

V. Circulation Plan

Introduction

There is a close relationship between circulation and land use that has a direct impact upon the vitality and viability of municipalities such as the Township of Bloomfield. From the earliest colonial period to the modern era, communities have developed in locations where the prevailing mode of transportation provided local mobility, access to markets and links to other communities as well as regions. During the 18th century, towns and cities clustered along bodies of water served by ships, ferries and ports. In the 19th century, towns and cities evolved along canals and rail lines served by stations, terminals and yards. During the 20th century, towns and cities grew in locations served by roads, highways and interchanges. In each case, transportation has played a central role in the development and vitality of the community in question.

Bloomfield is fortunate to be served by an extensive intermodal transportation system consisting of roads and highways, mass transit, bicycle/pedestrian facilities, truck routes and freight rail. The Township's transportation system makes a significant contribution to the local quality of life, economy and on-going revitalization efforts.

The Circulation Plan discusses the adequacy of Bloomfield's existing transportation system as well as proposed improvements. In addition, major transportation focus areas such as the Garden State Parkway, Bloomfield Avenue and NJ Transit commuter rail stations are identified and analyzed. The Plan also addresses some of the parking issues associated with current needs and anticipated demand from future redevelopment.

Bloomfield will benefit from NJ Transit's pending MidTOWN Direct and Newark City Subway services, which are among the most significant transportation investments in the Township in decades. They are projected to have a positive impact on local mobility, quality of life and economic development. The integration of these new mass transit services into the Township's existing transportation system is an important issue to be addressed. The EZ-Pass system has reduced traffic congestion at Garden State Parkway toll plazas within Bloomfield, however, there is a need to improve circulation and reduce traffic congestion on the local approach roads to the Parkway. Efforts to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation and safety through new facilities, traffic calming and signage are encouraged. Emphasis is given to increasing intermodal connections in order to enhance access to all modes of transportation, further integrating the Township's transportation system and promoting efficiency.

Major Road Network

The Township of Bloomfield has a network of major roads that provide local

access and connections to the northern New Jersey/New York City metropolitan region as well as destinations throughout the U.S. Bloomfield's major roads consist of the Garden State Parkway and multiple Essex County roads including Bloomfield Avenue, Broad Street, Franklin Street and Watchung Avenue. The Township's most heavily utilized road is the Garden State Parkway, followed by Bloomfield Avenue and other County roadways. The primary issues associated with the network of major roads are increasing traffic congestion, inadequate access to activity centers such as Bloomfield Center, limited way-finding and directional signage, pedestrian safety and impacts from the Garden State Parkway.

Garden State Parkway

The Garden State Parkway is a limited access highway that bisects the Township of Bloomfield from north to south. The Garden State Parkway provides local and regional access for the residents and businesses of the Township. It connects Bloomfield to Newark, Jersey City and New York City in the east; outlying suburbs to the north, south and west; and other regional destinations such as the Jersey Shore, Hackensack Meadowlands and Newark International Airport. The Parkway has five (5) interchanges and 10 entrance/exit ramps in the Township at Bloomfield Avenue, John F. Kennedy Drive, Belleville Avenue, Hoover Avenue and Watchung Avenue. The major issues concerning the Garden State Parkway are traffic congestion during peak periods, conflicts between local and regional traffic along approach roads and impacts to the Township as host community.

The Garden State Parkway is the most heavily traveled major road in Bloomfield with 1999 average daily traffic of 155,906 as shown in Table V-1. The high volume of traffic on the Parkway results in significant congestion, especially during peak periods when commuters from the Township, adjacent municipalities and communities throughout the region utilize it for access to employment destinations in northern New Jersey and New York City. The problem of traffic congestion is compounded by the lack of alternatives to the Garden State Parkway for north-south circulation. It is one of the few major north-south highways in the State since most highways are laid out in an east-west direction for access to Newark, Jersey City, New York City and other urban centers. When accidents occur or traffic volume exceeds the roadway capacity, the Garden State Parkway becomes a bottleneck that impedes local and regional circulation. There are no plans to expand the capacity of the Parkway, however, the introduction of EZ-Pass has reduced traffic congestion and back-ups at toll plazas located in the Township.

As with most highways, the Garden State Parkway has positive and negative impacts upon the Township of Bloomfield. The Parkway connects the Township to the regional highway network and provides outstanding access to major employment, shopping and recreational destinations. In turn, the

Garden State Parkway also makes Bloomfield accessible from throughout the northern New Jersey/New York City region. This contributes to the Township’s desirability as an accessible community for residents, businesses and investors.

