

# Franklin Borough Transportation Vision Plan



Franklin Borough, Sussex County, New Jersey  
April 2009



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## Executive Summary

The Borough of Franklin is located in Sussex County, New Jersey, and is home to approximately 5,100 people. Located in the state's Highlands Planning Area, several factors have made Franklin attractive for development, including its regional location along Route 23 and sewerage availability. State Route 23 connects central New Jersey through Passaic and Sussex Counties with New York State. Route 23 is approximately three miles long through Franklin and figures prominently in the Borough's transportation network.

In December of 2005, the Mayor of Franklin Borough invited NJDOT and others to discuss the Borough's needs, and to request assistance from NJDOT's Local Technical Planning Assistance Program to develop a comprehensive and coordinated transportation plan for the borough's downtown revitalization and future development and redevelopment of Route 23. The Borough adopted a new Master Plan in 2003, and completed a Main Street Revitalization Plan in 2006 to focus economic development in its downtown. The resulting Franklin Borough Land Use and Transportation Vision Plan was developed to further these plans, and with a view to its potential use in a future Plan Endorsement petition.

To develop the Plan, Base Conditions were defined (Chapter 2), including analysis of existing and supplemental traffic counts, crash analysis, and a regional and local multi-modal network evaluation. A variety of meetings and workshops were held throughout the project to solicit community input (Chapter 3). Comments were synthesized into five major themes which helped shape the Plan's recommendations: (1) promote parallel and network connections, (2) Hold Route 23 to three lanes, (3) Manage access, (4) Promote alternative transportation modes (bike/pedestrian/transit) and (5) Promote Smart Growth principles. Recommended transportation concepts which reflect these five

themes are found in Chapter 4. Proposed network enhancements include the Munsonhurst Extension, the High Street Connector and Gateway, and a Mabie/Lehigh Street Extension. Corridor and intersection improvements to Route 23, including sidewalk improvements and traffic calming features, are also proposed as part of an overall network plan.

This plan reflects the idea that transportation and land use decisions must be made together. The current land use and development patterns along Route 23 are not unique to Franklin Borough and the corridor. Similar development patterns can be observed on most of the regional highways throughout New Jersey. The regional prominence of a highway offers potential for the success of large-scale retailers and strip commercial centers. Properties located on highways have the maximum exposure to regional commuter traffic, have convenient access for delivery operations, and are generally large enough to create "convenient" surface parking lots. To better meet Smart Growth planning principles and assist the Borough in coordinating and promoting a healthy economic climate for both Route 23 and Main Street, this trend needs to be rethought. To promote Smart Growth principles, the goal of future large-scale developments should be an integrated design approach that not only attracts the ratable, but improves the quality of life for the Borough.

Chapter 5 provides an Action Plan, which is intended to serve as a guide for advancing the Vision Plan. The Action Plan summarizes the potential staging and preliminary development costs of recommended initiatives and concepts. Securing funding for plan elements and advancing projects from the concept stage to engineering design and construction will be critical next steps. To this end, potential federal, state, and local funding sources are provided.

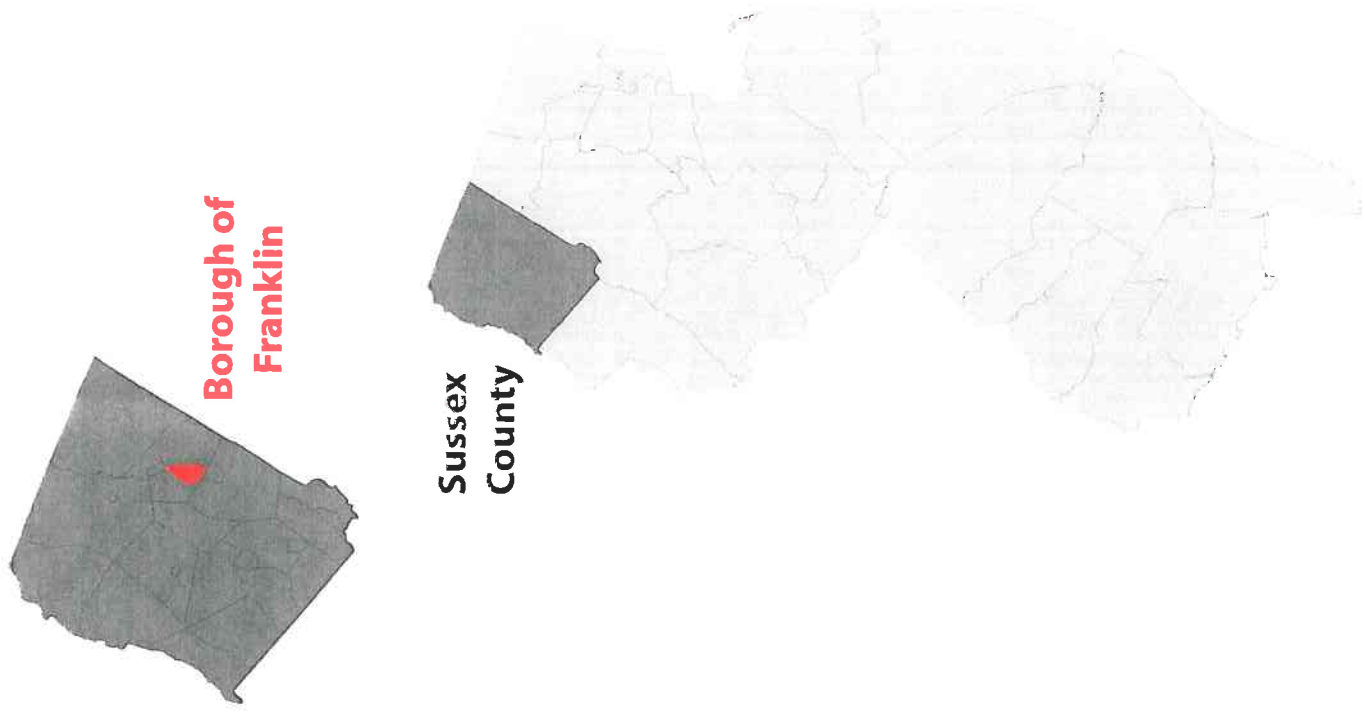
## Chapter 1: Project Background and Context

