



Appendix I

The County Fair at East Freehold Showgrounds Mitigation Report

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Monmouth County

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Introduction

The East Freehold Showgrounds (Showgrounds) is an 81-acre showground area in Freehold, New Jersey. It hosts a variety of different events such as show jumping, dog shows, and other special events. Its largest event is the Monmouth County Fair which typically occurs in late July. This is the only event that is reported to generate significant congestion in the area of the Showgrounds and is actively managed by a team of County staff that manage the Showgrounds and employ a variety of strategies to help minimize impacts to the local roadway network. However, despite the traffic management that is currently employed, several issues were identified by the County Fair staff, including:

- Congestion on CR 55 (Kozloski Road), particularly during the weekday PM peak period where fair traffic and regular commuter traffic are on the corridor.
- Drivers that are unsure where to park and how to connect from the remote parking areas to the Fair. These drivers can slow traffic entering parking areas and consume the time of the limited traffic control staff.
- Confusion regarding pick-up and drop-off of Fair visitors from taxi, ridehail, and private vehicles.

There are a number of transportation demand management (TDM) strategies that can address the issues identified in the Existing Conditions Report, improve visitor experience, and enhance quality of life for nearby residents. This purpose of this site-specific Mitigation Report is to identify TDM strategies that are currently in place, as well as provide recommendations for additional measures to address the existing issues identified above and improve the overall travel experience for visitors and nearby residents. The following sections outline the various strategies that can be applied at the Showgrounds, as well as for other similar types of events. Each TDM measure in the following sections is described briefly along with their 'playing card' and a backlit color:

	<p>A green backlit color indicates a TDM measure already in place</p>		<p>A yellow backlit color indicates a TDM measure recommended for consideration</p>
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Existing Operations Plan

The County currently employs a variety of traffic management strategies that include traffic routing, lane control, shuttles, off-site parking areas, pedestrian paths, and more (**Figure 1**). The plan also includes the deployment of variable message signs (VMS) and static signs that are deployed specifically for the Fair. Signs are deployed at major regional access points and between the access points and the Showgrounds. However, the plan is not documented and much of the management knowledge is based on the experience of County Fair staff combined with some limited documentation of the traffic flows, shuttles, parking, and pedestrian and ridehail areas. Memorializing this plan in a detailed written form would help ensure consistency from one event day to another, even when some of the regular traffic management and public safety staff may not be available.

Proposed Strategies

Figure 2 provides a summary of the proposed TDM strategies recommended for the Showgrounds. The recommendations should be considered as enhancements to the existing strategies being utilized for the County Fair. In addition, strategies that enhance connections to downtown Freehold should be coordinated with improvements identified in the *Downtown Freehold Vision Plan* (2018).

The strategies are organized into five categories: Communications, Traveler Behavior, Improve Existing Travel Options, Parking, and New Options, and are presented as a deck of cards. There is no single strategy that can solve all the transportation issues, and just like a card game, multiple cards (strategies) are needed for a “winning hand” (reduction in event and tourism related traffic congestion). A detailed description of the strategies is contained in the following sections.

It should also be noted that the strategies identified in this document that affect changes to traffic flow on public roads, the installation of additional signage, or the construction of new connections to the adjacent neighborhoods, will require coordination with Freehold Township, Monmouth County, and potentially NJDOT. It is recommended that Showgrounds staff meet with these stakeholders before implementing recommendations that impact the public right-of-way.