The Garden State Parkway, however, also attracts drivers from adjacent municipalities, increases traffic congestion in residential neighborhoods and physically divides Bloomfield. A significant number of commuters from neighboring municipalities utilize Township roads to enter and exit the Parkway during the morning and evening rush hours, thereby increasing traffic congestion on approach roads and in the vicinity of entrance/exit ramps. For example, 13,620 vehicles utilized the Watchung Avenue interchange and 31,373 vehicles utilized the Bloomfield Avenue interchange on a daily basis in 1999. This traffic conges-

Table V-1 Network of Major Roads, 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ		
Roadway Jurisdiction	Functional Classification	Average Daily Traffic
<i>State</i>		
Garden State Parkway	Highway/expressway	155,906 (1999)
<i>County</i>		
Alexander Road	Collector	N/A
Bay Avenue	Collector	N/A
Belleville Avenue	Minor Arterial	11,604 (1999)
Bloomfield Avenue	Principal Arterial	24,466 (1999)
Broad Street	Collector	N/A
East Passaic Street	Collector	N/A
Franklin Street	Minor Arterial	N/A
High Street	Collector	N/A
Hoover Avenue	Collector	N/A
John F. Kennedy Drive	Collector	N/A
Watchung Avenue	Collector	N/A
West Passaic Avenue	Collector	N/A
Washington Street	Collector	N/A
<i>Source: Essex County Department of Public Works, New Jersey Department of Transportation</i>		

tion often spills over into residential neighborhoods and diminishes the quality of life for residents. The Parkway also separates Bloomfield and functions as a visual and physical barrier, particularly in Bloomfield Center where the highway is elevated.

Bloomfield Avenue

Bloomfield Avenue is a principal arterial roadway that traverses the Township of Bloomfield in an east-west direction. Bloomfield Avenue spans the entire length of Essex County and connects Bloomfield to Newark in the east and outlying suburban municipalities such as Caldwell and Fairfield in the west. Within the Township, the roadway has an interchange with the Garden State Parkway and provides access to major destinations such as Bloomfield Center, Bloomfield College and the new Grove Street station on the Newark City Subway. The major issues with regard to Bloomfield Avenue are traffic congestion, circulation in Bloomfield Center, way-finding and directional signage and safety.

Bloomfield Avenue is the most heavily traveled roadway in Bloomfield after the Garden State Parkway with average daily traffic of 24,466 as shown in Table V-1. This reflects its dual function as a local roadway providing access to destinations within the Township and as a regional travel corridor providing access to destinations within the County between Newark and Fairfield. The high volume of traffic on Bloomfield Avenue results in significant congestion, especially during the morning and evening peak periods when commuters from adjacent municipalities and local traffic converge on the roadway. The traffic congestion is exacerbated by the presence of closely spaced and signalized intersections as well as the limited capacity of the four-lane roadway. The problem is most acute in Bloomfield Center where the radial road pattern, lack of way-finding signage, numerous traffic signals, limited off-street parking and conflicts between local and regional traffic exacerbate traffic conditions. The Bloomfield Center Alliance, which is a public-private partnership to revitalize the central business district (CBD), has proposed numerous improvements to address these circulation problems by creating a ring or by-pass road for through traffic, installing way-finding and directional signage and increasing off-street parking.

Bloomfield Avenue functions relatively well and provides adequate east-west circulation within the Township given the high traffic volumes, limited capacity and bottlenecks found at major intersections and in Bloomfield Center. The problem of traffic congestion can, in all likelihood, be managed and ameliorated but not eliminated. It is primarily a function of Bloomfield's development density, location near the center of the northern New Jersey/New York City metropolitan region and limited mass transit alternatives. Coordination with Essex County on system management improvements such as signal timing, installation of left-turn lanes and improved signage should be

pursued. These types of improvements are particularly recommended within Bloomfield Center to improve circulation and reduce bottleneck conditions. The installation of way-finding signage and safety enhancing traffic calming improvements are recommended for the Bloomfield Avenue corridor to identify key destinations and improve pedestrian safety. Recommended traffic calming improvements include roadway neck-downs, textured crosswalks, widened sidewalks and roundabouts.