The Borough of Franklin is located in Sussex County, New Jersey, and is home to approximately 5,100 people. The Borough, which is nearly 3,000 acres in size, is located in the state's Highlands Planning Area. Franklin is generally developed in the central core, with average housing density and strip commercial development in the outlying more environmentally and topographically constrained areas.

Several factors have made Franklin attractive for development, including its regional location along Route 23 and sewerage availability. State Route 23 connects central New Jersey through Passaic and Sussex Counties with New York State. Route 23 is approximately three miles long through Franklin and figures prominently in the Borough's transportation network. Most of the Borough's major commercial development has occurred along the east side of Route 23, while residential uses are located mostly along the west side.

In 2006 the Borough completed a Main Street Revitalization Plan to enhance its downtown assets, and implementation of the Plan is underway. Currently, many sites along Route 23 are currently being considered for development or redevelopment. These factors make this an ideal time for a municipal/state partnership to develop strategies for addressing the Borough's transportation needs in a comprehensive manner.

In December of 2005, the Mayor of Franklin invited the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and other stakeholders to discuss the Borough's vision and development needs. As the Borough was completing the Main Street Revitalization Plan, the Borough requested NJDOT's assistance to develop a comprehensive and coordinated transportation plan for the borough's downtown revitalization and the development and redevelopment of Route 23. In response, NJDOT provided consultant expertise through its Local Transportation Planning Assistance Program so that Franklin Borough could develop a framework for an integrated, coherent land use and transportation plan for future investment in Franklin Borough and the Route 23 corridor. The resulting Plan sets the



Project Location Map

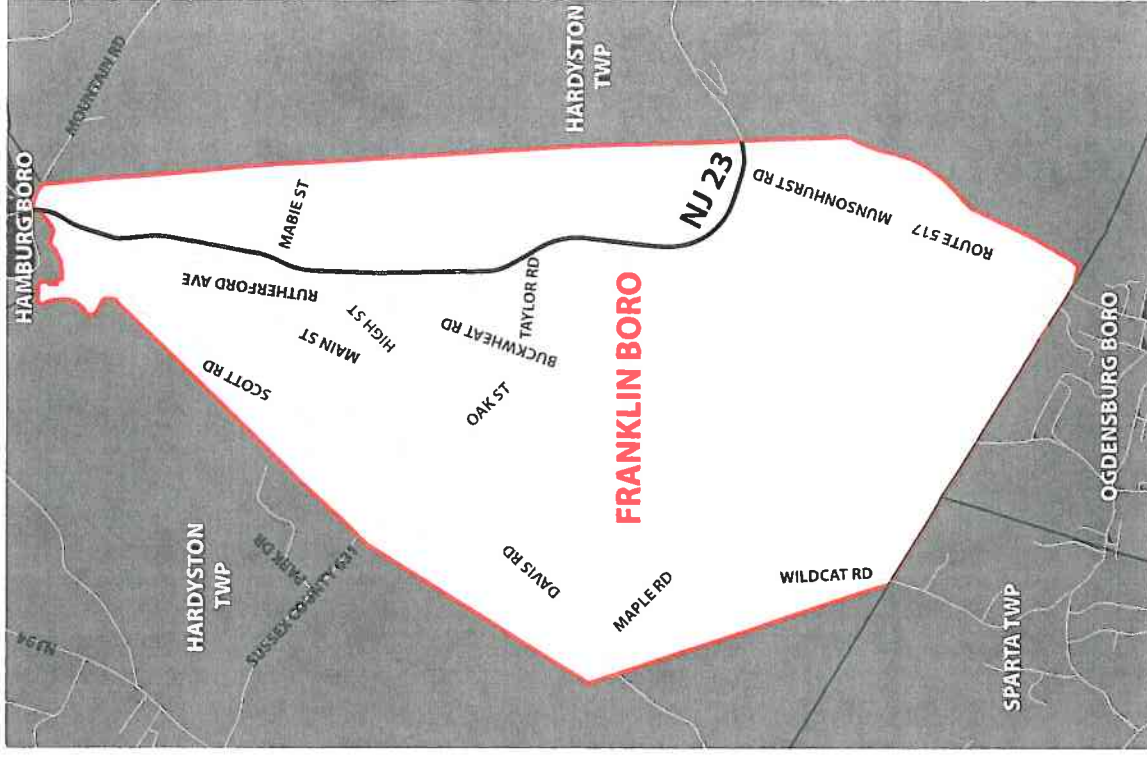
community context for proposed concepts, assesses the performance of various concepts, and provides the basis for the local entities to continue to work with NJDOT, Sussex County and the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization, the North Jersey Regional Planning Association, to plan, prioritize and advance the resulting multi-modal Circulation Plan Element in a future Plan Endorsement petition. While the study was undertaken with the understanding that NJDOT does not currently have available funding to implement the recommendations in the Vision Plan, the study has been developed with the idea that development of a comprehensive vision for Route 23 can provide a blueprint for change as private, as well as public funding sources do appear. This final report documents how the Vision Plan was developed, provides a written description of the Vision Plan, and presents results and recommendations from the corridor analysis.

