeting and not the Ocean and Monmouth meetings?
- Monmouth and Ocean counties would like to see the minutes of the Monmouth and Ocean CLC meetings. Please re-send
- Were the minutes submitted to the FTA as part of the official DEIS record?

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- We would like more information about the ridership model.

*Bonnie Goldschlag  
Monmouth County Planning Board*

**Comment:** I am disappointed in the format of this CLC meeting on 6/3/04 in that it did little to disseminate updated information on the DEIS, and appeared to evoke nothing more than emotional rhetoric from the attendees. I suspect that this forum was engineered to accumulate a quantity of “Anti-Monmouth JCT” Comments to integrate them into the study. I think it would be important and equitable to provide a summary of any and all comments obtained from the previous two meetings to the entire CLC membership (posted on NJT website?).

I am also disappointed that NJ Transit is intimating that they will not be suggesting a PLA as a result of the DEIS. It was my impression that the original scoping document contained that requirement. It would seem to be a ludicrous waste of millions of dollars if no PLA results from this DEIS.

If future CLC meetings are to be scheduled, I strongly urge to return to the original format, and “Capture the flavor” of the meeting through your Staff and Consultants, rather than via verbal or written comments from attendees. That process serves its purpose during the scoping meetings. They are not needed in the DEIS.

More and more, the Monmouth Jct. Route is evolving as the only viable alternative.

*Ben Waldron  
Monmouth Ocean Development Council*

**Comment:** This statement urges the restoration of Rail Services to Ocean County.

Most people, including myself, will agree that a tunnel to New York City is a priority project. This tunnel is needed to increase long-term rail capacity services into the City. I caution that smaller local transit projects, like MOM. That directly impact New Jersey residents, not be sacrificed. Eventually such feeder services will be needed to maintain the system’s efficiency and effectiveness. Do not lose sight of other important needed transit services that feed the New York economic engine.

The MOM project is not a new idea: As a Planner in Ocean County, I worked on this proposal in the early 1970’s. That was when projections were a fraction of today’s potential ridership and a fraction of its cost. It was doable then; It is doable now!

I believe and strongly urge that the MOM Rail Project must be realized and restored for the benefit of our environment, our economic development and as a legacy to the future generations of residents and visitors of this region and New Jersey.

*Hank DiPasquale  
Ocean County Transportation Advisory Board*

**Comment:** My name is Fred Brody. I am Chairman of the Monmouth county transportation Council.

The MCTC is the official advisory committee to the Monmouth county Planning Board and consists of 13 county residents that review transportation issues that affect Monmouth County its citizens. The council reviews essential transportation issues policies and concerns on behalf of county residents through monthly meeting which are open to the public.

The proposed Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex Passenger Rail Line, or MOM, has been one of the most important projects the council has identified for the past two years. On behalf of the MCTC, I am here to echo the support of the Monmouth County Planning Board and their recommendation that NJ Transit select the Locally Preferred Alternative that favors the Lakehurst to Monmouth Junction route currently under study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. We believe his alignment makes sense based on need, route, and environmental concerns. This proposed route would serve the rapidly growing sections of all three counties and allow many new riders to reach New Brunswick, Newark and New York, and Amtrak destinations on the Northeast Corridor to Trenton, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and Florida.

The LPA is imperative in order for the Metropolitan Planning Organization to advance this project for federal funding through the Federal Transit Administration. This important project should not be postponed because it could result in worsening traffic congestion, effect air quality, and control future costs.

Once built, the MOM line will be able to connect to other mode of transportation that are available now and designs that are being developed for future compatible feeder services such as Personal Rapid Transit. It is important for the public to be continually reminded that restoring passenger train service is their benefit and demands their active support. This is one of the missions of the MCTC.

The future mobility of an entire region depends on this project and the MCTC supports the selection of the Lakehurst to Monmouth Junction route as the LPA for MOM.

Thank you.

