

# Can We Reduce Congestion in New Jersey ?

## Focus: Pennsauken Transit Center



## The Answer is Yes!

**O**ptions make all the difference when it comes to getting around. But, for many of our daily trips, as residents of the Delaware Valley we have few options other than driving on congested roads to get where we need to go. NJ Transit is currently constructing a new rail transit center that will greatly increase the transportation options in South Jersey and the Delaware Valley. Expected to open in 2013, the Pennsauken Transit Center (PTC) will serve both the Atlantic City Line and the RiverLINE, allowing riders to transfer between the two train lines and providing bus transfers. The new station will make it significantly easier to get around the region by transit, providing shorter travel times and improved access to employment, educational, and cultural centers in Philadelphia, Atlantic City, Trenton, and beyond. This newsletter explains how the PTC, along with other congestion management strategies, can help mitigate congestion in the Delaware Valley.

### What Can I Do as a Citizen?

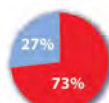
- ▶ Check conditions before your trip to determine the most efficient mode and route. Many tools and resources are available. (See the inside of this newsletter for examples.)
- ▶ Combine trips when you can; take transit, carpool, or join a local ridesharing program.
- ▶ Take advantage of local shopping and recreation opportunities, especially when accessible by transit, walking, or biking.
- ▶ Get involved with planning the future of your community. To request a DVRPC Citizen's Guide and learn how to get involved, call Jane Meconi, Public Involvement Manager, at 215.238.2871.

### What Can I Do as a Municipal Official or Staff Person?

- ▶ Review your community's comprehensive plan, zoning, and land development ordinances for transit-supportive regulations.
- ▶ Coordinate with municipal and county studies.
- ▶ Encourage adoption of a local "Complete Streets" policy that recommends designing streets for all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, disabled people, transit users, and drivers.
- ▶ Communicate with your county representatives on the DVRPC Board (see "About" at [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org)).
- ▶ There may be more ways to fund transportation improvements than you realize. The DVRPC *Municipal Resource Guide* (Pub #12003) and *Funding Transportation Safety Improvements* brochure (Pub #10018) are great sources of information.

**Forecasts:  
Typical Weekday  
in the Year 2015**

**570**  
BOARDINGS AT THE  
TRANSIT CENTER



**TYPES OF BOARDING:**  
27% Transfers  
73% Local / Non-transfers

**15-30%**  
TRAVEL TIMES SAVINGS FOR MANY  
RIDERS USING THE TRANSIT CENTER

**9.7 Million**  
REDUCTION IN ANNUAL VEHICLE  
MILES TRAVELED (VMT)

## Travel-Time Reliability

Recurring congestion refers to usual rush-hour traffic and the expected delays it causes. Travel-time reliability is a measure of the variation in how long it takes to make the same trip from one day to another. The PTC will help mitigate roadway congestion and reliability issues by providing travelers with more **options** to get where they need to go.

For example, someone who lives in Pennsauken and works in the University City section of Philadelphia will now have the option of a one-seat transit trip. Perhaps this commuter usually drives to work. One day, the trip home along I-676 and I-95 takes only 15 minutes. Another day, the same trip takes 45 minutes, causing our hypothetical commuter to be late for an appointment. One measure of reliability is the Planning Time Index (PTI), which represents the total time a traveler should allow to ensure on-time arrival. A PTI of 1.6 means that for a trip that takes 10 minutes in light traffic, a traveler should budget a total of 16 minutes to ensure on-time arrival 95 percent of the time. The PTI at 5:00 PM on I-95 northbound is as high as 4.4. Thanks to the PTC, more commuters in South Jersey will have the option to take transit when the roads are congested. Having more **options** means greater freedom to choose what's best for you.