Figure 1: Existing TDM Measures Near the Showgrounds

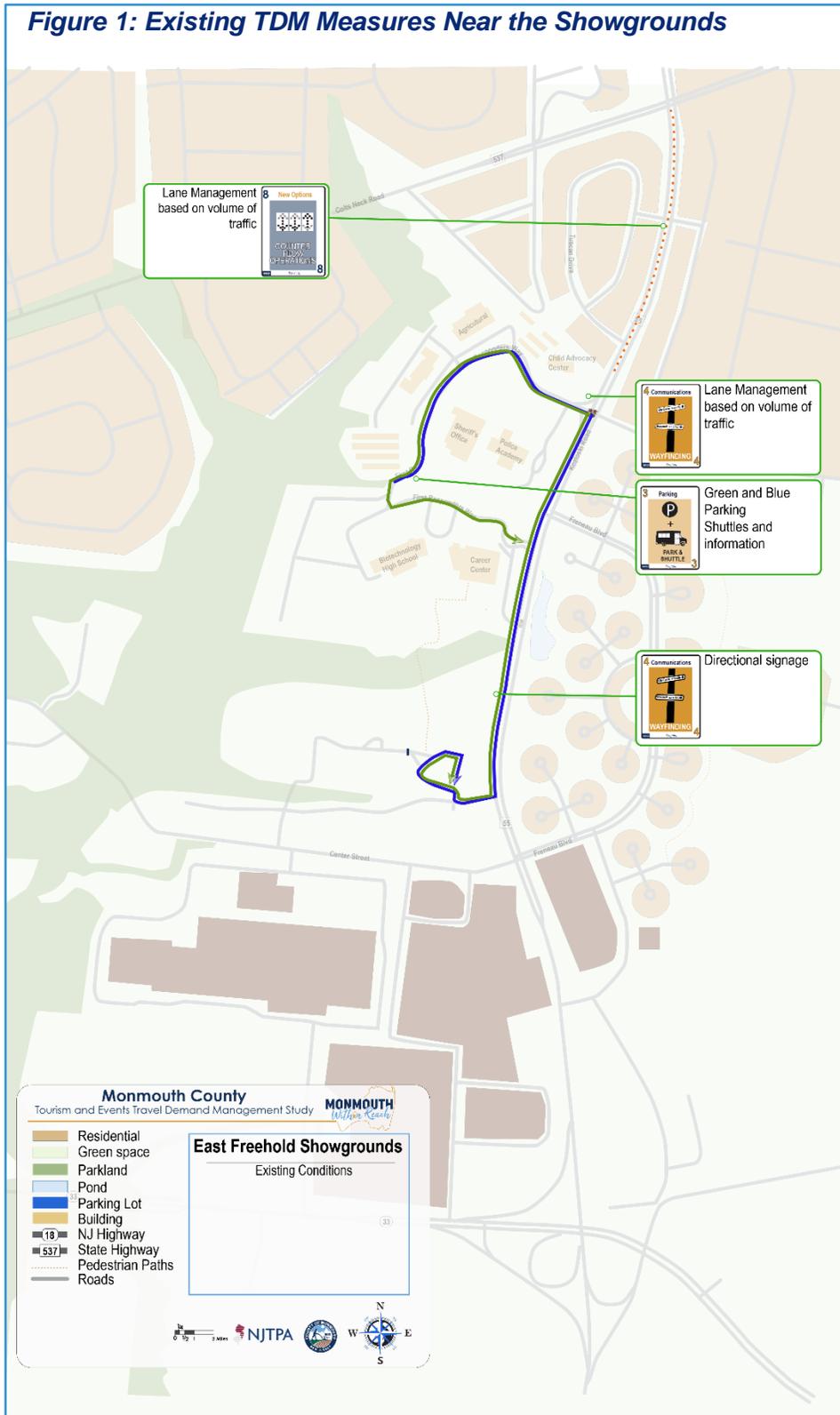
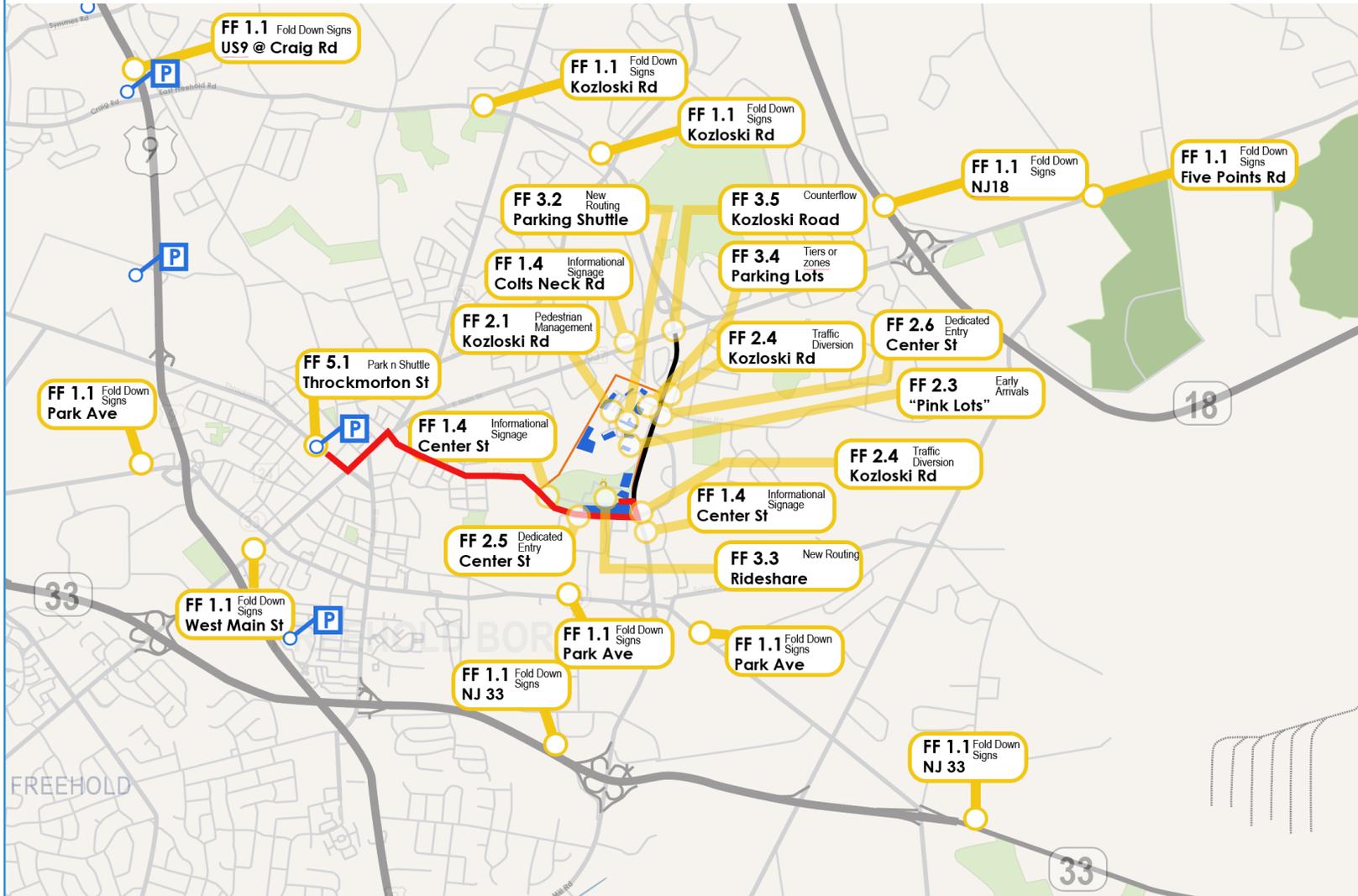
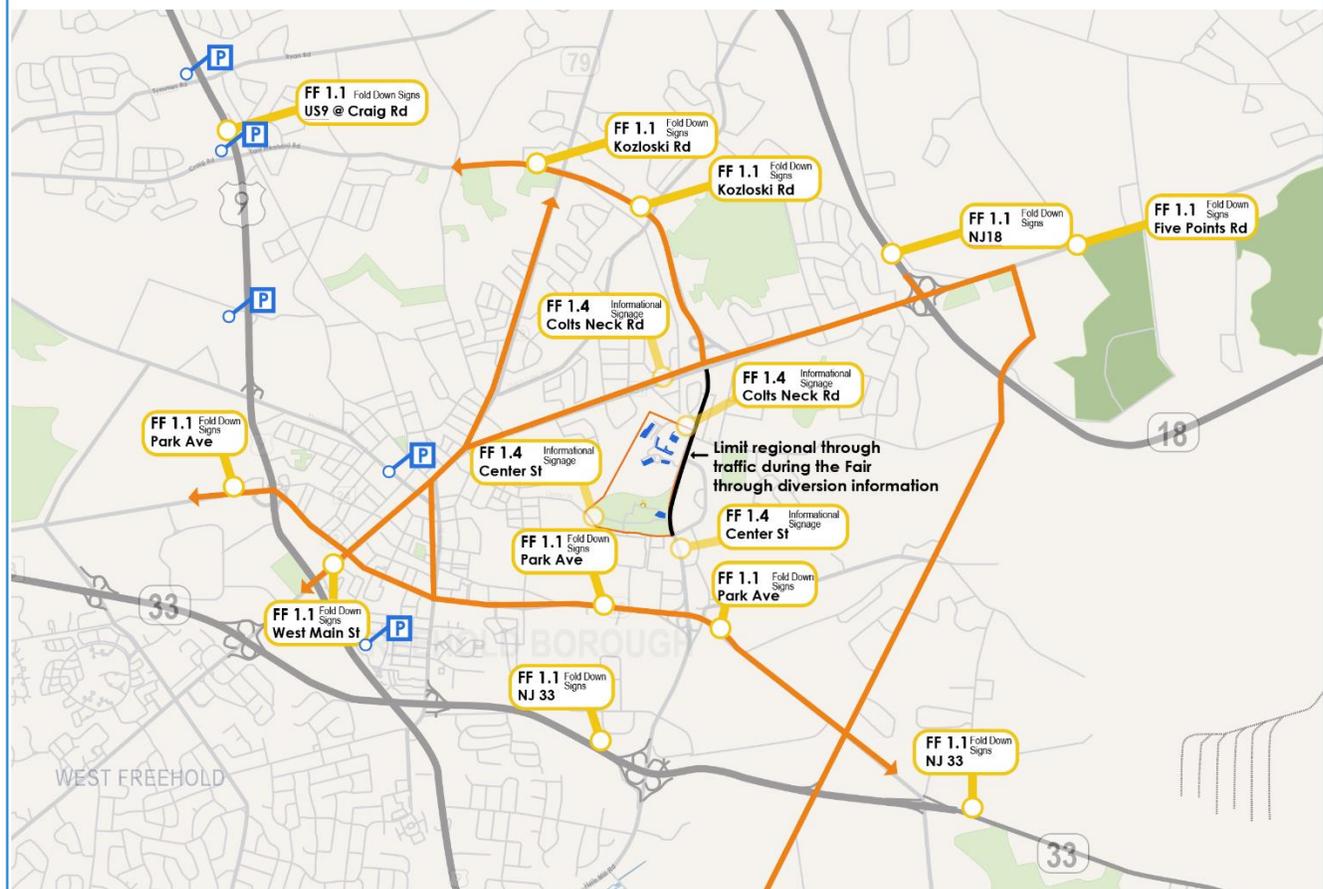


Figure 2: Location of Proposed TDM Strategies in the area of the Showgrounds



1 – Communications

Figure 3: Summary of Communication Strategies



Fold-Down Signs (FF 1.1)

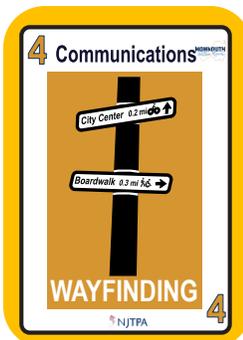
An alternative to more costly dynamic message signs (DMS) is to use fold-down signs, such as the one seen in **Figure 4**. These can be installed on light poles and are much easier to deploy than movable static or dynamic signs. Deployment costs are relatively low and deployment time can be up to 10 times faster with fold-down signs. Key considerations are the size of the signs, approvals, and sight distance considerations when the signs are in the open position.

