

October 2017



NV5

Executive Summary

The East Coast Greenway (ECG) is a developing trail system linking the major cities of the Eastern Seaboard between Canada and Key West, Florida. More than half of the 93 miles of the ECG in New Jersey are currently on off-road shared use paths.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) supports the development of the ECG in New Jersey. Along with the East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA) and NV5, Inc. NJDOT has developed a routing plan to enhance the ECG between the state's two largest cities, Newark in Essex County and Jersey City in Hudson County, as well as the surrounding municipalities of Harrison, Kearny, East Newark and Secaucus. This will provide an off-road shared use path that would offer key recreational and utilitarian walking and bicycling options across the Passaic and Hackensack Rivers.

The study included an analysis of existing reports, resources and maps, field visits, gathering stakeholder input and developing potential connections based on an evaluation of the existing conditions. Constraints in the study area include limited right of way, multiple river crossings, industrial uses, environment concerns, and heavy traffic volumes. Opportunities include multiple unused rail corridors, redevelopment areas, environmental cleanup sites, the Wittpenn Bridge replacement project, and regional significant destinations.



The current ECG route between Essex and Hudson Counties uses a narrow sidewalk along Truck Route 1&9



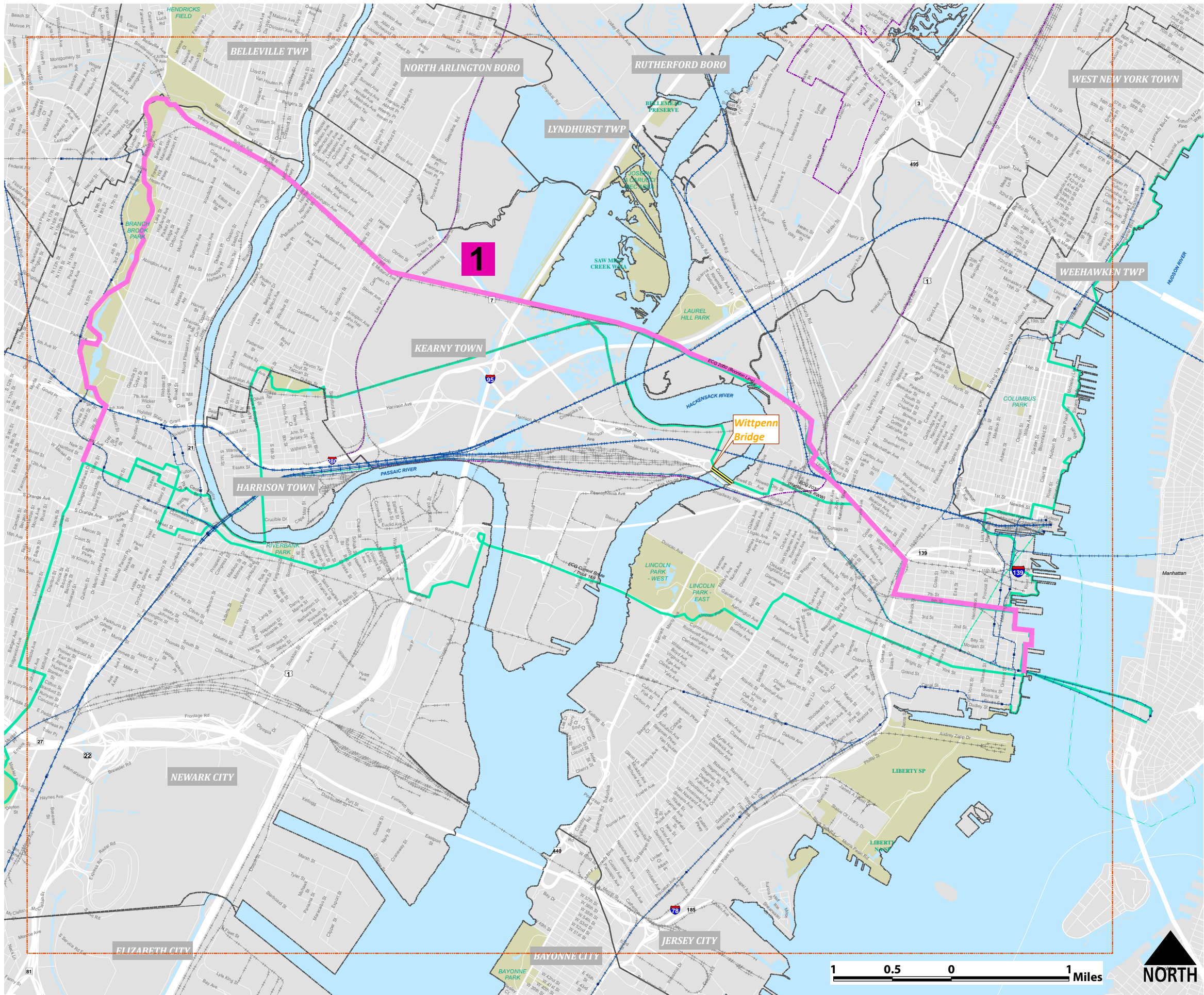
Access Road to Boonton / Newark Industrial Tract, Kearny, NJ