Other County Roads

The Township of Bloomfield is served by a network of smaller roads under the jurisdiction of Essex County that form a grid consisting of minor arterial and collector roadways, as shown in Table V-1. These roads provide access to regional facilities such as the Garden State Parkway and connections to local roads under the jurisdiction of the Township. They are also significant because of the access that they provide to major activity centers, neighborhood business districts and residential neighborhoods. Coordination with the County is necessary to ensure that these roads are maintained and improved in order to provide adequate local access and mobility as well as accommodate the significant regional traffic that traverses Bloomfield.

The County road network is the foundation of Bloomfield's local transportation system because of the balance of local access and connections to adjacent municipalities that it provides. For example, Broad Street traverses Bloomfield from north to south and provides access to the Bloomfield Center, North Center and Brookdale business districts; Brookdale County Park; Bloomfield High School and Bloomfield College; Broadacres office complex; and residential neighborhoods in the northern two-thirds of the Township. It also links the Township to Clifton in the north and East Orange in the south via Glenwood Avenue. Other significant County roads providing north-south circulation include Broughton Avenue, John F. Kennedy Drive and East Passaic Avenue. County roads providing critical east-west circulation include Belleville Avenue, Franklin Street and Watchung Avenue.

Local Road Network

The Township of Bloomfield's unique geography and linear north-south orientation determine the local road network. The road network has a hybrid radial and grid pattern that reflects its gradual development over time. The Township's geography and resulting local road network present certain transportation challenges, especially with regard to north-south circulation.

Bloomfield's local road network was originally designed in a radial configuration with the intersection of Bloomfield Avenue and Broad Street as the hub and local roads as the spokes running outward from the center. This radial pattern is particularly evident in the southern section of the Township that experienced intensive development at an early date. As development progressed, a grid

roadway pattern was laid out over the original radial pattern to accommodate and facilitate further residential, commercial and industrial development. The grid pattern is found throughout the Township but is particularly evident in neighborhoods such as Ampere Parkway, Brookside and Watsessing Heights. More recent in-fill development has resulted in the creation of other roadway types such as cul-de-sacs and closed loop streets with limited connections to the existing local road network. Most local roads have a limited right-of-way/cartway width and relatively low design speed to facilitate land access over mobility. Mobility is achieved through connections to higher capacity roads such as the County road network and Garden State Parkway.

Bloomfield's local road network is constrained by major physical barriers such as the Garden State Parkway, NJ Transit Montclair Branch and Boonton Lines, Conrail Orange Branch and Third River corridor. This results in a divided road network that reduces mobility and limits connections between sections of the Township as well as between residential neighborhoods and major activity centers. Improvements that address this problem such as coordinated way-finding signage, bicycle/pedestrian facilities and greenway corridors are encouraged.

Parking

The Township of Bloomfield is a large and densely developed municipality with areas of extensive residential, commercial and industrial development. Parking is a significant issue, particularly in commercial districts, residential neighborhoods abutting commercial districts and in the vicinity of mass transit facilities such as bus stops. The demand for parking in the Township is anticipated to increase as the revitalization of Bloomfield Center progresses, redevelopment of transitional industrial sites occurs and expanded rail service to Newark and New York City commences. Specific focus areas include Bloomfield Center and environs; the NJ Transit Bloomfield, Watsessing and Grove Street Stations; and residential neighborhoods along Broad Street and Franklin Street impacted by commuters utilizing bus service to New York City. Consideration should be given to ensuring that new development is served by adequate parking, increasing parking facilities where appropriate and evaluating the feasibility of a permit parking program in station areas and at major bus stops.

Gateways

The Township of Bloomfield occupies a high-visibility location in the center of Essex County and the northern New Jersey/New York City metropolitan region. Every day, thousands of commuters, visitors and other non-residents pass through Bloomfield on the Garden State Parkway, Bloomfield Avenue, NJ Transit rail lines and private bus routes. There are several prominent gateway locations where various regional highways, local roads and rail lines enter the Township. Gateways are high visibility entrance points into a mu-

municipality that function as the “front door” to a community. They have the potential to help a municipality create a unique identity and convey an image as an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest. They can also facilitate circulation by clearly delineating the routes to major destinations and activity centers in a municipality.

Bloomfield has multiple gateway locations as shown in Table V-2. These include the Garden State Parkway interchanges, Broad Street, Watchung Avenue, Bloomfield Avenue, Glenwood Avenue and NJ Transit Stations. Thousands of travelers, many of them non-residents, pass through these gateway areas each day. As a consequence, they have the potential to enhance the image of the Township and help it develop a unique identity.