Figure 4: Fold-down signs are easier to deploy than new directional static or dynamic signage.



Website Travel Portal (FF 1.2)

Showgrounds staff could leverage the County's Waze partnership to define specific routes to and from the Showgrounds on event days, and designate street closures to minimize pass-through traffic. This would be responsive to the roadway / parking lot closures that are implemented by operators. The first step would be to join the Waze Event Partners Program. Once the Fair operators are a member, they can upload road closures and turn restrictions into the platform, which would be reflected for all of Waze routings on specified event days. The operators would also be able to access real-time information on traffic patterns in the area, which are crowdsourced from Waze's operations.



Parking Lot Signage (FF 1.3)

On non-event days, the parking lots that are typically used for the Fair are only known by generic names that are associated with the nearest building. However, during event days, they are grouped together to form the Blue, Green, Pink, Red, Main, and Center Lots. For the purposes of the Fair, adding color identifiers to signs would allow communications to be simplified to provide directions to one of those lots based on the direction of approach. This would allow signs to be consistent, legible, and easy to understand.

Figure 5 shows the lots clustered as they are in the current configuration with one exception. The Pink Lot may be useful to consider for other TDM measures such as incentive for early arrivals to have several sites with walking access and shuttle access to the fairgrounds with a dedicated access point that closes at a specific time.

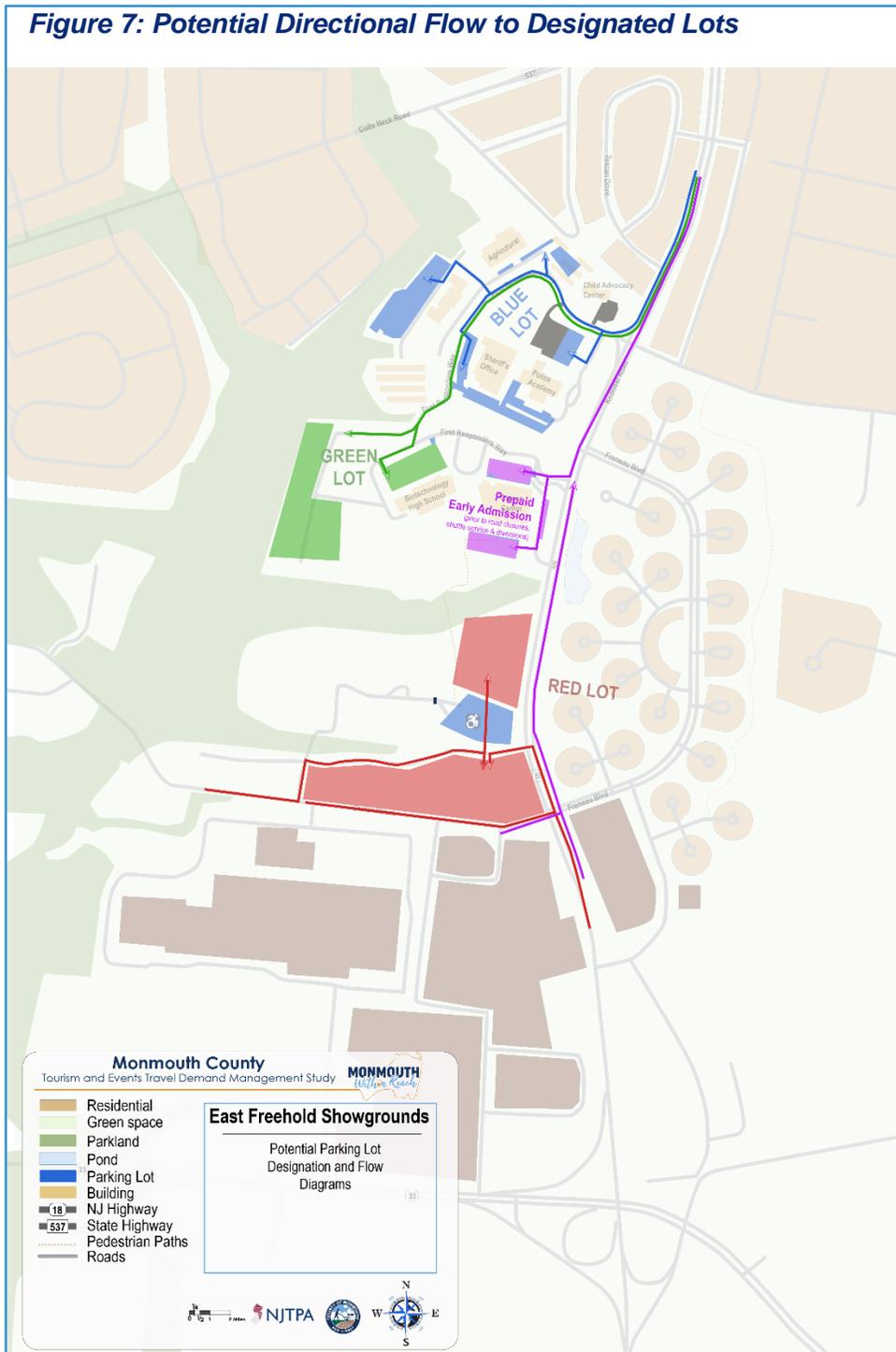
The rationale for directional access is shown in **Figure 6**. With no limitations to access, significant cross movements can be created that can add additional delay for visitors as well as other background traffic on the roadway network. Because Showgrounds staff open and close parking areas based on utilization, rather than direction of travel, flows to and from the parking areas overlap significantly, creating choke points at intersections along CR 55 (Kozloski Road).

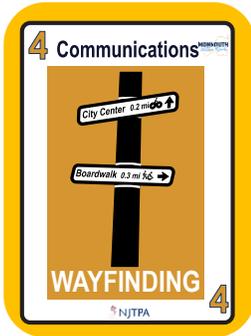
Figure 6: Existing Access to Parking



If the north lots (Blue and Green) are accessed only from the north and the Red lots from the south, there would be no crossing movements. The Pink Lot could be based on early admission and time restricted to allow the road closures to go into place. This separation of movements is shown in **Figure 7**.