While focusing on the Route 23 corridor, the study also addresses other areas of the Borough. Local connections from Route 23 to Main Street are a primary focus of this study, as this will link, and strengthen, the two main areas of economic development. The north-south project limits span the entire length of Route 23 within the Borough (milepost 31.4 to milepost 34.3), with an emphasis on the segment between Munsonhurst Road (County Route 517) and North Rutherford Avenue. The east-west project limits include the area between the Main Street redevelopment area on the west and the neighborhoods and retail east of Route 23.

### **Purpose and Need**

The primary objective of this study is to develop an integrated land use and transportation plan that encourages and complements future commercial and residential development in Franklin Borough and the Route 23 corridor. This multi-modal Vision Plan was developed with a view to its potential use in a future Office of Smart Growth Plan Endorsement petition. The Vision Plan builds off of past and current initiatives, including downtown revitalization efforts and ongoing development and redevelopment along Route 23.

The Vision Plan is also intended to develop a community based corridor development vision and transportation framework. This framework will



**Study Area**  
Route 23 in Franklin, NJ

guide the future decision-making of Franklin Borough and NJDOT with respect to development along the Route 23 corridor, and will lay the groundwork for a future Access Management Plan for Route 23. To that end, individual site reviews for access, circulation and alternative access were considered as part of this project. Opportunities to provide connectivity in the local network and the Borough's Main Street and CBD were examined. A review of existing street closures, and safety issues on local roads were also addressed as part of the Vision Plan.

### **Environmental Framework**

Franklin Borough is located in the Highlands Region, which covers approximately 1,000 square miles or 13% of New Jersey's land area. Through the passage of the Highland Act by the New Jersey State Legislature, the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council) was created. The Council is an independent agency of the State, whose fundamental goal is to protect, restore and enhance water quality in the region. Recently, the Highlands Council adopted the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) which seeks to protect the Region's natural resources while promoting sustainable growth. The Plan identifies "planning" areas and "preservation" areas. Planning Area towns may opt to conform to the Highlands RMP or not. Preservation Area towns must conform.

The Borough is located within the Highlands Planning Area, making conformance to the RMP is strictly voluntary. Given the goals and objectives of the Highlands RMP, the current zoning and land use patterns along Route 23 of the Borough would not conform to the goals and objectives stated in the RMP. However, if the Borough was to advance the concepts contained in this NJDOT Corridor Planning Study of Route 23, the Highlands would likely work to support such initiatives provided that the Borough solidified it in its Master Plan and zoning ordinances.

Participation in the Highlands conformance process could yield Franklin Borough the ability to capture valuable Highlands Council support in both technical and financial resources. While the Highlands Council's mission is primarily aimed at the preservation of natural resources, areas where development can and should occur is an important aspect in its ability to preserve valuable natural resources. As such, planning area communities like Franklin Borough stand to gain from support by the Highlands Council in their development efforts; particularly if sewer and water allocations are needed. Depending on the level of support the Council is prepared to offer, this may yield the ability for the Borough to advance its revitalization efforts.

The concept work contained in this report considers the natural environment and depicts the Borough's potential to absorb more growth than is currently permitted today. This potential has regional significance, and as such, the Highlands Council would see this growth as valuable. As previously stated, the Council's potential partnership with the Borough would enhance their ability to protect additional natural resources. Granted, the details and land use standards would need to be worked out, but the dominant landscape that plagues Route 23 today, the single use, auto-dependant land uses, would have to change. These land use patterns are not sustainable according to the State Plan and the RMP and would likely gain resistance at the State level. As previously discussed throughout this planning initiative, the Borough stands to gain a significant increase in ratables with a coordinated approach. This approach that would likely be viewed as favorable with the Highlands Council.