There are numerous methods to enhance gateway locations including attractive and informative way-finding signage, landscaping, public art, streetscape improvements and the promotion of desirable land uses. Gateway enhancements

Gateway	Location
Garden State Parkway Gateways	Interchange 148, 149, 150 and 151
Northern Gateways	Broad Street, West Passaic Avenue, Bellevue Avenue
Central Gateways	Watchung Avenue, Bay Avenue, Hoover Avenue, Belleville Avenue
Southern Gateways	Bloomfield Avenue, Franklin Street, Glenwood Avenue, Watsessing Avenue, Grove Street
NJ Transit Station Gateways	Bloomfield Station, Watsessing Station, Grove Street Station

that utilize a combination of these methods are recommended for the primary gateway locations. The selective use of one (1) or more of these gateway enhancements is recommended for secondary gateway locations.

Mass Transit

The Township of Bloomfield has a mass transit network that provides local access and connections to major destinations in the northern New Jersey/New York City metropolitan region. Bloomfield’s mass transit network consists of NJ Transit commuter rail and bus service as well as private carrier bus service. The Township’s commuter rail lines are lightly used at present, however, usage is projected to increase in the future as new service is implemented. Bloomfield is a hub of NJ Transit bus service in Essex County and is well served by private

bus lines. The primary issues associated with the Township's mass transit network are parking and access at train stations, the condition of train stations the integration of bus and commuter rail service and the location of bus stops.

NJ Transit Commuter Rail Service

The Township of Bloomfield is currently traversed by three (3) NJ Transit commuter rail lines, as shown in Table V-3. The rail lines are the Montclair Branch, Boonton Line and Newark City Subway. They are a legacy of Bloomfield's early development as a streetcar/railroad suburb of Newark and New York City, the former presence of large industrial plants that required rail service and a strategic location along the major rail corridors in the northern New Jersey/New York City metropolitan region. Access to commuter rail service is available at the Bloomfield, Watsessing and Rowe Street stations. A fourth station at Grove Street is scheduled to open in late-2001. The Township will benefit from additional commuter rail service after NJ Transit completes several major projects that are currently under construction.

Bloomfield and Watsessing Stations

The NJ Transit Bloomfield and Watsessing Stations are located on the Montclair Branch of the Morris and Essex Lines that terminates in Hoboken. At present, both stations are underutilized with limited service and low ridership. This is the result of part-time service on the Montclair Branch, which operates during the weekday morning and evening peak periods only. Both stations are also in poor physical condition, which detracts from their appearance, hinders access and contributes to the perception of inadequate safety.

NJ Transit is, however, planning a significant increase in service at the Bloomfield and Watsessing Stations once the Montclair Connection project is completed in late-2001 or early-2002. This project will combine the Montclair Branch with the Boonton Line in Montclair and provide direct travel to New York City through NJ Transit's MidTOWN Direct service. NJ Transit also plans to provide off-peak service at both stations during the weekday, although no weekend service is planned in the immediate future. In addition, NJ Transit is planning to renovate and improve the upper portion of Bloomfield Station. The renovation of the former station building, which is privately owned, is recommended given the importance of the station to Bloomfield Center. Similar improvements are recommended for the Watsessing Station given its deteriorating condition and function as the focal point of the Watsessing Center business district.

Rowe Street Station

The NJ Transit Rowe Street Station is located on the Boonton Line that terminates in Hoboken. At present, the station is underutilized with limited ser-

vice and low ridership. This is the result of part-time service on the Boonton Line, which operates during the weekday morning and evening peak periods only. The station is also in poor physical condition, which detracts from its appearance, limits usage and impacts the adjacent residential neighborhood. The station is further constrained by the limited availability of commuter parking.

The NJ Transit Rowe Street Station will be closed when the Montclair Connection project is completed and MidTOWN Direct service to New York City begins in late-2001 or early-2002. NJ Transit plans to terminate commuter rail service on the Boonton Line through Bloomfield and points east as part of this project. The major issues to be addressed include the status of the Rowe Street Station and future use of the Boonton Line. The Rowe Street Station is not a designated historic site and it is unclear whether the facility can be reused for another purpose. Careful planning and coordination with the adjacent residential neighborhood as well as NJ Transit is necessary to determine the future use of the Rowe Street facility.

