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"Englewood urges NJ Transit to support Bus Rapid Transit line"

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Englewood urges NJ Transit to support **Bus Rapid Transit** line

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ENGLEWOOD - City leaders and the Englewood Hospital and Medical Center are urging NJ Transit to support a proposed **Bus Rapid Transit** system that increases access to mass transportation in the area.

The Englewood Economic Development Corporation co-wrote a letter with Mayor Frank Huttle III, to voice their support for the Route C4 proposed in a **Bergen County Bus Rapid Transit study**. This letter, along with a secondary letter by Englewood Hospital and Medical Center supporting the system, were sent to NJ Transit on July 15.

The Route C4 would begin at Englewood Hospital and Medical Center; include stops in the city's downtown, Skymark Development in Ridgefield Park, the American Dream and Meadowlands Sports Complex; and end at Secaucus Junction, according to the **Bergen County Bus Rapid Transit Study** website.

It will fill a tremendous void, said Adam Brown, chairman of the Englewood Economic Development Corporation. Every other successful town in northern New Jersey has rail access to Secaucus Junction. This will put us on equally footing with these towns.

Bus Rapid Transit differs from NJ Transit's regular bus service in a number of ways. The buses have fewer stops in order to reduce travel times and make use of exclusive bus lanes, according to the Bergen County **Bus Rapid Transit Study** website.

The vehicles are also given traffic signal priority, which is when traffic lights are timed to the average bus-speed instead of vehicle-speed, according to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Traffic signal priority could also entail having buses send a signal to traffic lights to either shorten a red light or prolong a green light, according to the FTA. The FTA said the **Bus Rapid Transit** system can also make use of queue jumps, or a short stretch of bus lane combined with traffic signal priority, at intersections and allow rider to pre-pay for a ticket to reduce waiting times.

The **Bergen County Bus Rapid Transit study** is accepting feedback about which features to include in a potential **Bergen County** line.

In November 2013, NJ Transit created nine different routes to potentially use in **Bergen County**. This list was reduced to five routes which includes the Route C4, in March. Brown said NJ Transit is planning to further reduce the list to three routes this summer.

Patients, visitors and employees of Englewood Hospital and Medical Center who live along the proposed route could all benefit from mass transit, said Michael Pietrowicz, senior vice president for planning and program development at the hospital.

It will provide more access to care here, more convenience in arriving and departing, and eliminate congestion on the roads due to the current traffic that currently goes to and fro, said Pietrowicz. It will also provide economic stimulus for our town and the City of Englewood. It will provide people with limited access to cars the availability to search for jobs along the corridor.

The hospital recently completed a facilities master plan, which identified a future need for additional parking, said Pietrowicz.

If either the bus line or a proposed Hudson-Bergen Light Rail extension come to Englewood Hospital and Medical Center, Pietrowicz said there is an opportunity to speak with NJ Transit to develop a shared parking structure.

Huttle said he supported the **Bus Rapid Transit** system because it provides alternative ways for Englewood residents who live in the city to commute to other parts of New Jersey. Those who commute to Englewood would also benefit from the system, said Huttle.

Transportation systems are fundamental, said Huttle. It's important that infrastructure is made to competitively grow, compete, and provide all those quality of life and economic benefits.

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