## Chapter 2: Base Condition

### Existing Plans and Studies

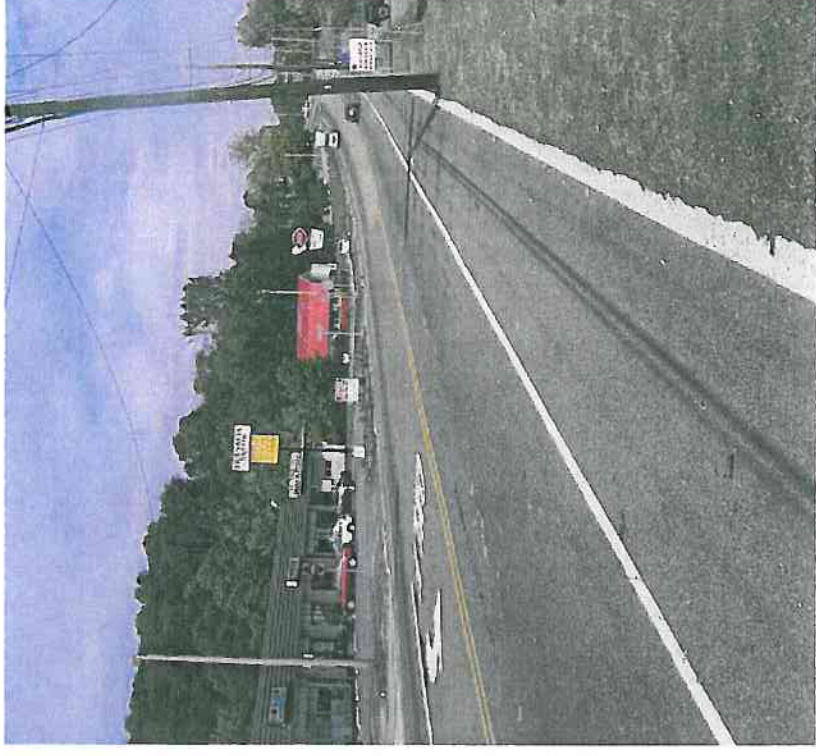
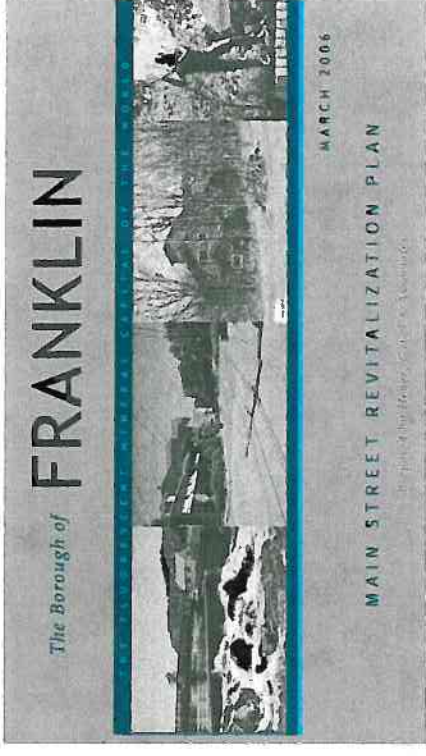
The Borough of Franklin adopted a new Master Plan in March of 2003. The Master Plan's overall goal is "to preserve and enhance Franklin's character by protecting existing residential developments, by developing and revitalizing the commercial areas, and by re-establishing Main Street as a vibrant focal point of the community." A Main Street Revitalization Plan was also prepared for the Borough in March of 2006. The Revitalization Plan identifies potential transportation gateways along Franklin's main roads and recommends signalization at the Route 23/High Street intersection.

Prior to this study, several transportation problem areas were identified along Route 23. In February of 2006 NJDOT undertook a study to assess these problems, and define potential solutions for further study. High crash rates were identified at the Washington Avenue and High Street intersections with Route 23. The study recommendations included re-opening Washington Avenue to Route 23 and extending High Street across Route 23 to Mitchell Street. Conceptual drawings and preliminary cost estimates were prepared for both recommendations.

### Roadway Descriptions

Classified as an Urban Principal Arterial, State Route 23 serves as the primary means of circulation both within and through Franklin Borough. The existing roadway cross-section for Route 23 has one 12-foot lane in each direction, with shoulders varying in width from four to ten feet through the Borough. Dedicated left-turn lanes are present at specific intersections along Route 23 including Franklin Avenue, the Weis Market driveway, Washington Avenue, and the entrance to the Dunkin Donuts. The speed limit is posted at 35mph through the study area, although it increases to 40mph near Munsonhurst Road and north of Mabie Street.