*Fred M. Brody  
Monmouth County Transportation Council*

**Comment:** My name is Daniel Green. I'm a member of the Transportation Advisory Board of Ocean County and the NJ Association of Railroad Passengers. I'm also the Secretary of the Central Jersey Rail Coalition, a group of civic-minded citizens advocating for the MOM passenger rail project. Members of the Rail Coalition are all unpaid volunteers, and we are not affiliated with any political party.

All over the United States, cities are building and expanding commuter rail lines. Even NJ Transit is building and expanding rail service in multiple locations around the state. But inland Monmouth and Ocean Counties are still completely left out. It is now well-known that, by the year 2010, Monmouth and Ocean and Middlesex Counties will be home to one-fourth of New Jersey's entire population and labor force. New Jersey needs this important passenger rail service called MOM, which will provide passenger rail service to inland portions of the three counties. The MOM project is a vital component of a sensible and practical regional transportation plan for the future.

NJ Transit and its consultant, SYSTRA, have been studying three possible routes for MOM. But, whichever is finally decided upon, it is important to realize that travelers who need to go from Ocean and Monmouth Counties to north Jersey and New York must cross through Middlesex, one way or another. It would be better all around to offer a rail alternative than to continue cramming still more cars and buses onto the already-choked highways through Middlesex county. Passenger rail service on the MOM route is necessary, practical and affordable.

The transit requirements of scores of towns in this tri-county region must outweigh some minor inconvenience to some residents of the few towns that MOM will pass trough. There are those who believe

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that they can hold thousands of travelers hostage to a provincial belief that their enclaves are completely autonomous and can remain like Sleepy Hollow forever. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, that is untenable and outrageous. Moreover, those in Middlesex who are opposing MOM are only hurting their own county by trying to block this rail service. They will come to realize that their legitimate local concerns will be addressed and satisfied. In the end, rail service will benefit Middlesex County as much as it will help Ocean and Monmouth. It is our sincere hope that these good people will reconsider their own future and offer support instead of opposition.

Of the three proposed alignments, the route which will serve the most passengers by far is the one from Lakehurst to Monmouth Junction. The most affordable and easiest to develop is the one from Lakehurst to Red Bank. The least practical is the one from Lakehurst to Matawan. One or possibly two of these alignments should be developed. But what will happen when the DEIS is over around the end of this year? Will NJ Transit and SYSTRA issue a thick report, filled with data, tables and maps, and then throw it back to the three counties to fight over once again, as they have been doing for years? Will this multimillion-dollar DEIS bring us back to square one and thus result in zero benefit for the traveling public? That, indeed, is the rumor floating around for some time, and that will be unacceptable.

The Central Jersey Rail Coalition demands that, when the DEIS is concluded, SYSTRA make a decision and choose which of the three proposed alignments is the best, and then recommend it to NJ Transit. Then the Board of Directors of NJ Transit should declare that route to be the LPA-the locally-preferred alternative. We want the state Department of Transportation and the governor to ratify this and to put the full weight of state government behind it, so that funding for MOM can be finally assured. Let us put an end to these years of squabbling and delay, for our highways are becoming more congested every day. Let us get the MOM trains to roll, once and for all. Whichever of the three alignments is chosen, the residents of this tri-county area deserve it soon.

*Daniel Green, Secretary  
Central Jersey Rail Coalition*

**Comment:** Monmouth, Ocean and Middlesex Counties are among the fastest growing in New Jersey. In Ocean county the population, especially among senior citizens, is continually on the increase, and many of the working age citizens commute to work in or near the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area. The majority of these commuting workers drive their automobiles as evidenced by the increased traffic on the Garden State Parkway and along Route 9 and the continuing need to expand these routes and related Raritan River bridges. Public transportation in the form of buses exists, but is insufficient to handle the demand. In addition, buses are adversely affected by inclement weather and traffic conditions and contribute to worsening air quality as a consequence of their diesel exhaust.

Passenger rail service originating from Lakehurst will provide Ocean County residents, especially seniors, with a public transportation alternative that is not affected by weather or traffic conditions. In addition, train travel provides a safer and more comfortable ride. Since one ten-car train can carry as many passengers as twenty buses, the train has the potential to mitigate highway traffic, help improve air quality and reduce dependency on petroleum products.