Figure 7: Potential Directional Flow to Designated Lots



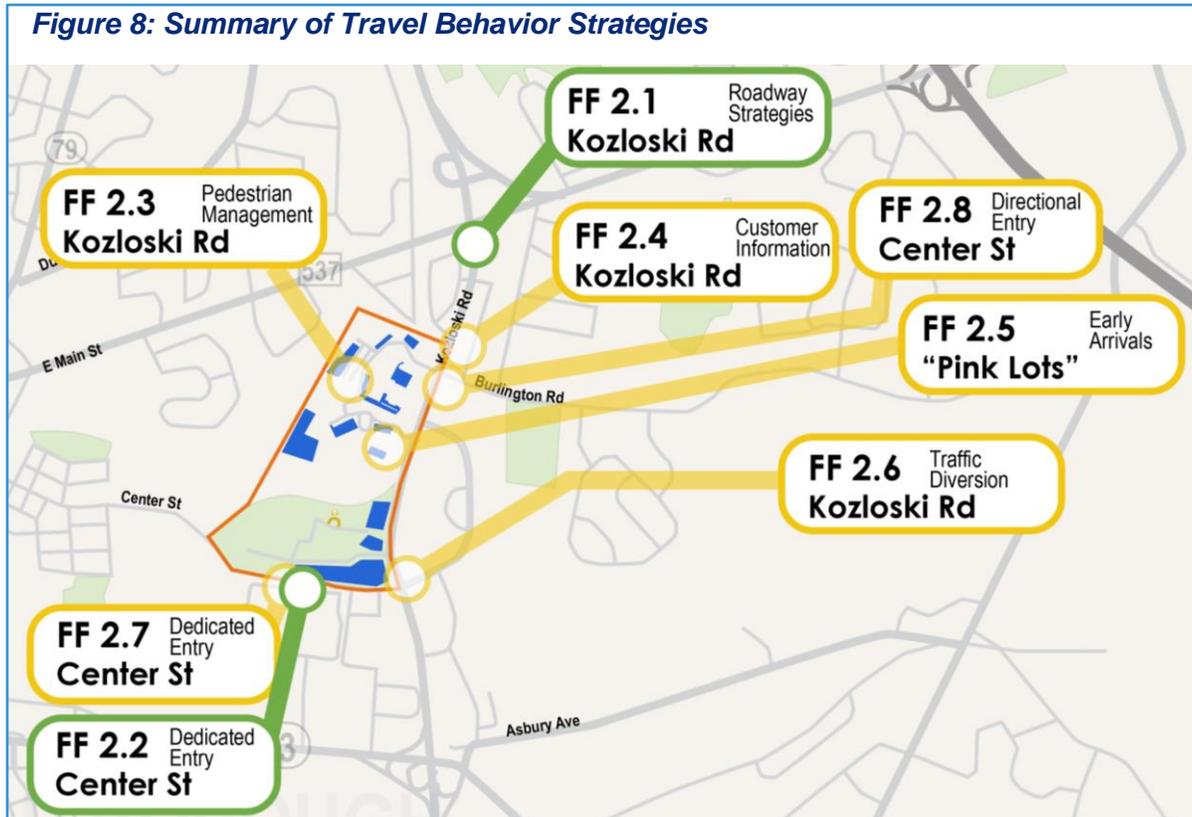


Ridehailing and Parent Drop-Off Signage (FF 1.4)

Providing a restricted entry point for ridehail services and parent pick-up/drop-off area and using directional signage along with communications to the ridehail companies and operators, the impact of ridehail and other pick-up and drop-off activity on congestion could be simplified. Refer to the Parent Drop-Off and Ridehail routing in **Figure 5** from Center Street.

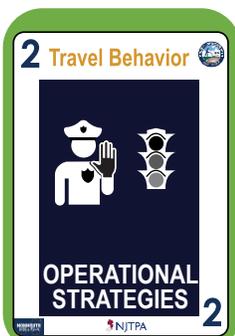
2 – Travel Behavior

Figure 8: Summary of Travel Behavior Strategies



Roadway Strategies (FF 2.1)

The Fair operators currently utilize many roadway optimization strategies to try to minimize traffic congestion, including turn lane prohibitions, directed traffic patterns, and opening/closing entrances to parking areas. This proactive form of traffic management minimizes delay to Fair visitors and passing traffic.

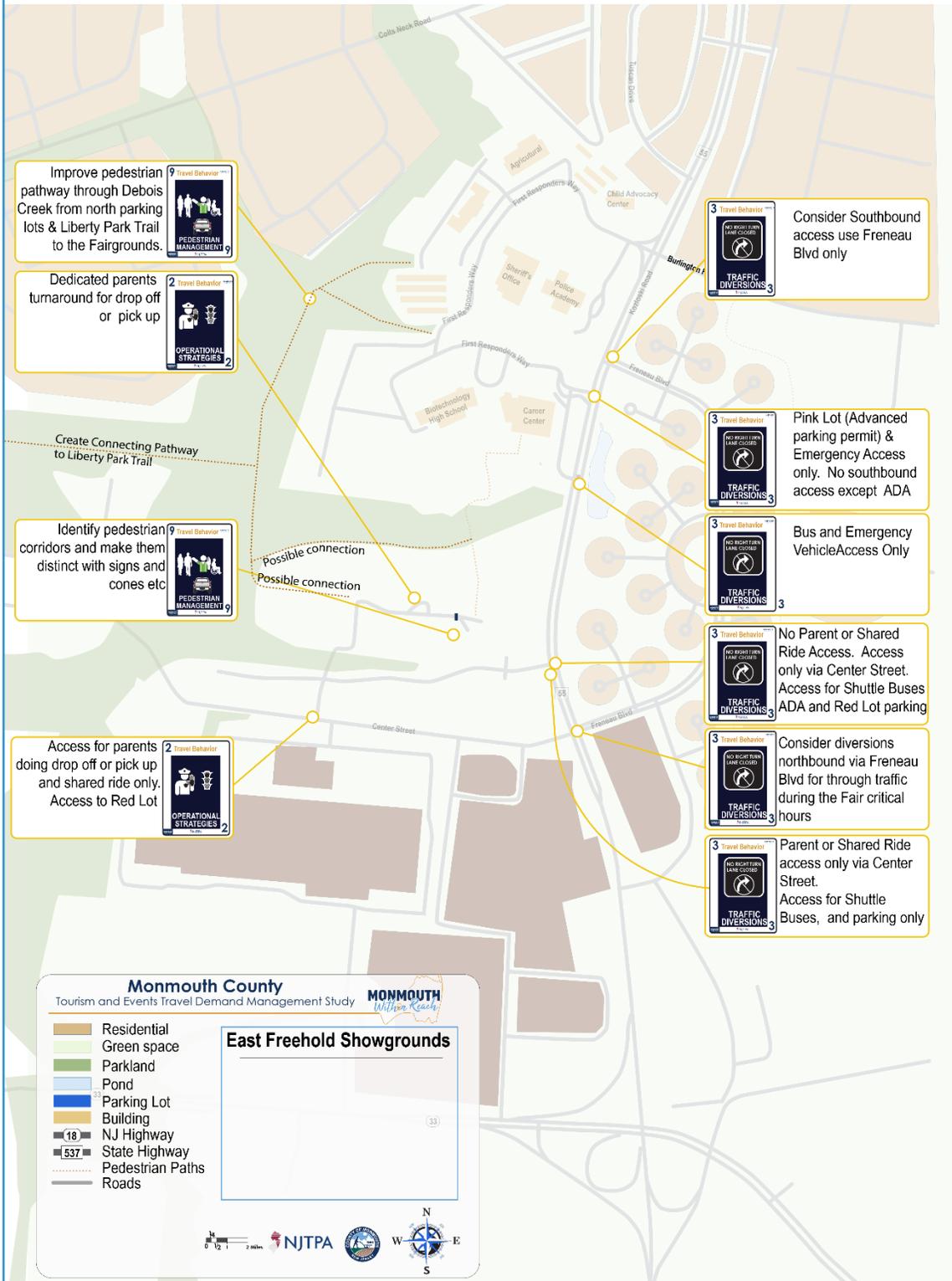


Exhibitor + Employee Parking (FF 2.2)

There are separate parking areas for exhibitors and employees. This keeps these groups away from the flow of visitor traffic both geographically and temporally, since these groups generally arrive early and depart late.