In addition to Route 23, two major county routes are located within the study area. Munsonhurst Road (County Route 517), which approaches Route 23 at the southern end of the Borough, is an Urban Minor Arterial with a posted speed limit of 50mph. Franklin Avenue (County Route



631), an Urban Collector with a posted speed limit of 35mph, serves as an important connection between Route 23 and the western side of Franklin.

### Desirable Typical Section

The NJDOT State Highway Access Management Code established both a “Desirable Typical Section” (DTS) and an “Access Level” (AL) for every segment of the State highway system. The DTS is used to delineate level of service thresholds for access applications, and can be changed by Departmental action.

Within the project limits, Route 23 has a DTS of 4C, which specifies “4 Lanes, Undivided with Shoulders or Parking.” Route 23 has an AL of 4, which specifies “Driveway with Provision for Left-Turn Access via Left-Turn Lane.” The existing Route 23 section differs from the DTS, and partially conforms with the AL for specific segments where left turn lanes are provided.

### Existing Traffic Count Data and Analysis

Figure 1 shows the locations where traffic counts were conducted for this study. Peak period manual turning movement counts were conducted at the following eight (8) intersections with Route 23: Munsonhurst Road, Franklin Avenue, the Weis Market driveway, Taylor Road, Washington Avenue, Mitchell Street, High Street, and Mabie Street. Table 1 shows existing Level of Service (LOS) and Volume/Capacity (V/C) ratios from an Highway Capacity System Analysis (HCS) of these intersections.

Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) data was gathered at the following six (6) locations: Munsonhurst Road just south of Route 23, Route 23 just east of Munsonhurst Road, Cork Hill Road just south of Franklin Avenue, Route 23 between Washington Avenue and Rutherford Avenue, North Rutherford Avenue, and Route 23 just north of North Rutherford Avenue. Table 2 shows Average Daily Traffic (ADT), directional distribution, and heavy vehicle percentages at each location.

Detailed traffic volume and existing intersection analysis sheets are included in Appendix A.