Passenger rail service along a route from Lakehurst via Monmouth Junction provides many advantages over other routes suggested. This route will provide service through Ocean, western Monmouth and Middlesex Counties where the growing population will have a viable public transportation alternative to utilize. From Monmouth Junction the route will use Amtrak's Northeast Corridor which passes through New Brunswick, the location of Rutgers University and Robert Wood Johnson Hospital. This route will make it possible for those using those facilities to easily commute by train from the affected areas. Currently, students attending Rutgers University from Ocean County must either bear the high cost of living on campus or drive their automobiles. There is no easy way to commute by public transportation.

Further, the Monmouth Junction route offers the opportunity for travelers to change trains at the Northeast Corridor and travel south to Trenton, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. or even Florida. For senior citizens

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living in Ocean County passenger rail service will offer new opportunities to travel without relying on automobiles or driving. Getting to Liberty International Airport in Newark will become an easy one-seat train ride from Lakehurst.

Passenger rail service is a vital necessity for the growing population of the region and is long overdue. Escalating fuel prices, parking fees and tolls are making it more difficult financially for those who must travel to earn income. Passenger rail service is the solution of choice throughout the United States and is recognized by transportation planners as being a vital part of an integrated transportation system. Europe has long known this fact.

In consideration of the foregoing I urge NJ Transit to support passenger rail service for the region, and in particular, the route from Lakehurst via Monmouth Junction.

Respectfully,

*Salvatore R. Petoia, P.E.  
Central Jersey Rail Coalition  
Member: Ocean County Transportation Advisory Board*

**Comment:** According to recently released statistics, Ocean County continues to lead New Jersey in terms of residential growth. The effects of that growth are evident at all times of day, but particularly during the morning and evening commute. While our County government is expending substantial sums of money to expand and upgrade our local roads, the fact remains that our current transportation infrastructure is simply not going to be able to handle the needs of those who live, work and visit Ocean County. As a former resident of Point Pleasant Beach, I know first hand the benefits of passenger rail service. Each morning I witness many of my neighbors board trains bound for points north to go to work. Each weekend, I witness hundreds of visitors who come to our community via rail. Unfortunately, Ocean County is vastly undeserved by rail with stations in just two of our coastal communities. The vast majority of our residents, and particularly those from our inland communities, where the bulk of our growth continues to occur, need additional mass transit options.

The Ocean County Freeholder Board and virtually every governing body in Ocean County has endorsed the Lakehurst to Monmouth Junction alignment for MOM. We see direct access to the Northeast Corridor as being critical to our ability to manage the growth that we've seen. Access to the Northeast Corridor will allow our residents to leave the cars behind and still have fast, reliable access to places in New Jersey like Trenton, Princeton, New Brunswick, and Newark. Moreover, access to the Northeast Corridor also brings access to Amtrak and opens the door to destinations far and wide – New York City, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., even Florida. We believe that all our residents, from students who will use the trains to get to schools like Rutgers, Princeton or UMDNJ to our vast and growing senior population for whom train travel has always been a part of their life will be better served by a MOM line that connects directly to the Northeast Corridor. On behalf of the more than 500,000 residents of Ocean County, I ask that NJ TRANSIT select the Lakehurst to Monmouth Junction alignment of the proposed MOM passenger rail line as the locally preferred alternative.

*James F. Lacey  
Ocean County Freeholder*

**Comment:** The Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders continues its vigorous opposition to the proposed Monmouth Junction to Lakehurst Line, presented in the March, 2004 Middlesex Ocean Monmouth (MOM) Rail Project Draft Environmental Impacts Statement (DEIS) as an alternative to meet the transportation needs of the MOM study area.

The negative impacts of the proposed restoration of diesel commuter rail service along a 40.1 mile corridor from Monmouth Junction in South Brunswick Township on the Northeast Corridor to the Lakewood Transportation Center and Lakehurst via Jamesburg, Freehold and Farmingdale Boroughs, with a station in Jamesburg, far outweigh the benefits.