## I-95 Revive and Your Commute

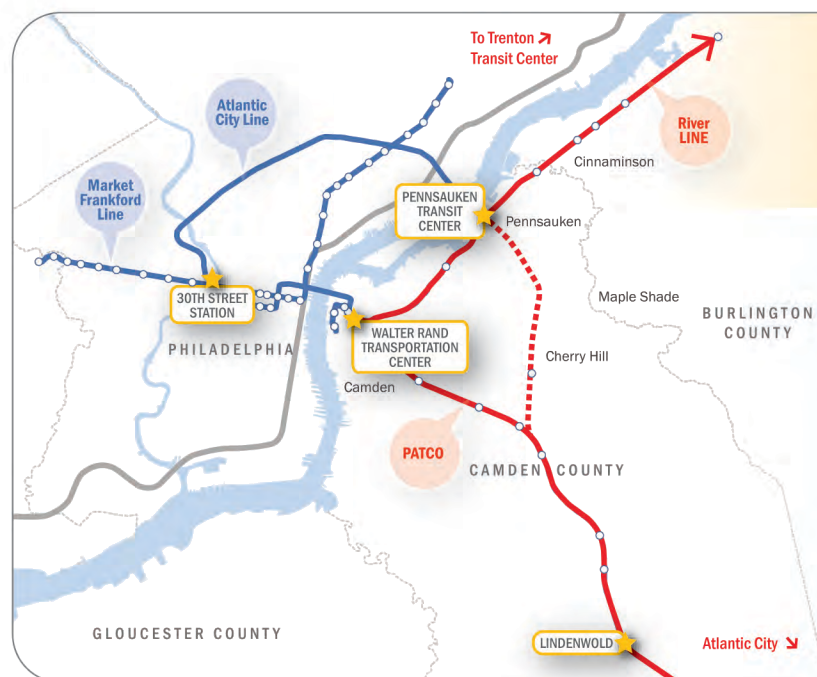
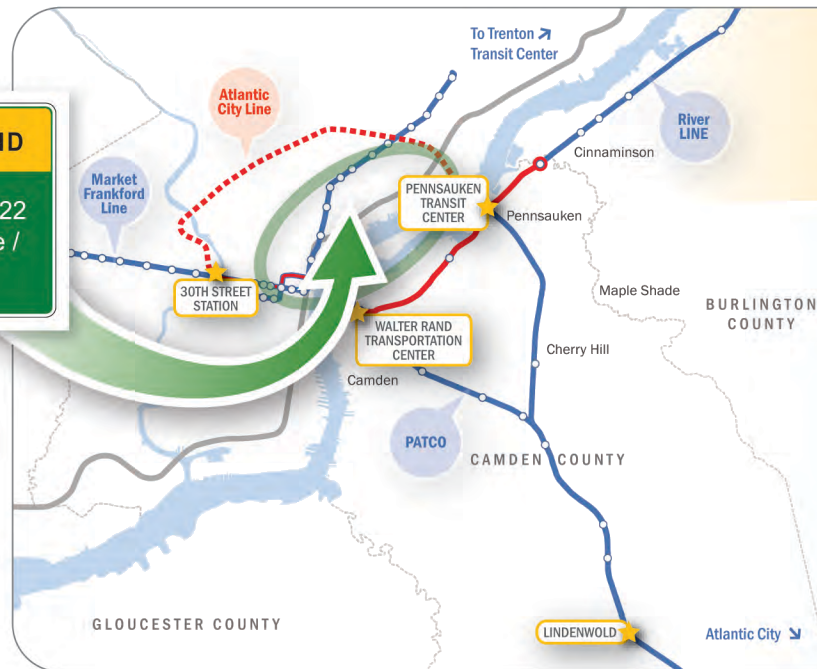
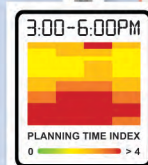
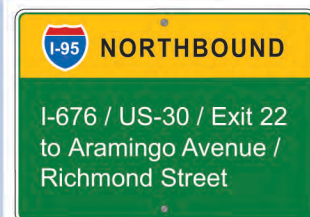
PennDOT is working on a long-term, multi-phase initiative to improve and rebuild I-95 in Pennsylvania. Five major projects to reconstruct the highway between I-676 and Cottman Avenue in Philadelphia are in varying stages of design or construction. These projects, although carefully planned to affect rush-hour traffic as little as possible, will impact commuters for at least the next decade.

For more information about the I-95 projects, see [www.95revive.com](http://www.95revive.com). Knowing what **options** are available and using cutting-edge tools to plan trips can help travelers avoid congestion from construction or other causes.

## Travel Smarter

There are many websites and applications to help figure out the best way to make your trip:

- ▶ SEPTA ([www.septa.org](http://www.septa.org)) and NJ Transit ([www.njtransit.com](http://www.njtransit.com)) provide Trip Planners on their websites.
- ▶ PennDOT's and NJDOT's traffic cameras, as well as construction and incident updates, are available at [www.511pa.com/Traffic.aspx](http://www.511pa.com/Traffic.aspx) and [www.511nj.org/trafficmap.aspx](http://www.511nj.org/trafficmap.aspx), respectively.
- ▶ Some private services such as Traffic.com offer free, real-time traffic information. Others, including Sigalert.com, offer personalized updates for a fee.
- ▶ There are many smartphone applications such as INRIX, Waze, and TomTom that provide real-time traffic information.
- ▶ Smartphone applications to navigate transit networks include Embark and HopStop.



## Reducing Travel Costs and Travel Time: What the Figures Show

The Pennsauken Transportation Center (PTC) will expand the mobility **options** in Pennsauken and the region by reducing the cost, travel time, and number of transfers required to make certain transit trips. It will not only expand the **options** available to Pennsauken residents and others who live or work in the vicinity but also increase opportunities for economic development by improving access to Pennsauken. Each figure above shows the travel-time savings for a hypothetical transit trip and compares that journey to the same trip by car. For example, the second figure depicts the time and cost to make a trip from Trenton to Atlantic City (or vice versa) by car and train. The PTC will save transit riders approximately 20 minutes of travel time and reduce the number of transfers from two to one on this 90-mile transit trip. While the train trip would take the same amount of time as driving in uncongested conditions, it would cost a bit less. When regular Friday commuter congestion and heavy shore traffic lead to severely congested road conditions, the travel times for driving and transit would likely be similar. Travelers are free to choose the mode that makes the most sense for their particular trip. See the section on "Travel-Time Reliability" at the top-left of this page to learn how the PTC will help give travelers in the Delaware Valley more **options** to mitigate the congestion and unreliability of some of the region's most-used roads.