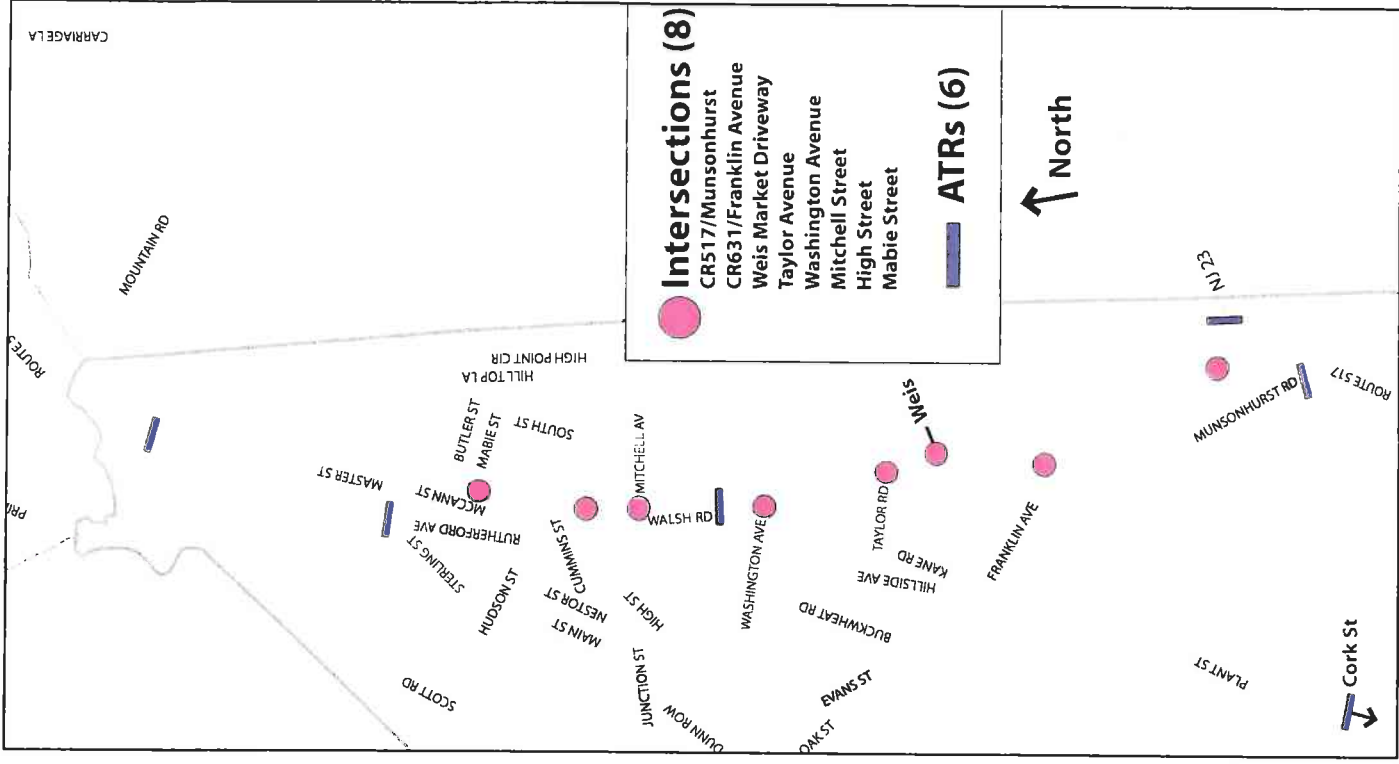


Figure 1: Traffic Count Locations



**Table 1 – Manual Turning Movement Counts**

Intersection with Route 23	Type	Level of Service (AM)	V/C Ratio (AM)	Level of Service (PM)	V/C Ratio (PM)
CR517 (Munsonhurst Road)	Signalized	B	0.78	D	1.04
CR631 (Franklin Avenue)	Signalized	E	0.99	D	0.98
Weiss Shopping Center Entrance RT	Un-signalized	B	NA	E	NA
Taylor Road LT/RT	Un-signalized	F/C	NA	F/C	NA
Washington Avenue	Signalized	C	0.79	C	0.96
Mitchell Street	Signalized	B	0.78	C	0.92
High Street LT/RT	Un-signalized	F/C	NA	F/C	NA
Mabie Street	Signalized	B	0.83	B	0.88

**Table 2 – Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) Data**

Location	ADT	Directional	Heavy Vehicle
Munsonhurst Road (south of Route 23)	10995	50% WB	5.4%
Route 23 (east of Munsonhurst Road)	13956	51% SB	2.3%
Cork Hill Road (south of Franklin Avenue)	1309	56% NB	2.9%
Route 23 (between Washington & Rutherford)	19958	50% SB	5.7%
North Rutherford Avenue	1418	56% SB	2.9%
Route 23 (north of North Rutherford Avenue)	18058	50% NB	3.9%

### Crash Analysis

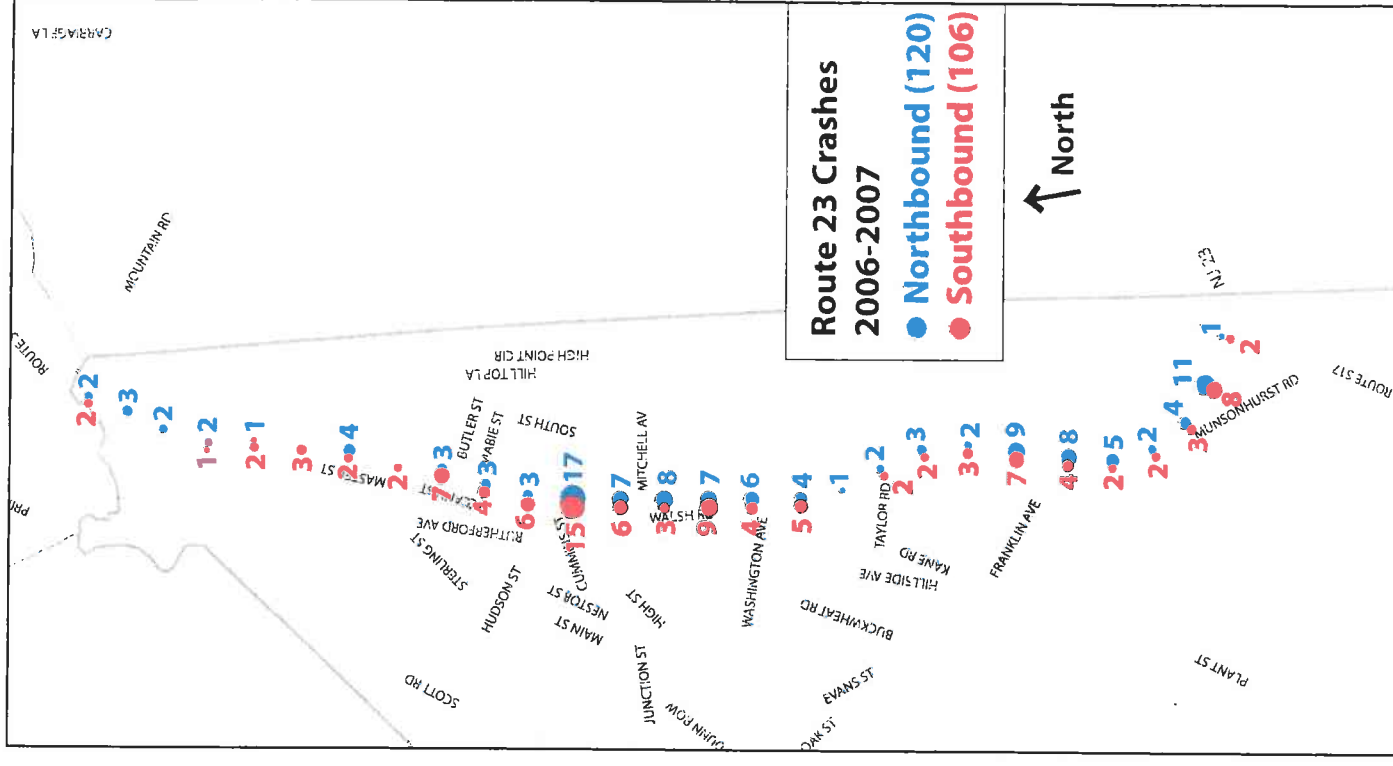
Crash data was obtained from the Franklin Borough Police Department for the entire length of Route 23 through Franklin Borough. The data provides the date, time and location of all crashes for years 2006 and 2007. **Figure 2** shows crash cluster locations along Route 23, which were highest at or near the intersections with Munsonhurst Road (19 crashes) and High Street (32 crashes). There were also 50 crashes reported in the approximate half-mile stretch between Washington Avenue and High Street, which represents the highest density of crashes in the study area.