Grove Street Station

The NJ Transit Grove Street Station is located at the terminus of the Newark City Subway that is currently being extended from Newark to Bloomfield. The station is being constructed as part of a comprehensive rehabilitation and modernization of the Newark City Subway. This project includes new light rail cars, new track and power systems, a new station in the Silver Lake section of Belleville and a Vehicle Base Maintenance Facility in Bloomfield. It is scheduled to open in mid- to late-2001 when the Subway extension begins service.

The Grove Street Station will provide frequent and high-quality mass transit service to downtown Newark Penn Station and intermediate destinations such as University Heights and Branch Brook Park. Passengers will be able to transfer at Penn Station for PATH service to the World Trade Center and NJ Transit commuter rail service to mid-town Manhattan and points as far south as Trenton. NJ Transit has long-term plans to extend the Newark City Subway to Broad Street Station, Newark International Airport and mid-town Elizabeth. The Grove Street station will have a 150-space parking lot for commuters and connecting NJ Transit bus service.

It is difficult to predict the how the Grove Street Station will affect circulation and travel patterns in Bloomfield since it has not yet opened. However, the major issues that warrant attention at this time include preserving on-street parking for residents in adjoining residential neighborhoods, addressing potential increases in traffic congestion caused by commuters driving to the station and providing sufficient intermodal access for pedestrians, buses, shuttles and other modes of transportation.

Bloomfield’s commuter rail stations are a significant amenity that provides residents, businesses and visitors to the Township with a safe, fast and convenient alternative to driving. This is particularly important given the increasingly congested traffic conditions found on the regional highway and local road networks. The stations are also a quality of life factor that may give the Township an advantage over nearby municipalities in the competition for new investment, jobs and residents.

Table V-3 Mass Transit-Passenger Rail Stations, 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ		
Station	Type of Facility	NJ Transit Line
Bloomfield Station	Park-and-Ride	Morris and Essex Lines - Montclair Branch
Watsessing Station	Local Walk-On	Morris and Essex Lines - Montclair Branch
Rowe Street Station*	Local Walk-On	Boonton Line
Grove Street Station	Park-and-Ride	Newark City Subway
* Station to be closed when MidTOWN Direct Service begins in 2001 or early 2002.		
Source: NJ Transit, Bloomfield Department of Engineering		

It is recommended that the Township work with NJ Transit to provide adequate access to the stations in order to capitalize on MidTOWN Direct and Newark City Subway service. This is particularly important for residents who live in the northern section of the Township because of their distance to the stations. Possible options are additional bus and shuttle service to the commuter rail stations. Consideration should be given to capitalizing on the presence of the stations by preparing station area plans for appropriate transit-oriented development and access in the vicinity of these facilities.

Bus Service

The Township of Bloomfield is a major hub of bus service in Essex County. The Township is currently traversed by 15 NJ Transit and private carrier bus routes, as shown in Table V-4. These routes operate primarily on Bloomfield’s major north-south and east-west roads such as Broad Street and Bloomfield Avenue. The density of bus service and limited commuter rail alternatives make it the primary mode of mass transit in the Township at present. The major issues as they relate to bus service are the location of bus stops, improving intermodal connections with NJ Transit commuter rail service and preserving existing bus routes after MidTOWN Direct and Newark City Subway service begins.

Table V-4 Mass Transit - Bus Service, 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ		
Line	Operator	Origin - Destination
11	NJ Transit	Newark - Willowbrook Mall
27	NJ Transit	Irvington - Clifton
28	NJ Transit	Newark - Montclair State University
29	NJ Transit	Newark - West Caldwell - Parsippany
34	NJ Transit	Newark - Montclair
72	NJ Transit	Newark - Paterson
90	NJ Transit	Irvington - Belleville
92	NJ Transit	Newark - South Orange
93	NJ Transit	Newark - Bloomfield
94	NJ Transit	Bloomfield - Linden
705	NJ Transit	Passaic - Wayne
709	NJ Transit	Bloomfield - Paramus
44	DeCamp	Bloomfield - New York City
33	DeCamp	West Caldwell - New York City
88	DeCamp	Orange - New York City
<i>Source: NJ Transit, DeCamp Bus</i>		

NJ Transit Bus Service

NJ Transit bus service through Bloomfield consists of intra-state routes oriented towards Newark. The Township is served by 12 NJ Transit bus routes that provide access to employment centers, shopping areas, colleges and universities and other major destinations in Essex County and the northern New Jersey/ New York City metropolitan region. The bus routes also provide intermodal connections to PATH and NJ Transit commuter rail service at Newark Penn Station.

