

# Monmouth County Transportation Council Quarterly Newsletter



*Issue Fourteen - Fall 2020*

## Motor Vehicle Commission and Governor Murphy are Taking Steps to Cut Down Lines and Long Waits

Since the Motor Vehicle Commission opened its doors in July they have been plagued by long lines and extended wait times. To help manage the demand for services [the Motor Vehicle Commission has moved 20 commonly used forms online](#). Drivers can now fill them out before going to an agency, which will help alleviate long waits and shorten lines. See the full list of forms [here](#).

[Additionally Governor Murphy signed two bills into law that will help alleviate congestion at MVC locations](#). One allows drivers age 65 and over to use old photos to allow them to renew their drivers licenses online, while another gives new residents 120 days, instead of 60 days, to register their vehicles.



## EZ Ride's Safe Routes to School Student Travel Toolkit

EZ Ride, the transportation Management Association for Monmouth County, has developed a [Safe Routes to School Student Travel Toolkit provided](#) as resource for school administrators, parents, and students. It explains how to keep students safe and socially distanced when arriving and departing school. EZ Ride is dedicated to helping

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- [MCTC Meeting October 13, 7p.m.](#) to be held online

## Did you know?

[A total of 1.9 billion gallons of biodiesel was produced in the United States in 2018](#) with production in 34 states. Iowa was the lead producer with 365 million gallons, followed by Texas and Missouri with 227 and 216 million gallons, respectively. Biodiesel has similar fuel properties to petroleum diesel but is manufactured from vegetable oils, animal fats, or recycled restaurant grease.

## EZ Ride Offering Free Rides to Asbury Park Residents

[EZ Ride is offering free rides through their Ryde4Life Program](#) to all Asbury Park Residents aged 18 and over to get to their doctor's appointment or food shopping within 15 miles of their home.

build a safer walking and biking environment, both in regards to road and COVID-19 safety. EZ Ride has produced [numerous safety guides for bicycling and walking, and have published pedestrian facts and figures](#) to encourage walking and bicycling to school.

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## AMTRAK Working on a Solution for Delays Caused by an 85 Year-Old Newark Bridge

The Dock Bridge next to Newark Penn Station regularly gets stuck in an open position after opening for passing ships and causes delays on NJ TRANSIT, AMTRAK, and PATH rail services. [AMTRAK has entered discussions with the U.S. Coast Guard to have the bridge permanently closed](#). The bridge receives a limited number of requests to open for ships and AMTRAK believes locking the bridge in the closed position and dedicating it to rail service will cut down on delays.

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## Fewer Bridges in New Jersey are in Need of Major Repairs.

The Federal Highway Administration's annual report found that fewer bridges in the state have been rated as structurally deficient, or in poor condition than any year in the past decade. [While many more still require repairs and rehabilitation, the rise in bridge repairs has been attributed to the increase in the gasoline tax.](#)



## How Has the COVID-19 Pandemic Affected Bicycle Use?

## NJ TRANSIT Twitter

NJ TRANSIT offers expedited information about your preferred transit service through social media. Get the information that is useful to you and your routes using the following links:

[North Jersey Coast Line](#)

[Northeast Corridor](#)

[North Jersey Buses](#)

[All other NJ TRANSIT Social Media Accounts](#)

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## Participate with the Council

If you have an interest in transportation, we invite you to contact the staff advisors to the Monmouth County Transportation Council at [transportation@co.monmouth.nj.us](mailto:transportation@co.monmouth.nj.us) and find out about ways you can participate or volunteer with us.

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## Portal Bridge to be Replaced

[In late July the Project to Replace the Portal Bridge gained approval for federal funds.](#) The replacement of the Portal Bridge will put an end to regular delays along the Northeast Corridor Rail line caused by the bridge becoming stuck in the open position after opening for ships to pass underneath. [The state has already begun to receive funds from the federal](#)

When stay-home orders began bicycles sales jumped, selling out many bicycle shops. With the closure of gyms and offices many people turned to bicycles for exercise and escape from the daily monotony of quarantine. Cities around the country saw very different effects of the pandemic on bicycling but [overall it seems that bicycles became a more important travel option than driving.](#)



## Moving Closer to Autonomous Vehicles with the First Autonomous Corridor

[A 40-mile stretch of road between Detroit and Ann Arbor in Michigan is to be outfitted with dedicated lanes for autonomous vehicles.](#) This project is being implemented under a public-private partnership and has gained the support of numerous auto makers and technology companies. The corridor will be a test bed for autonomous vehicles and how they interact with each other, other forms of autonomous vehicles such as freight, and other road users.