### Regional and Local Network Evaluation

Historically, Rutherford Avenue and Main Street were the primary north-south routes through Franklin Borough. These roads at one time provided excellent access to the Borough's downtown shopping area, which 50 years ago offered a diverse mix of pedestrian-oriented residential, office, and retail uses. However, as the use of automobiles increased over time, land uses were separated and site layouts became more auto-oriented. As new businesses increasingly chose to locate along Route 23 due to cheaper land and better vehicle access, development along Main Street stalled and then began to dwindle. This led to more and more traffic along Route 23 and less traffic along Main Street and Rutherford Avenue.

Today, traffic relies primarily on Route 23 for travel through Franklin Borough as the only continuous north-south regional route through the Borough. However, Route 23 carries approximately 23,000 vehicles per day and is currently at capacity. This can result in traffic congestion that is frustrating for both regional and local travelers. As businesses continue to locate along Route 23, both regional travelers and local residents become increasingly dependent on this road to reach shopping opportunities and work destinations.

Contributing to this problem is Franklin's local roadway network, which poses difficulties for local circulation. In particular, there is a lack of east-west connections through the Borough. Several streets, including North Rutherford Avenue and Washington Avenue, have been modified in recent years to restrict access to and from Route 23. Along with degrading access



**Figure 2: Crash Clusters (2006-2007)**

to retail opportunities along Route 23, this lack of connectivity hampers efforts to revitalize the Main Street area.

Over the years, the Borough has taken the initiative to improve north-south mobility and preserve Route 23's capacity by connecting major retail parcels with a roadway system paralleling the east side of Route 23. The Vision Plan builds upon this framework to create a continuous, regional north-south facility east of Route 23.

Local circulation deficiencies at specific locations are described in further detail below:

#### *North Rutherford Avenue/Route 23 Intersection*

The northernmost intersection of Rutherford Avenue and Route 23 only allows traffic to flow one-way in the northbound direction, which prevents traffic traveling southbound on Route 23 from accessing Main Street and the Redevelopment Area via Rutherford Avenue. This intersection was open to two-directional traffic in the past, but was closed several years ago based on complaints from residents living on northern Rutherford Avenue. Speeding, pedestrian/vehicle conflicts, and truck traffic were the most common complaints.

#### *Washington Avenue*

Prior to Walmart's arrival, Washington Avenue had direct access to Route 23. In 1995, the Franklin Board of Education proposed closing Washington Avenue's access to Route 23 to discourage through traffic to and from Walmart. Their primary motivation was to increase children's safety during the school day, as pick-up and drop-off parking areas are located across the street from the school. The school system also has a requirement of two fire drills per month, which means that kids spread out across Washington Avenue to access the staging area across the street from the school. Emergency access to Washington Avenue from Route 23 currently remains via a flexible bollard system.



**North Rutherford Avenue/Route 23 Intersection**



**Washington Avenue Closure**

The Washington Avenue closure has had traffic ramifications in neighborhoods close to the school. A large number of morning drop-offs and afternoon pick-ups are concentrated at the parking lot at the corner of Parker Street and Buckwheat Avenue. Some of the resulting traffic uses Walsh Road to access Route 23, and neighbors in this area have also complained about speeding traffic.

#### *Munsonhurst Road/Route 23 Intersection*

During the public process, the intersection of Route 23 and Munsonhurst Road was identified as a problem because cars traveling in the southbound direction of Route 23 cut in front of trucks just past the intersection to enter the right-most climbing lane. This prevents trucks from moving into the climbing lane, which creates operational difficulties as trucks remain in the left-most passing lane while traveling up the hill. The high right turn volume onto Munsonhurst Road is another important consideration at this intersection.

#### *Turns off of Route 23*

Due to the large number of businesses along Route 23 and heavy daily traffic volumes, the ability for vehicles to make turns on to and off of the roadway is an important consideration. Vehicles often make illegal left turns out of driveways along Route 23 that only allow right-turns, particularly at Weis Market and Walmart. Congestion results from stacking that occurs behind vehicles attempting to make left turns off of Route 23 into adjacent businesses.