## Potential Strategies for this Congested Corridor



### Very Appropriate Strategies

(Definitions of these strategies and many more are in the CMP Report - Publication #11042)

- ▶ **Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)**
- ▶ **Incident Management**
- ▶ **Modifications to Existing Transit Routes**  
Making the existing transit system serve people better is often a more efficient and cost-effective approach than initiating new projects. This family of strategies includes Express Transit Routes, More Frequent Service or More Hours of Service, and Making Transfers Easier for Passengers, and others.

### Secondary Strategies

(There are more listed in the CMP Report.)

- ▶ **Signal Improvements**  
Including Transit Signal Priority to temporarily extend green time or otherwise expedite buses, light rail, or trolleys through the existing road system.
- ▶ **Traffic Calming**
- ▶ **Transit Infrastructure Improvements**
- ▶ **Passenger Intermodal Center or Garage for Transit Riders**
- ▶ **Walking and Bicycling Improvements**
- ▶ **Freight Capacity Investments**
- ▶ **Minor Road Expansions**

### Inexpensive Strategies that Help Almost Everywhere

(Definitions of these strategies and many more are in the CMP Report.)

- ▶ **Safety Improvements and Programs**
- ▶ **Signal Preemption for Emergency Vehicles where Needed**
- ▶ **Intersection Improvements of a Limited Scale**
- ▶ **Access Management**  
(both engineering and policy strategies)
- ▶ **Marketing/Outreach for Transit and Transportation Demand Management**

# Quick Introductions:

## Congestion Management Process (CMP)

The CMP is a systematic process for managing congestion. It provides information on transportation system performance and a range of strategies to minimize congestion and to help people and goods reach their destinations. The CMP advances the goals of DVRPC's Long-Range Plan and strengthens the connection between the Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and other Commission efforts.

## Long-Range Plan

*Connections 2035 – The Regional Plan for a Sustainable Future* (Publication #09047) was adopted by the DVRPC Board on July 23, 2009 as the long-range plan for the Greater Philadelphia region. The *Connections* Plan puts a strong emphasis on creating livable communities, managing growth and protecting resources, building an energy-efficient economy, and creating a modern multimodal transportation system. Metropolitan planning organizations like DVRPC are key actors in regions across the country, responsible for coordinated, comprehensive, and continuing transportation planning. To participate in developing *Connections 2040*, visit [www.dvrpc.org/Connections2040](http://www.dvrpc.org/Connections2040).

## Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is the regionally agreed-upon list of priority projects, as required by federal law. The TIP must list all projects that intend to use federal funds, along with non-federally funded projects that are regionally significant. Projects address highway, transit, bicyclist, pedestrian, and freight-related needs. For more information, visit [www.dvrpc.org/TIP](http://www.dvrpc.org/TIP).

## Pennsauken Transit Center Study

During Fiscal Year 2013, DVRPC's Office of Smart Growth conducted a study of the Pennsauken Transit Center to examine potential impacts and opportunities created by the new transit center. The study also addressed potential improvements to the station area to ensure that the transit center is safe and accessible for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists. For more information, see Publication #13051, or contact Andrew Svekla, Senior Planning and Design Analyst, 215.238.2810 or [asvekla@dvrpc.org](mailto:asvekla@dvrpc.org). For more information about DVRPC's Smart Growth initiatives, visit [www.dvrpc.org/SmartGrowth](http://www.dvrpc.org/SmartGrowth).



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**Abstract:** The CMP newsletter series focuses on congested subcorridors in the Delaware Valley, alternating between New Jersey and Pennsylvania. This edition highlights opportunities created by the new Pennsauken Transit Center, scheduled to open in 2013. For more information, please visit [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org).



## LET US KNOW what YOU think!

*This newsletter is part of a series that focuses on a selected subcorridor in the Delaware Valley. This is the fourth to focus on a subcorridor in New Jersey. The series includes an introduction to the Congestion Management Process (Publication #NL09007). Help make this a useful resource for other communities by sending any comments to Jesse Buerk, Transportation Planner, at 215.238.2948 or [jbuerk@dvrpc.org](mailto:jbuerk@dvrpc.org).*



The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is dedicated to uniting the region's elected officials, planning

professionals and the public with the common vision of making a great region even greater. Shaping the way we live, work and play, DVRPC builds consensus on improving transportation, promoting smart growth, protecting the environment, and enhancing the economy. We serve a diverse region of nine counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer in New Jersey. DVRPC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Greater Philadelphia Region — leading the way to a better future.

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