## NJ TRANSIT is Moving Forward with Electric Bus and Natural Gas Power Plant Programs

The NJ TRANSIT Board has approved a contract to begin the construction of electric bus charging stations and the needed electric infrastructure at the Newton Avenue Bus Garage in Camden. Additionally a Transit Grid Power Plant is planned to be constructed in Kearney. [The charging infrastructure will serve the eight electric buses being tested to determine how NJ TRANSIT can roll out electric buses throughout the state while the power plant is intended to provide power to the Northeast Corridor, Morris and Essex commuter line, and Hudson-Bergen Light rail in the event of a power outage.](#) The power plant project is seeing some push back however as the plan calls for the plant to be powered by natural gas but residents and environmentalists would prefer solar power.

[government.](#)

NJ TRANSIT has also began construction of a replacement for the Raritan River Bridge. The bridge has been plagued by maintenance issues since being damaged by Hurricane Sandy. [It's replacement will be more resilient to storms and incorporate new technologies to help speed the flow of trains.](#)

## Together North Jersey's Local Technical Assistance Program

Municipal governments, non-profit, community based, and non-governmental organizations are eligible to apply for technical assistance services to support local initiatives. The program covers a wide range of projects and assistance. [See if a project being conducted by your town or organization is eligible for technical assistance.](#)

## Around the World

In the Netherlands, [children are traveling to school by Bicycle Bus.](#) Similar to a walking school bus, up to eleven children and one adult chaperone travel to and from school daily. The different being the introduction of a shared vehicle the children and chaperone can pedal together. This method of travel is safer and quicker than a walking school bus while offering the same exercise and health benefits.





You may have come across the Transportation Newsletter Bookmarks featuring the Blue Comet at your local library. [Dive deeper into the history of New Jersey's all-time premiere train that set the standard for decor and service at reasonable prices.](#)

## Help the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority Plan for the Future

How do you see yourself travelling in the future? Would you use a self-driving car? Are there regional transportation projects that you think you be prioritized for funding?

These are some of the questions the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) will be asking the public as it drafts its next long-range transportation plan, *Plan 2050: Transportation, People, Opportunity*. The plan will detail new programs and recommend policies and transportation investments during the next 30 years.

The NJTPA region includes 13 counties in northern and central New Jersey and is home to 6.7 million people. The NJTPA oversees more than \$2 billion in transportation investments each year. To be eligible to receive federal transportation funds for programs and projects, the NJTPA must adopt a plan every four years.

All residents are encouraged to participate in the planning process during the next several months. Online meetings, surveys, a website and symposium series are just some of the ways you can get involved. To share your ideas, interests, and concerns about of the future of transportation in North Jersey, please take the NJTPA's 5-minute survey and sign up for virtual events at the *Plan 2050* website: <http://www.njtpa.org/plan2050>.

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## Fall Driving Tips

The changing of seasons is always a good time to re-evaluate your driving habits. It is getting dark earlier, reducing visibility. Roads may become covered in leaves which hide pot holes or debris that can damage your vehicle, and you are 3.5 times more likely to have a run in with animals such as deer while on the road.

Deer are especially active around dawn and dusk. If you encounter a deer on the road, remember they are rarely alone and make sure to brake, not swerve to avoid them. Be extra cautious in areas with historically high collisions with deer and if you do have a run in with deer, follow these [additional tips on how to avoid a collision](#).

[The AARP offers the following tips for staying safe on the road this fall.](#)

Rutgers University is holding a one hour online course for all who are interested titled [Defensive Driving to Avoid Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions](#). This free course will prepare you for any altercation with wildlife on the roadways.

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**Have a question, comment or hot tip? Send us an email:**  
[transportation@co.monmouth.nj.us](mailto:transportation@co.monmouth.nj.us)

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### About This Newsletter

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform Monmouth County citizens about transportation topics and related events in their community. This newsletter is produced by the Monmouth County Division of Planning Transportation Section for the Monmouth County Transportation Council. The County of Monmouth and the Board of Chosen Freeholders do not necessarily share the viewpoints of the material mentioned in this newsletter.

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