Figure 9: Travel Behavior Details



Several recommendations related to traveler behavior are described below and summarized in **Figure 9**.



Pedestrian/Vehicle Conflicts/Pedestrian Zones (FF 2.3)

Pedestrian and vehicle conflicts can be managed by locating pedestrian management staff at key locations, or by changing traffic flow patterns to create "pedestrian only zones". Areas of pedestrian management focus include shuttle bus and ridehail pick-up and drop-off areas, the intersection of CR 55 (Kozloski Road) and Frenau Boulevard, and crossing locations near the parking entry points and from the Center Street lot across the main entry road.



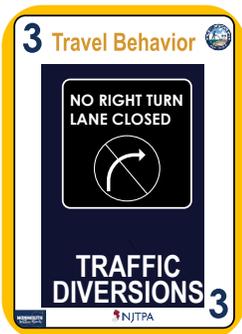
Information Provision and Questions (FF 2.4)

A central customer service point would encourage visitors to keep moving until they are further inside the Showgrounds site. This may reduce the number of drivers stopping to ask questions, which in turn would positively affect ingress flows. Staff can also be equipped with Frequently Asked Questions cards, which they can hand out to visitors, to address the most common questions. Customer service agents would encourage visitors to keep moving until they can arrive at the central customer service location. Combined with a simplified parking system, where visitors can park anywhere based on where they enter, there would be less congestion due to visitors stopping and engaging with staff.



Early Arrivers (FF 2.5)

Early arrival incentives, such as premium parking or discounted parking fares, can be used to offset demand during peak periods. Note that, if pursued too aggressively, this policy may lead to additional traffic in the area during the commuter peak periods. However, most visitors don't take advantage of early arrival incentives, and the intent is to capture a small percentage of visitors to provide congestion relief during peak periods.



Background Traffic Diversions (FF 2.6)

CR 55 (Kozloski Road) is bounded by US 9 and NJ 33 and provides access to destinations between these two regional routes in the areas around the Freehold Showgrounds. A background traffic diversion plan would use signs to encourage visitors to avoid CR 55 (Kozloski Road) on Fair days. Pass-through traffic could be directed to use the limited access highways, and traffic to destinations near the Showgrounds could be directed to use an alternate exit and access local destinations via Five Points Road, Main Street, or NJ 79.

Dedicated Entry Point for Parents and Ridehail (FF 2.7)

In combination with the entry point for operational traffic to the Showgrounds off Center Street, a system of hangtags or permits could allow parents dropping off children or ridehail vehicles to use a dedicated turnaround and lay-by parking area.

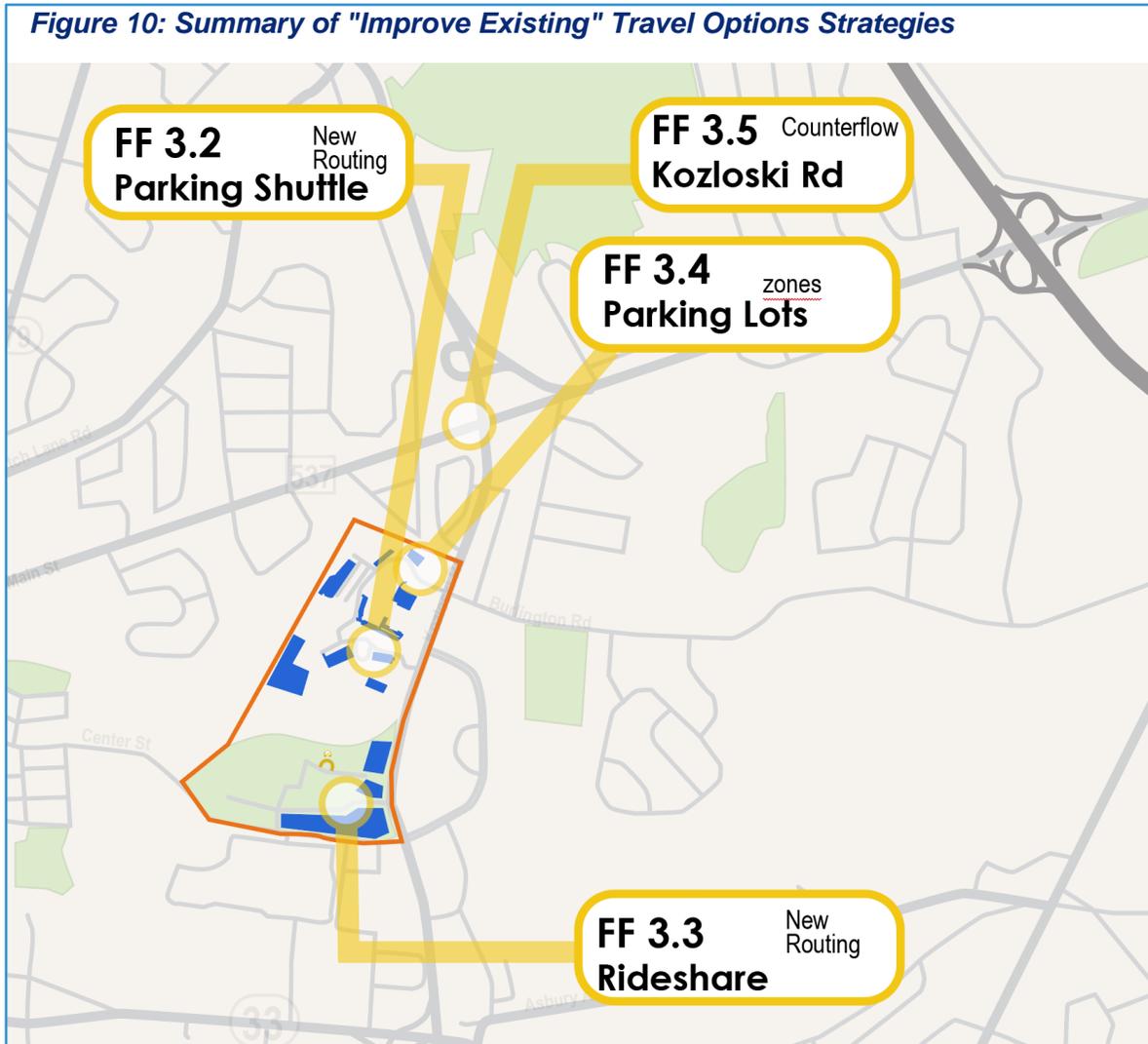


Directional Entry Point for Parking Lots (FF 2.8)

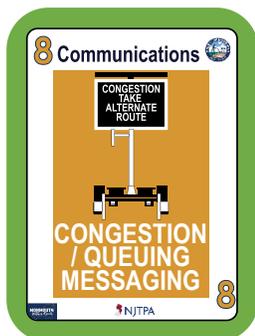
As noted earlier, changing the existing operations to allow entry into the Red Lots via Northbound CR 55 (Kozloski Road) from Park Avenue and NJ 33 and for the Blue and Green Lots via southbound CR 55 (Kozloski Road) from NJ 537 can provide an opportunity to provide dedicated lanes for shuttles, ADA access, and emergency vehicles. Through traffic could be diverted via Freneau Blvd for a limited time during the fair to reduce congestion as well.