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We continue to have concerns on a number of safety, environmental and operational issues, including:

1. The danger to school children, other pedestrians and bicyclists at grade crossings as a result of the increased frequency of trains.
2. The impact on traffic at grade crossings resulting from the more frequent commuter and freight operations through developed areas of Southern Middlesex County.
3. The ability of emergency vehicles such as ambulances and fire trucks to cross tracks quickly and gain speedy access to their destinations while responding to emergency calls.
4. The ability of school buses and paratransit vehicles to cross tracks quickly and safely
5. The impact of increased noise and vibrations on surrounding residential developments, schools, parks and other public areas that would result from idling diesel engines and movement of trains during acceleration and braking.
6. The cost and impact on other needed projects resulting from construction of the proposed tunnel that would connect the Jamesburg Branch to the Northeast Corridor.

The Draft Environment Impact Statement (DEIS) does not address the need for dual or second rail line that would be needed at least at key locations, and eventually throughout the entire alignment, a position expressed by former NJ DOT Commissioner John Haley. This second rail line in turn would infringe upon adjacent residential and business areas.

Middlesex County opposes the proposed development of a train station and parking area in Jamesburg for the reasons just discussed and additionally because the proposed station would result in:

- Significant noise and likely displacement of residences and commercial facilities
- Negative impacts on Thomson Park, including wetlands and stream encroachment
- Negative impacts on historic structures, such as the Ensley-Mount-Bucklew House, which is listed on the National Historic Register
- Disturbance of contaminated sites near the proposed station

The DEIS mentions, but does not adequately address these impacts.

The DEIS proposes two sites in the vicinity of Herrod Boulevard in South Brunswick as potential station areas. Little information is provided regarding development of a major train station and parking in this undeveloped area and impacts this would have on access, increased traffic, parking and environmental issues, including wetlands disturbance.

The DEIS advances the following alternative solutions to meet the transportation needs of the MOM study area.

These are:

1. No Build
2. Transportation System Management (TSM)
3. Enhanced Bus
4. Monmouth Junction to Lakehurst Commuter Rail
5. Red Bank to Lakehurst Commuter Rail
6. Matawan to Lakehurst Commuter Rail

Opposition by Middlesex County and the affected municipalities of South Brunswick, Monroe and Jamesburg, clearly shows that New Jersey Transit must consider alternatives other than the Monmouth Junction Line. Middlesex County and its municipalities could wholeheartedly support the TSM, Enhanced Bus, the Red Bank to Lakehurst and/or the Matawan to Lakehurst Commuter Rail solutions.

The Red Bank to Lakehurst and the Matawan to Lakehurst Rail Alternatives would provide needed rail service to Monmouth and Ocean County commuters. These lines would connect with the North Jersey

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Coast Line (NJCL) in Red Bank and/or Matawan and continue north to Newark. These alternatives are far more feasible and more cost effective than the Monmouth Junction Line. The Red Bank to Lakehurst Alternative would connect to the North Jersey Coast Line at the existing train station in Red Bank.

At least thirteen Monmouth and Ocean County communities would be served by the alternative, which would also alleviate traffic along the heavily congested Route 9 corridor.

Middlesex County also recommends that New Jersey Transit consider extending the electrification of the North Jersey Coast Line south of Long Branch to Bay Head. This would provide a major incentive for the redevelopment of communities along the North Jersey Coast Line, help commuters from Ocean and Monmouth Counties travel to Northeast New Jersey and to Newark and New York, and provide an improved level of transit service to accommodate the summer tourism industry for the New Jersey shore. This is consistent with the station "fix it first" and "smart growth" initiatives by encouraging development in already developed communities with improvements to existing infrastructure.

Middlesex County questions where the rather large funding would come from that is needed to build this project. This concern applies especially to the Monmouth Junction Alternative which is the most costly and which cost is likely to escalate beyond current estimates.