An aerial view of the Bergen Arches, an unused historic rail corridor in Jersey City

Preferred Alignment

Five alternative alignments for the ECG Essex-Hudson Greenway Connector were developed and presented to stakeholders. The Boonton Line Corridor option emerged as the preferred alignment (see map of the preferred alignment on the following page). This railroad corridor is currently inactive and has the potential to be a largely off-road (95%) shared use path that can be used by people of all ages and abilities.



ECG ESSEX-HUDSON GREENWAY CONNECTOR ROUTING PLAN

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Legend

- Option 1: Northern Connector - Boonton Line
- East Coast Greenway (Current Route)
- ECG (PathTrain)
- ECG (Ferry to New York)
- NJ Meadowlands
- Municipalities
- Counties
- Wittpenn Bridge
- Train Station
- Railroad
- Other Railroad
- Study Area Boundary

*NIT = Newark Industrial Tract

The preferred alignment begins in University Heights in Newark, heads north to the Branch Brook Park Path and then goes eastbound along the Boonton Line. The corridor is largely uninterrupted across the Passaic River through Kearny. The rail corridor used a turn style drawbridge to cross the Hackensack River. This bridge is now locked in a position that is open to river navigation, creating a gap in the rail corridor access across the river. At this point, two options were considered to cross the river. One option was to build a bridge across the river and the second option was to run a small ferry across to Laurel Hill Park in Secaucus. During stakeholder discussions it was determined that a ferry connection would be most cost-effective and feasible to implement. After the river crossing, the alignment continues on the Boonton Line, through the proposed Bergen Arches, the 6th Street Embankment to the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway in Jersey City. A photo board of the various segments of the preferred alignment from Newark to Jersey City is shown on the following page.

Next Steps

The next step for advancing the ECG Essex-Hudson Greenway Connector is to define the discrete projects that would be phased independently in order to make this vision a reality. County and municipal staff should plan to advance these projects independently, with this document showing how each segment fits into the statewide and nationwide effort of completing the East Coast Greenway. It is important to note that the first step for implementation along the railroad corridor segments would be to investigate and confirm the abandonment status.



Steering Committee Members and Routing Strategy Session Participants

PREFERRED ALIGNMENT: BOONTON LINE - PHOTO BOARD

PREFERRED ALIGNMENT NEWARK



Norfolk Street Sharrows, Newark



Norfolk Street, Newark



Branch Brook Park, Newark



Boonton Line: Greenwood Lake St, Newark



Boonton Line: Route 21 (Passaic River)

PREFERRED ALIGNMENT HARRISON / KEARNY



Boonton Line at Passaic Avenue, Kearny



Ice & Iron Trail, Highland Ave, Newark
Concept / Rendering



Boonton Line: Forest St, Kearny



Boonton Line: Kearny



Boonton Line: Hackensack River

PREFERRED ALIGNMENT JERSEY CITY



Boonton Line: Hackensack River



Laurel Hill Park, Secaucus



www.bergenarches.com, Jersey City
Concept / Rendering



www.embankment.org, Jersey City
Concept / Rendering



Hudson River Waterfront Walkway, Jersey City