3 – Improve Existing Travel Options

Figure 10: Summary of "Improve Existing" Travel Options Strategies



Variable Message Signs (VMSs) (FF 3.1)



A network of VMSs is used to provide information to motorists, with some placed as far as a mile away from the Showgrounds. A comprehensive VMS plan is also available, showing the general location and messaging on these panels. The VMS around the site allows the operators to change the flow of traffic and parking access points, enabling them to minimize congestion on the approach roads.

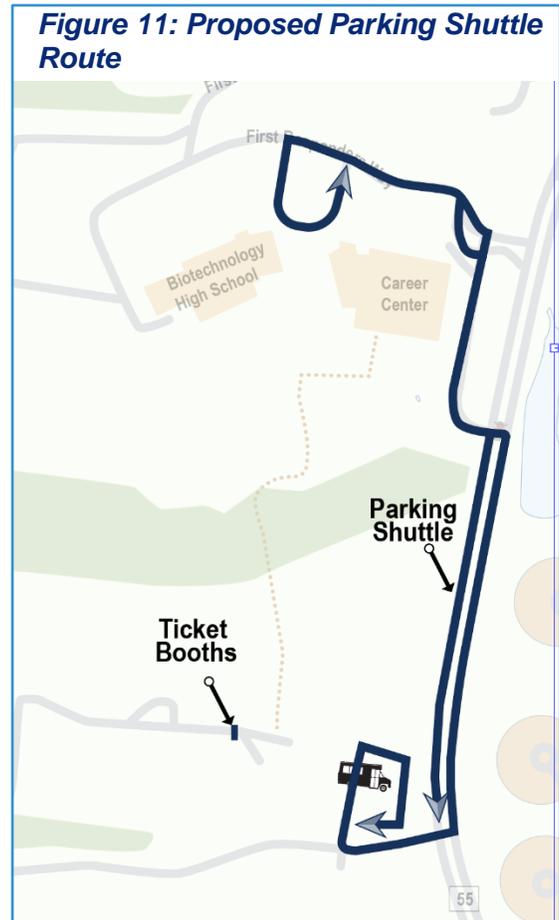


Parking Shuttle (FF 3.2)

Currently there are two shuttle bus routes that provide connectivity between the lots designated as Blue and Green to the lot nearest the ticket booths. However, the shuttle bus can be constrained by traffic congestion on CR 55 (Kozloski Road) during the most congested periods. There may be an opportunity to change the routing of the bus and use an existing

turnaround to provide a shorter service that combines with the directional access to parking and diversion of regional through traffic to improve the shuttle services (**Figure 11**). However, it would introduce additional walking to the northernmost lots.

It is also recommended that consideration be given to moving the bus turnaround at the entry to the Showgrounds to the eastern part of the lot to allow for a ridehail turnaround when the bus stops are currently placed.

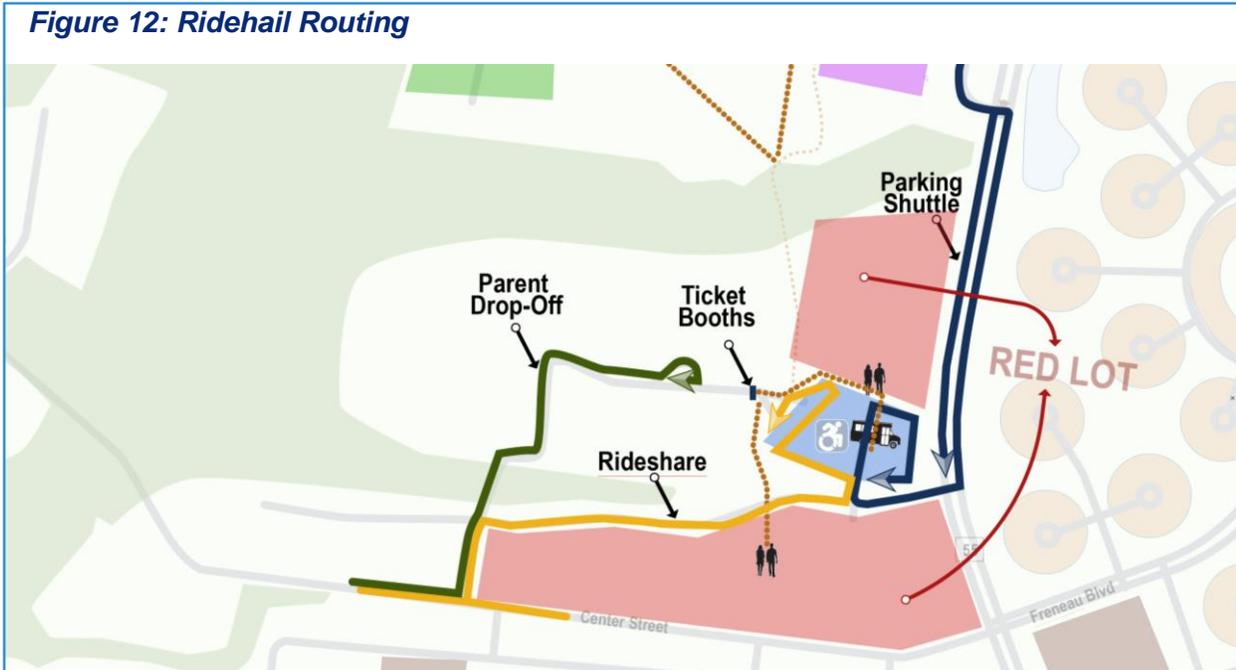


Ridehail + Geofencing (FF 3.3)

A designated ridehail pick-up/drop-off area would make it easier for passengers and drivers to find each other, while minimizing the incidence of ridehail vehicles navigating through the site or stopping in other areas that may interrupt traffic flow (**Figure 12**). A centralized location may lead to more ridehail demand, since visitors would have greater confidence that a vehicle will be available after an event. There is a designated area off of Center Street that is

currently used for ridehail, taxi, and private vehicle pick-up and drop-off. However, it is not well signed and a geofence is not provided. Improved signage, information on the Fair website, and geofencing can help to better inform drivers where to go. A short-term parking area may also help to decongest the pick-up and drop-off area by vehicles who are waiting to pick up passengers that have not yet made it to the designated ridehail area.

Figure 12: Ridehail Routing



Zones of Parking (FF 3.4)

The diagram (**Figure 13**) shows different parking zone colors for each arrival direction. This is intended to help visitors find their parking spaces/lots after an event. As visitors are entering however, there would be no demarcation of parking, visitors from the north would park in northern lots, and those from the south would park in southern areas.



Counter-Flow on CR 55 (Kozloski Road) (FF 3.5)

Counter-flow options on CR 55 (Kozloski Road) would allow for additional entry and exit capacity during ingress and egress periods, respectively, or provide an opportunity for a shuttle-only lane. Other options include a full closure of CR 55 (Kozloski Road) to through traffic, with Freneau Boulevard used as a bypass route, or closure in one direction, so that direction can be used by the shuttle bus, and the opposite direction would be used for traffic flow (in the northbound direction, for example) (**Figure 14**). A review of StreetLight data shows that only 30% of the traffic on CR 55 (Kozloski Road) north of Center Street is destined for nearby locations/the Fair. This shows that most of the traffic can use alternate routes on Fair days if these are designated with diversionary signage on event days.