Middlesex County supports needed transit capacity and safety improvements along the Route 9 corridor, including the enhanced bus and transportation systems management (TSM) alternatives. We believe these improvements are vital to accommodate existing requirements and provide for increasing future demands.

Thank you for the invitation to participate in this community liaison committee meeting and offering Middlesex County the opportunity to present its comments and observations.

*George M. Ververides  
Director of County Planning  
Middlesex County, NJ*

**Comment:** I am not here to go through the million of reasons, in order for the study group to approve the implementation of the MOM system. You hear it all; I suppose you can quote most of them verbatim. All we are asking is to give us a true and factual report. We will surely be aware of what will be said.

There are at present quite a few politicians who are awaiting your report and have a strong interest in what you will say. The Central Jersey Rail Coalition have over the years been in contact with the military and they would like to see a passenger system to Lakehurst and could tie it in with the other bases that border them. They do see the merits of a passenger system. I also have in my possession a hand written note from our present Governor, who wrote that he was not 100% but 150% in favor of a passenger system within the MOM area. We hope that you have well studied all the possibilities and the ways to implement a passenger system in the near future.

Last but not least if you think that the gasoline situation is bad now as the terrorist cancer gets worse do expect a much higher cost and greater problems. As the boy scouts say; be prepared.

*Milton M. Itell  
Central Jersey Rail Coalition*

**Comment/Letter:**

June 3, 2004

Re: Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex Rail Project

By way of this letter we would like to advise you that we continue to be in full support of the Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex (MOM) line. The MOM project has been and will continue to be the #1 priority in transportation for the legislators from Monmouth and Ocean counties.

Passenger rail service needs to be restored to our region. The population continues to increase bringing with it many more challenges for those attempting to travel in the area.

We ask that you continue to work diligently to make this project come to fruition.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Singer  
Senator  
District 30

*Letter from Legislative Office – 30<sup>th</sup> District  
Robert W. Singer – Senator  
Joseph R. Malone II – Assemblyman  
Ronald S. Dancer – Assemblyman*

**Comment:** At the third meeting of the CLC committee, I would like to highlight several issues for comment and for further consideration by NJ TRANSIT and the consultant team as they continue their work efforts on the DEIS for the MOM Project;

Service market area – as NJ TRANSIT and consultant prepare for the upcoming ridership modeling process, it is clear that the service market area needs to account for the Route 18 corridor and the secondary areas of Ocean County, not directly served by the proposed alignment. In terms of the ridership model, travel behavior for Ocean County residents who are accustomed to long distance commutes will be different from traditional models which penalize distance to station sites and number of transfers to reach one's destination, this needs to be accounted for.

Noise Assessment – Given that a build option would be many years in the future, we can well anticipate that our rail technology will continue to improve, applying old guidelines to train noise and vibration represents a harsh measurement of impact levels.

In order to advance the MOM project to the next work phase, the DEIS must come up with a locally preferred alternative. A process without a conclusion would end advancement of this project and be a total waste of over \$8 million of taxpayer money.

Monmouth Junction is the only alternative that addresses the growth and congestion issues when looking at projections over the next 20 years.

The study area does not sufficiently consider the heavily congested, Route 18 corridor and the positive impacts that the Monmouth Junction alternative would provide. There would be positive impacts on Route 1 as well.

New Brunswick is underestimated as an intermediate destination point. There is a concern that Rutgers University has not been sufficiently considered in the process.

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The lack of an east-west transportation corridor is a major problem especially in the Monmouth County area. The Monmouth Junction alignment addresses this issue in part.

The quality of life issues of traffic congestion, air quality and smart growth are becoming more critical everyday. The MIS highlighted these and recommended enhanced bus service. As the consultant team has noted in various DEIS reports, the traffic and congestion situation continues to be a problem which requires public transportation solutions. Given permitting and regulatory requirements, new roadways will simply not be built, therefore restoration of passenger rail service remains one of the best options available to this growing region of the State.