Of the 12 NJ Transit bus routes that traverse Bloomfield, a total of 10 provide service to Newark while the other two (2) are considered local routes providing access to Passaic, Paramus and Wayne. The majority of these routes converge on Bloomfield Center at historic Watsessing County Park, which is a major transfer point. Consideration should be given to improving this bus stop in light of its importance to the NJ Transit route system, heavy usage, high visibility and location adjacent to Watsessing County Park. There is also a need to provide im-

proved connections between NJ Transit bus routes and NJ Transit commuter rail service at the Bloomfield, Watsessing and Grove Street Stations. The feasibility of relocating bus transfers within Bloomfield Center to the Bloomfield train station should be pursued. Finally, it is necessary to provide adequate bus and shuttle service from the northern section of Bloomfield to the NJ Transit commuter rail stations in order to capitalize on MidTOWN Direct and Newark City Subway service.

Private Carrier Bus Service

Private carrier bus service through Bloomfield consists of inter-state routes oriented towards New York City. The Township is served by three (3) DeCamp Bus Line routes that provide access to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in mid-town Manhattan. The private carrier bus routes supplement existing NJ Transit commuter rail and bus service, particularly in the northern section of the Township where mass transit options are limited.

Bloomfield is traversed by the DeCamp 33 route on Broad Street, the 44 route on Montgomery and Franklin Streets and the 88 route on Glenwood Avenue and Broad Street. The advent of NJ Transit MidTOWN Direct commuter rail service has adversely impacted private carrier bus service elsewhere in northern New Jersey. The preservation of the DeCamp bus routes is encouraged in order to provide a balanced mass transit system and to serve the northern section of the Township, which is located a significant distance from the NJ Transit commuter rail stations.

Freight and Goods Movement

The Township of Bloomfield has a relatively small network of freight and goods movement consistent with its history as a suburban community with a limited industrial base. This network provides connections to destinations throughout the region, elsewhere in the U.S. and overseas. It consists of multiple Township and County designated truck routes and one (1) freight rail line, as shown in Table V-5. During the past several decades, Bloomfield's freight and goods movement network has contracted as the industrial activity that relies upon truck and rail transportation has relocated elsewhere. The major issues as they relate to freight and goods movement in the Township are protecting residential neighborhoods from the impact of trucks and preserving freight rail service for remaining industrial facilities.

Truck Routes

Bloomfield has 13 designated truck routes consisting of 8 Township routes and 5 Essex County routes. No changes in truck routes are proposed, although they should be monitored for potential impacts upon adjacent residential neighborhoods due to high traffic volumes such as at Le France Avenue and Lourence Street

Freight Rail

Bloomfield’s freight rail network consists of the former Conrail Orange Branch, which is a single-track line serving the Hartz Mountain industrial facility on Bloomfield Avenue. The Orange Branch connects the Township to the national

Table V-5 Freight and Goods Movement Network, 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ	
Type of Facility	Description
<i>Truck Routes</i>	
Glenwood Avenue	Municipal Route
Arlington Avenue	Municipal Route
Watsessing Avenue	Municipal Route
Grove Street	Municipal Route
Montgomery Street	Municipal Route
John F. Kennedy	Municipal Route
Bay Avenue	Municipal Route
Hoover Avenue	Municipal Route
Bloomfield Avenue	County Route
Broad Street	County Route
East Passaic Avenue	County Route
West Passaic Avenue	County Route
Belleville Avenue	County Route
<i>Freight Rail</i>	
Orange Branch	Limited Service Conrail Line
<i>Source: Bloomfield Department of Engineering</i>	

freight rail network and is currently under the control of a joint operating company owned by CSX and Norfolk Southern, which acquired Conrail in 1999. This acquisition has introduced competitive freight rail service into the Township for the first time in decades, however, there are a limited number of industrial users remaining as potential customers. The preservation of freight rail service is encouraged in order to serve the remaining industrial facilities in the southern section of the Township.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities

The Township of Bloomfield has a well-developed network of pedestrian facilities consisting of sidewalks, crosswalks and walking paths. The overwhelming majority of streets and roads in Bloomfield have been developed with sidewalks to accommodate and facilitate pedestrian circulation. All major signalized intersections contain marked crosswalks for pedestrian circulation and safety. Extensive walking paths are found in Township and Essex County parks such as Brookside Park, Brookdale County Park and Watsessing County Park. Consideration should be given to improving pedestrian circulation and safety in targeted areas near schools, shopping districts and major activity centers. Recommended improvements include sidewalk widening, intersection upgrades, traffic calming and signage.