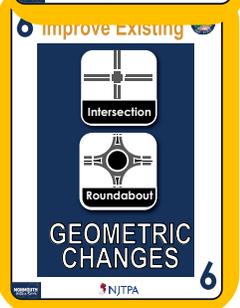
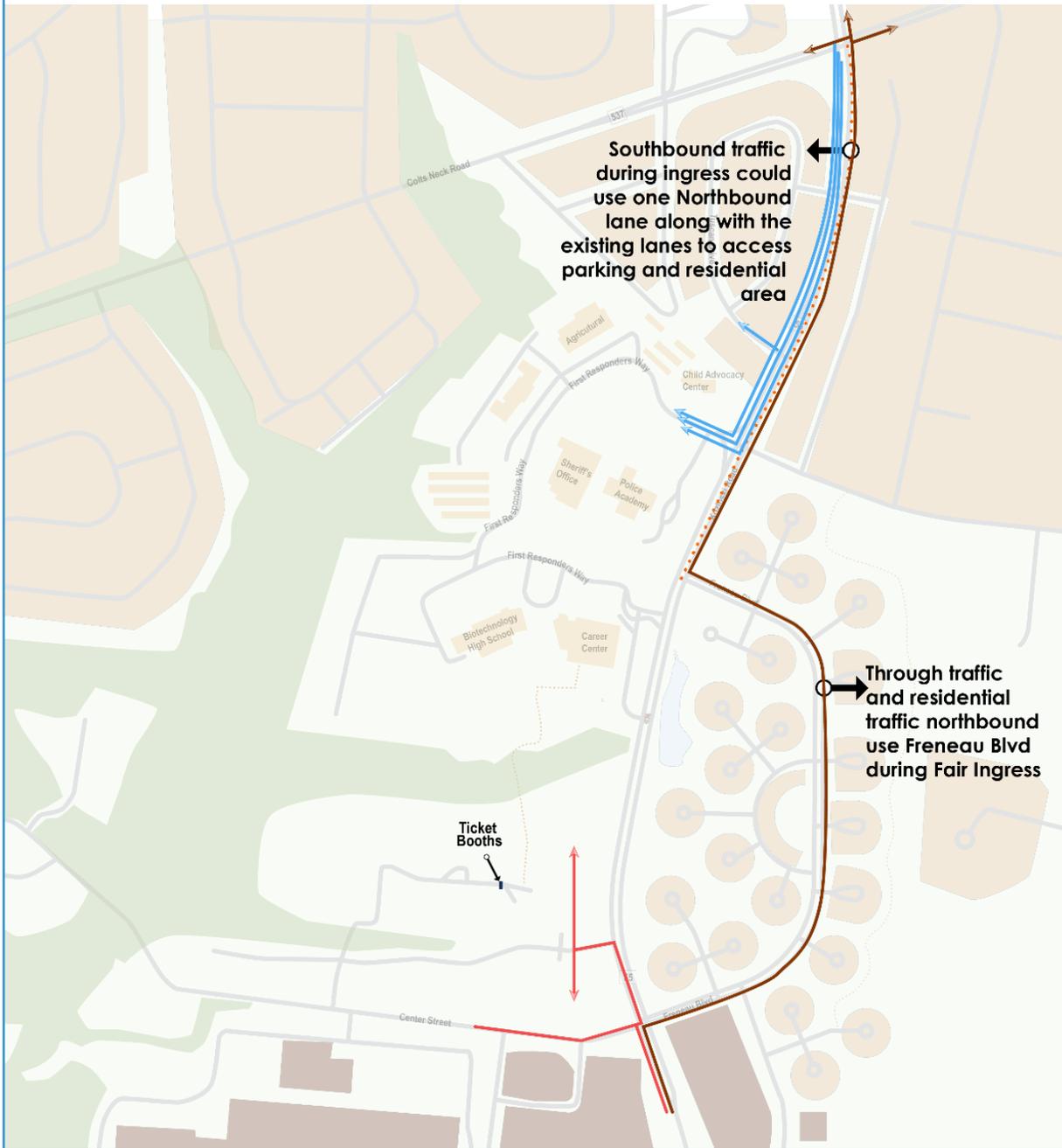


Figure 13: Parking zones would allow drivers to park in areas closest to their arrival route, minimizing traffic on CR 55 (Kozloski Road) and crossing traffic streams near the Showgrounds site.



Figure 14: Traffic Diversions on CR 55 (Kozloski Road)



4 – Parking

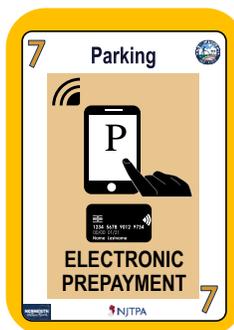
Keep Parking Available (FF 4.1)

County Fair staff currently open and close parking areas depending on the availability of parking as it relates to the distance to the Showgrounds. Parking areas that are closer are filled first to a certain level, and then the remote parking lots are opened based on congestion to reallocate traffic. This occurs until the shuttles start which then closes off some parking areas to avoid conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and shuttles. While some of these measures involved paid parking, the County Fair Staff are currently not interested in implementing parking fees. These measures are shown as examples for organizers of other, similar events.



Reservation System (FF 4.2)

While County Fair staff are not currently interested in implementing parking fees, organizers of other events can implement a parking reservation system to allow visitors to purchase parking permits online. This would allow for a dedicated permit lane at entrance plazas, increasing entry capacity and minimizing queues. Parking permits can be processed by inspection, RFID, or by scanning a bar code (to prevent duplication). A permit entry lane typically operates two to five times faster than a normal lane.



Fee for Parking (FF 4.3)

Parking at the County Fair is currently free, and Fair staff do not currently have interest in charging for parking. However, parking fees during large events could encourage visitors to carpool. One option to offset this parking fee is to provide a voucher for the same amount at businesses at the event location, such as for food or other vendors. The parking fee should encourage carpools, which would increase the average vehicle occupancy, and decrease the number of vehicles to a large event. The fee can also be used to offset operational costs for the paid parking operation. This approach could also be used to promote early access. For example, in the case of the County Fair, the Pink Lots could be utilized to allow early entry with exclusive access into the fair an hour before the rest of the fair opens.