The Monmouth Junction Alignment deal with traffic congestion, air quality and smart growth better than the other alternatives because of where the growth over the next 20 years

In a professional MOM survey conducted of the tri-county region, responses reveal that nearly two-thirds of those surveyed placed reducing traffic, managing growth or improving mass transit as the most or second most important issue facing their county today. 89% say that road and traffic congestion is a problem in their area.

Of the 68% of those surveyed who say they have heard of the MOM passenger rail project, over half have a favorable opinion of the project.

When residents were given a brief description of the route through which the Lakehurst to Monmouth Junction alignment would run, support of the project climbed to 78%. 60% of those surveyed indicated that they or someone in their household would likely use the service and 65% indicated they would be interested in having a station located in their area.

73% of those surveyed believe that area growth and development is going to happen no matter what and that more should be done to plan for and manage that growth. 72% say that the MOM project represents Smart Growth planning and more than three quarters (78%) agree that the MOM passenger rail project is a good way to help reduce traffic congestion.

*Kathleen Edmond  
Ocean County Department of Transportation Services (Ocean Ride)*

**Comment:** The New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers (NJ-ARP) is in complete support of the Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex (MOM) rail alignment. NJ-ARP has long championed the well-positioned MOM routing because of its ability to draw from an estimated pool of two million residents in the heart of these rapidly development central New Jersey counties. The adoption of the MOM alignment will directly reduce growing vehicular congestion and pollution that increasingly threatens the mobility and livability within this region. At the same time, the passenger rail line will also contribute to economic revitalization and redevelopment of municipalities where both tax revenues and property values have risen at rates slower than surrounding communities.

While passenger trains have operated on various portions of this route, the MOM alignment is brand-new and designated to address New Jersey intrastate travel needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well as serve traditional New York City commuters and regional rail customers. The MOM proposal is also consistent with the State Development Plan and is exactly what it envisions for furnishing a public transit alternative to those areas lacking same and provide an option to driving. Residents of Monmouth, Ocean and Middlesex counties will again access to both New Jersey Transit and Amtrak rail systems, thus broadening their travel choices once the MOM project is completed. At the same time, northern New Jersey rail riders will be able to reach additional towns, employment and recreational sides in the central party of the state creating a new non-automotive option.

It is no secret that the population of the state continues to grow at staggering rates. Ocean County has seen a huge 47.6% increase in population in the past 20 years as indicated by the recently released census and in

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a report labeled Total Resident Population: New Jersey, Counties and Municipalities: 1980, 1990, 2000 that was released by the New Jersey State Data Center. This same report directly states that “Middlesex County had the largest net population increase (+78,382) in the state from 1990 to 2000, followed by Ocean (+77,713), and (and) Monmouth (+62,177). . . .” These three counties are the very counties that the MOM rail line is projected to serve and which it directly addresses. It should further be pointed out that the report also states that “The Coastal region remained the population magnet of New Jersey,” further proof of the necessity of the MOM rail line.

Additionally, population projections released by the state reveal an additional projected 23.0% growth rate over 1998 population levels by the year 2015, a mere 11 years away, for Ocean County alone. Projections to 2015 for the tri-county Monmouth, Ocean and Middlesex county region reveals an additional projected growth rate of 17.3% over 1998 levels to the year 2015. Our current infrastructure of roads cannot handle today’s population let alone these types of growth rate projections. It has been prove time and time again that we simply cannot build our way out of massive congestion through highway expansion. Calls for open space preservation, quality of life issues, safety concerns and pollution factors have all but put a stop toward large highway expansion projects. The MOM rail line is a well-through, practical alternative to alleviating such congestion and will be a viable means of transporting people while at the same time directly addressing these concerns. NJ-ARP strongly supports the MOM rail line as the right project for our current time and for the future.

*James Ciacciarelli, Director  
NJ Association of Railroad Passengers*

**Comment:** The Friends of Monmouth Battlefield is the Officially-Recognized Friends Organization by the New Jersey State Park Service for Monmouth Battlefield State Park. Incorporated in 1990, the Friends have as its core mission the protection, preservation and historical interpretation of the Battle of Monmouth and related sites. We have an active and successful Battlefield Preservation Program, which is responsible for the preservation of nearly 400 acres of Monmouth Battlefield National Landmark lands.