Bloomfield has limited facilities dedicated to bicycle circulation, although bicyclists typically share the road right-of-way with automobiles and other vehicles. Consideration should be given to developing a network of bicycle facilities linking residential neighborhoods to schools, shopping districts and major activity centers and major activity centers with each other. Such facilities may share the road right-of-way with vehicles or have their own right-of-way where appropriate. Funding from the New Jersey Department of Transportation is currently available for bicycle planning and improvements.

Bloomfield has significant potential to provide enhanced pedestrian/bicycle circulation in conjunction with the Greenway proposed for the Third River, Second River and Toney's Brook/Wigwam Brook corridors. The Greenway follows these water bodies and links most residential neighborhoods in the Township with existing parks, community facilities, neighborhood business districts and other activity centers. The Greenway should include, to the maximum degree practical, a shared path for walkers, joggers and bicyclists.

Recommendations

Bloomfield's circulation system is a significant asset that contributes to the Township's outstanding quality of life and gives it a competitive advantage over other municipalities in efforts to attract residents, employment and investment. There is a need for improvements, however, to integrate the various modes of transportation, preserve and upgrade existing infrastructure and increase the safety and efficiency of the system. The recommended circulation improvements include:

1. Improve circulation in and around Bloomfield Center through roadway, mass transit and pedestrian/bicycle improvements. These include creation of a loop circulation system, creating additional off-street parking, installing way-finding directional signage, integrating NJ Transit bus and commuter rail service, providing shuttle service to the

- Bloomfield Station, encouraging traffic calming measures and providing bicycle lockers.
2. Address traffic congestion by installing way-finding directional signage, promoting the use of mass transit and making system management improvements such as installing left-turn lanes and computerized traffic signals.
 3. Reduce traffic congestion in high traffic areas, especially Bloomfield Center, by reducing and improving bus transfer points. Relocate the Bloomfield Center transfer point to Bloomfield Station.
 4. Improve parking conditions by ensuring that development regulations require adequate off-street parking with new development, providing parking facilities in targeted locations such as Bloomfield Center and evaluating the feasibility of a permit parking program in station areas.
 5. Create gateways at major entrances to Bloomfield through way-finding signage, landscaping, streetscape improvements and the promotion of desirable land uses.
 6. Encourage the use of mass transit by improving parking and access at train stations, renovating deteriorating train stations and integrating bus and commuter rail service. Implementation actions include increasing parking at NJ Transit stations, providing shuttle service to stations and installing pedestrian and bicycle facilities such as sidewalks and bicycle lockers.
 7. Preserve bus service in all sections of Bloomfield after MidTOWN Direct and Newark City Subway service begins. Targeted areas include the northern section of the Township where commuter rail service is unavailable.
 8. Coordinate with Conrail, NJ Transit and NJDOT to preserve freight rail service to remaining industrial users along the Orange Branch in the southern section of the Township.
 9. Provide pedestrian circulation and safety improvements in targeted areas such as schools, parks, shopping districts and major activity centers where pedestrian traffic is heavy. Recommended improvements include widened sidewalks, traffic calming measures and signage.
 10. Coordinate with NJDOT on a bicycle plan and improvements linking residential neighborhoods to schools, shopping districts and major activity centers and major activity centers to each other.
 11. Plan for and incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities into the proposed Greenway along the Third River, Second River and Toney's Brook/Wigwam Brook corridors.
 12. Prepare for and capitalize on the commencement of MidTOWN Direct and Newark City Subway service. The use of these mass transit options should be encouraged to improve local circulation and reduce traffic congestion. Particular attention should be given to station areas in order to

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provide adequate commuter parking, preserve on-street parking for residents, enhance pedestrian/bicycle access to station facilities and promote transit-oriented development opportunities. Shuttle bus service is recommended for access to the Bloomfield, Grove Street and Watsessing stations.

13. Consider applying to NJ Transit Community Shuttle Bus Program for local shuttle service to rail stations.