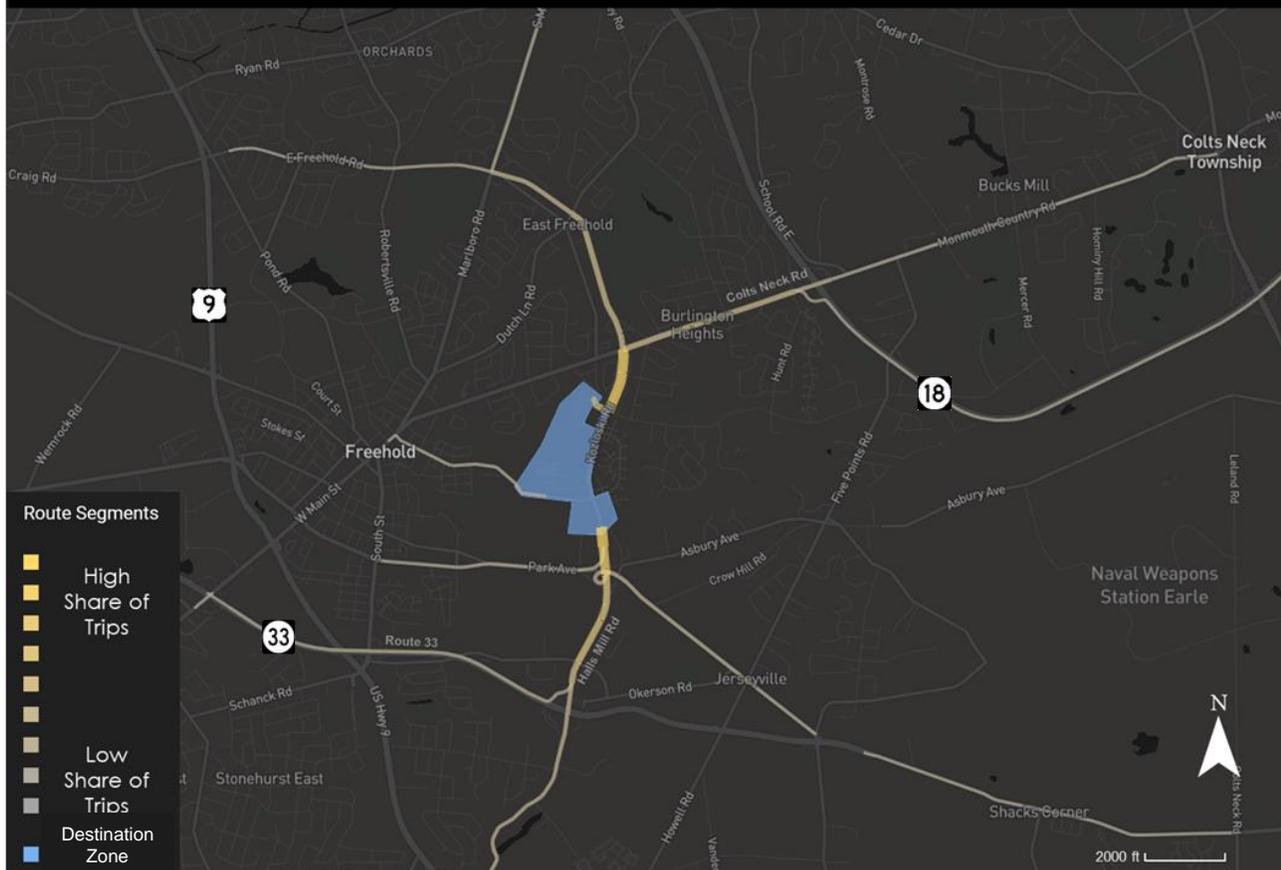
5 – New Options



Connecting Shuttle Services/Off-Site Parking (FF 5.1)

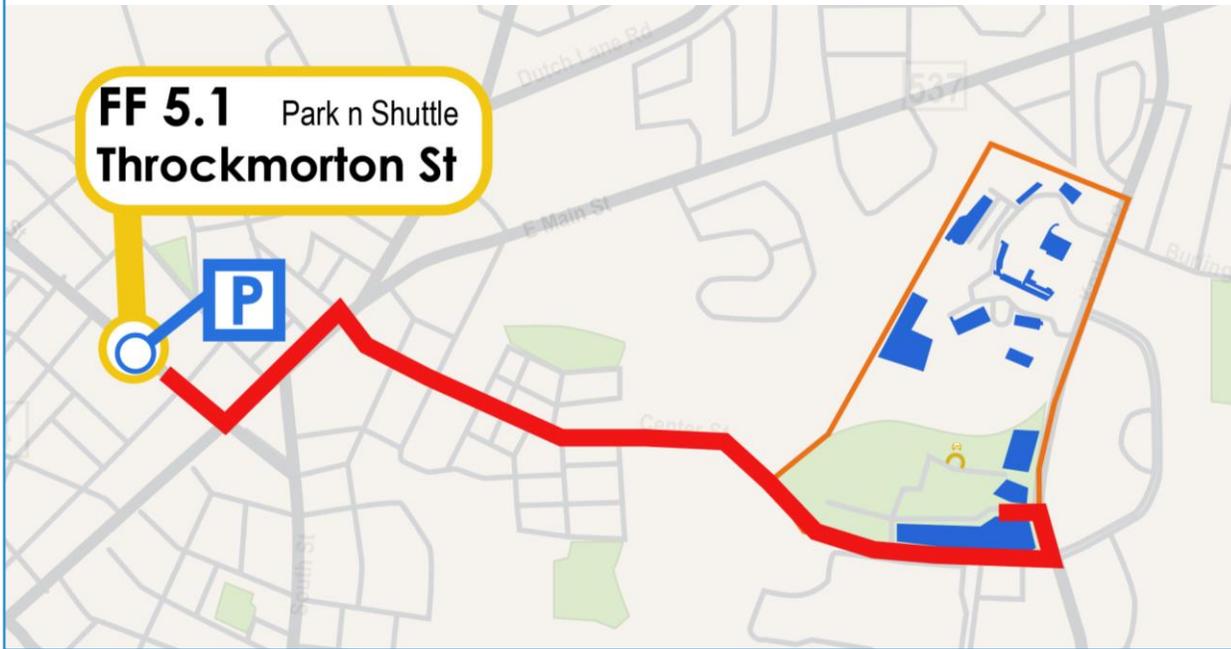
Several of the lots on and off the Showgrounds site are used on event days and are connected with shuttles. This can be further expanded upon to include more off-site parking lots along the arrival and departure routes as well as other transit nodes. The arrival routes to the Showgrounds show that there are many parking areas that are located along routes that visitors are already traveling on, and many of the park-and-rides are served by NJ TRANSIT bus routes (). At these locations, "COUNTY FAIR PARK AND RIDE" signage may be a simple implementation to draw a small portion of the Fair visitors to these remote parking areas, and visitors can also arrive by NJ TRANSIT buses. **Figure 16** shows a potential shuttle route from the parking areas around Throckmorton Street that could be used for visitors arriving by car, those arriving by bus into Downtown Freehold, residents within the areas, and visitors to Downtown Freehold that may also want to visit the Fair. Shuttle buses would still travel in traffic, but if there are fewer vehicles on the roadways near the Fair (because of fewer parked on-site), traffic flow would be less congested for Fair visitors and for background traffic.

Figure 15: Roadways that Experience 5% or More of Traffic Destined to the Showgrounds



Source: Stantec, StreetLight Data

Figure 16: Sample Park-and-Ride Shuttle Option



Conclusions and Implementation

Monmouth County staff are already successfully implementing and managing several TDM strategies for the County Fair. The modifications and new strategies, such as reorganizing parking, improve the pick-up and drop-off area, improving pedestrian connections, offering incentives for early arrivers, diverting pass-through traffic away from Kozloski Drive, among others, recommended in this document are intended to supplement or improve upon what is already happening during the Fair. Many of the recommendations presented in this document could also be applied to other event venues in the County.

A summary implementation matrix is provided below which depicts each strategy based on its complexity to implement as well as its effectiveness (see **Figure 17**). The matrix can be used by decision makers to help select strategies to pursue as funding for or interest in certain strategies arise.

Figure 17: The County Fair at East Freehold Showgrounds Implementation Matrix

