

NJ Transit maps new Mercer rail station to ease commute

By RICHARD S. REMINGTON

NJ Transit plans to build a new Northeast Corridor train station in Hamilton Township to help ease mounting commuter congestion at the Trenton and Princeton Junction stations, Transportation Commissioner Hazel Gluck said yesterday.

But Gluck also made it clear that NJ Transit is still looking for the money to build the estimated \$23 million to \$27 million project, which is scheduled to become operational in the mid-1990s.

The proposed rail station would be built on a 27-acre tract a short distance from the Sloan Avenue intersection with Route 295. The plans include a 1,700-car parking lot with room to add another 1,300 spaces if warranted by ridership growth.

The project also would include construction of a new bus garage and maintenance facility at the site to replace an 80-year-old garage in Trenton.

The Princeton Junction and Trenton stations are operating near capacity due to surging ridership gains brought on by development in Mercer, western Monmouth and northern Burlington counties as well as Bucks County, Pa., said Gluck, who chairs NJ Transit's board of directors.

According to market projections, the 5,000 parking spaces available at Princeton Junction and Trenton will

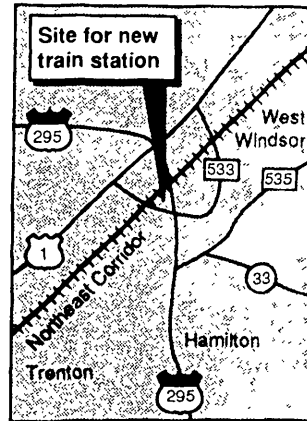
have to be increased up to 9,000 spaces by the mid-1990s, Gluck said. Another 400 to 600 spaces are to be added at Princeton Junction, but any further parking capacity would have to be added at a new site, she said.

NJ Transit had narrowed its search for a new station to the Hamilton site and a tract in Lawrence near the intersection of Route 295 and Route 1, said Gluck. The agency opted for the

Hamilton site because it provided sufficient space for both the train station and bus garage.

"Between the Hamilton train station, the Trenton parking facility and the increase at Princeton Junction, we think that we will meet the needs by the mid-90s," Gluck said. "We're beginning now to try to accomplish that, which is something that's really unique because usually you find out after the fact that we really need to do something like this."

The agency will soon initiate preliminary design and environmental



studies of the site and begin searching for a federal funding source to finance the final design and construction phases of the project, she said. NJ Transit believes it has the money available to purchase the site, she added.

NJ Transit's capital budget already faces federal budget cuts and future funding levels are uncertain.

Current cost estimates for the project range from \$10 million to \$13 million for the rail station and between \$13 million and \$14 million for the bus garage.

The site consists of several small tracts with different owners, including a property that once housed a plastics factory. The soil on that site will have to be tested for any contamination which the current property owner would be responsible for removing under the Environmental Cleanup Responsibility Act (ECRA), Gluck noted.

"Preliminary soil tests on the tract have raised some environmental concerns and we will have to undertake more extensive testing to determine the nature and extent of any contamination," she said.

Trenton Mayor Arthur Holland said members of the city's economic development committee reacted negatively when informed of the Hamilton train station plan, fearing that potential development could be diverted away from the city.

The Hamilton proposal originated under the administration of former Gov. Brendan Byrne and Transportation Commissioner Louis Gambaccini.

"If Commissioner Gambaccini had proceeded with a similar proposal several years ago, we would not now have the development that's taken place adjacent to the Trenton train station area," Holland said. "A rail station is a magnet to development."

But Gluck noted that the new train station would require acres of parking space that would be lost to potential commercial, office or retail development.

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Rug merchant guilty on drugs

A 23-year-old man pleaded guilty to five narcotics charges yesterday, including the sale of four ounces of cocaine from his carpet store in East Orange.

Vincent Gallucci, who lives in South Orange and operates Gala Carpet Co. on Sanford Street in East Orange, admitting selling cocaine to an undercover Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent on Feb. 5, 1987. The DEA and the Essex County Prosecutor's Office had taken part in an eight-month investigation of Gallucci, which included the use of wiretaps and undercover work.

Assistant Prosecutor Glenn D. Goldberg said Gallucci could be sentenced to a maximum of 48 years in prison when Superior Court Judge Harry Hazelwood imposes sentence on Jan. 5.

Orange senior dies of scalding

An 80-year-old Orange man died yesterday from burns he received Oct. 24, when he and his daughter got into an argument in the house they shared and she poured boiling water on him, according to Police Director Charles Cobbett.

Cobbett identified the dead man as Wisdom Dew and the suspect, Dew's daughter, as Mattie Slade, 56, both of Maryland Street.

Dew died at St. Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston about 10:10 a.m. The Orange police subsequently upgraded an aggravated assault charge—filed against Slade more than two weeks ago—to homicide, Cobbett said.

Slade, a bookkeeper, was arrested at her home about noon, brought before a Superior Court judge in Newark for arraignment and released on bail pending grand jury action, he added.

Parley to address tax-exempt status

The New Jersey chapter of the Accountants for the Public Interest are sponsoring a conference Nov. 30 to help nonprofit organizations avoid jeopardizing their tax-exempt status by some fund-raising activities.

The conference will be held at the New Jersey Bar Association Building on the campus of Rutgers University on Ryders Lane in New Brunswick. It will begin at 8:15 a.m. and end at 1 p.m.

Fees range from \$53 to \$75 per person and reservations and other information can be obtained through the accountants organization, 400 Park Ave., Plainfield, 07060.

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