

## Main Street Flexible Design Project

This project investigated the importance of flexible design policies and standards for highways that serve as main streets through communities. The goal was to identify and recommend changes in the project delivery process so that main streets could retain their small town feel while maintaining requisite access and continuity. The heart of the project were 10 detailed case studies from the Northeast and five nationwide. Unlike similar surveys, these case studies delved into the specific details that drive geometric design and performance standards. Finally, a new set of main street design guidelines were developed. The report was embraced by NJDOT and is available on their website: <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/publicat/>.

Concurrent to the project, NJDOT updated and revised their roadway design manual. A phrase coined in the project, “proactive roadway design”, is in the preface to the new manual.

An outgrowth of the project was a visual preference survey of 50 main streets across New Jersey. This provided NJDOT a tool to define main streets via traffic and street characteristics.

The project was presented at the 2001 Transportation Research Board conference ([http://gulliver.trb.org/publications/am/2001\\_practical\\_papers.pdf](http://gulliver.trb.org/publications/am/2001_practical_papers.pdf)), 2002 National Town Meeting on Main Street, 2002 Institute for Transportation Engineers Annual Meeting, and the 2003 New Jersey State Historic Preservation Conference. The visual preference survey formed the basis for “Turning Highways into Main Streets: Two Innovations in Planning Methodology”, Reid Ewing et al, Journal of the American Planning Association, Summer 2005.



**Project Duration:** 1999-2003

**Total Budget:** \$70,000

**For more information:**

New Jersey Department  
of Transportation;  
Voorhees Transportation Center  
at Rutgers University

**Contact:**

Gary Toth  
609-530-5262  
[gary.toth@dot.state.nj.us](mailto:gary.toth@dot.state.nj.us)  
Martin Robins  
732-932-6812  
[mrobins@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:mrobins@rci.rutgers.edu)