The organization has no formal position on the MOM proposal. However, we wish to strongly advise the project sponsors, and reviewing agencies that the proposed MOM line runs directly through the heart of Monmouth Battlefield National Historic Landmark. If the project proceeds to design and construction, all efforts must be made to minimize impacts to the Landmark and Battlefield State Park, and enhancements are strongly encouraged. Enhancements may include a potential stop at Monmouth Battlefield State Park for visitors, battlefield landscape restoration and interpretation, and support for educational and interpretation of the battlefield as a whole.

The Friends of Monmouth Battlefield stand for the integrity of this National Historic Landmark, and is committed to work with involved agencies to see that sacrifices made upon these hallowed fields may best be preserved and interpreted for this, and future generations of Americans.

*Richard S. Walling  
President, Friends of Monmouth Battlefield*

#### **Comment/Resolution**

**WHEREAS**, the Monmouth, Ocean Middlesex region is one of the fastest growing regions of New Jersey, and will continue to grow rapidly over the next decades;

And

**WHEREAS**, an alternative mode of travel is urgently needed to address the dramatically increasing congestion and delay on Route 9 and other area roadways, and

**WHEREAS**, to meet these needs and as a follow-up to their Major Investment Study of 1996, NJ TRANSIT is now conducting a Draft Environmental Impact Study that examines three passenger rail alternatives to help meet the transportation needs of this region; and

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**WHEREAS**, these alternatives include passenger rail to Lakehurst via Monmouth Junction, passenger rail to Lakehurst via Red Bank and passenger rail to Lakehurst via Matawan, and  
**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Lakehurst have long been a supporter of re-activating passenger rail service to Lakehurst, and  
**WHEREAS**, the proposed passenger line to Lakehurst via Monmouth Junction will run along an active freight route and will pass through five municipalities in Ocean County, six municipalities in Monmouth County, and three municipalities in Middlesex County; and  
**WHEREAS** since the Monmouth Junction line is the only alternative that connects to the Northeast Corridor, it offers that greatest mobility for residents in this region, and  
**WHEREAS**, the Monmouth Junction alternative not only provides access to adjacent counties, northern New Jersey and New York but also offers transit to jobs, universities, as well as medical, cultural, and sports facilities in New Brunswick, Princeton, Trenton, Camden, and Philadelphia, and  
**WHEREAS**, the Monmouth Junction line is located in Western Monmouth where current and projected growth is concentrated, and  
**WHEREAS**, the Red Bank Line is located too far east to provide service to Western Monmouth where the growth is occurring and is duplicative of Monmouth County's existing passenger rail, the North Jersey Coast Line, and  
**WHEREAS**, based on the finding of the previous NJ TRANSIT Major Investment Study, very few riders are anticipated on the Red Bank line and the fare box recovery rate will be extremely low, and  
**WHEREAS** the Matawan alternative has many environmental constraints, less projected riders and many more encroachments than the Monmouth Junction alternative, and  
**WHEREAS** the Matawan line was eliminated as a viable passenger rail alternative from the previous NJ TRANSIT Major Investment Study, and  
**WHEREAS** the Monmouth County Park System has spent over \$700,000 and has received an additional \$756,000 to develop a joint bicycle, pedestrian trail along the abandoned Matawan line right-of-way, and  
**WHEREAS**, this train will link up with the existing Henry Hudson Trail in the Bayshore and will provide a much-needed resource for bicyclists and pedestrians,  
**NOW, THEREFORE**, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Lakehurst, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey that the governing body of the Borough of Lakehurst supports Lakehurst to Monmouth Junction passenger line as the preferred alternative to provide improved transit service to the Monmouth, Ocean and Middlesex region.  
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Municipal Clerk forward certified copies of this resolution to Governor James E. McGreevy, the Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the Ocean County Planning Board, and New Jersey Transit.

*Bernadette Dugan, RMC  
Municipal Clerk  
Borough of Lakehurst*