#### **Pedestrian/Bicycle Compatibility**

There is a lack of pedestrian connectivity both along and across Route 23. Most of Route 23 does not have sidewalks linearly along the roadway, and there are only five crossing opportunities (Franklin Avenue, Washington Avenue, North Rutherford Street, High Street, Mabie Street) over the three mile stretch. At each of these five intersections, a crosswalk is provided at only one leg of the intersection. Route 23 is generally bicycle incompatible, as the adjacent shoulders have inconsistent widths and travel speeds are high.



**Lack of Sidewalks along Mabie Street**



**Narrow Sidewalks near Schools**

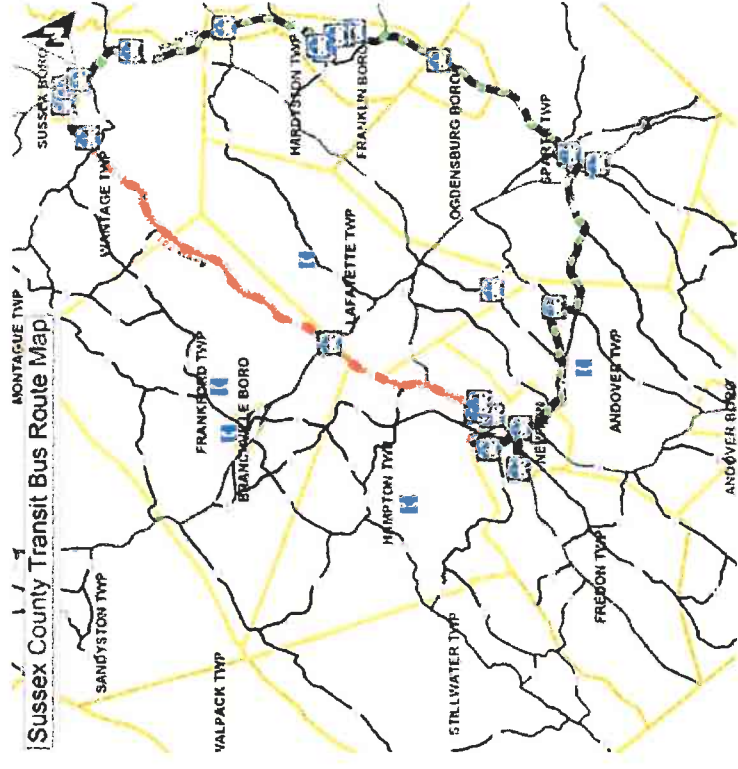
Poor pedestrian conditions may encourage additional automobile trips that otherwise would be made on foot. This is particularly true for school trips, as many residents living east of Route 23 are not comfortable letting their children cross Route 23 to reach the local schools west of Route 23. Many of these trips are 1/2 mile or less. In addition to school trips, the lack of pedestrian amenities may inhibit walking and bicycling trips to the businesses along Route 23.

During the public process participants noted that it has been a challenge for the Planning Board to implement sidewalks along Route 23 because individual property developers have opposed building sidewalks. Some properties along Route 23 have installed sidewalks, including the Staples and Commerce Bank and the developer for the proposed Rite-Aid at the southwest corner of Washington Avenue and Route 23 agreed to add sidewalks to their site layout plan. Even with these segments, the majority of Route 23 does not have sidewalks.

### Transit Service

Public transportation is available in Franklin Borough through Sussex County Transit, which provides a bus route that loops through Newton, Andover, Sparta, Ogdensburg, Franklin, Hardyston, and Sussex Boro. The loop route uses Route 23 and Munsonhurst Road to travel through Franklin Borough, with an approximate travel time of 15 minutes through the Borough. Formal bus stops along Route 23 include the Weis, Walmart, and Shop-Rite stores and the junction of High and Main Streets; however, bus operators will stop at other locations along the route based on a signal from passengers. The service is only available on Monday through Friday, with six runs per day between 5:30AM and 6:30PM.

New Jersey Transit (NJT) operates Bus Route 194 along Route 23 from New York City into Sussex County. The route terminates at the Stockholm Park 'n' Ride, which is approximately three miles east of Franklin.



## Chapter 3: Public Process

The Project Team for this study consisted of Franklin's Planning Director (Jim Kilduff), NJDOT representatives, and the consultants to NJDOT (Urban Engineers, Inc. and Heyer, Gruel & Associates). Community outreach was conducted by the Project Team to generate proactive public participation and input in shaping the Vision Plan. A variety of meetings and workshops were held over the course of the project to solicit community input. Meeting materials such as public advertisements, sign-in sheets, minutes, and summaries are included in **Appendix B**. These meetings are summarized below:

### *Kick-off Meeting (November 13, 2006)*

A kick-off meeting was held on Friday, November 13, 2006 at the Franklin Borough municipal building to review the project's scope and schedule. Over 25 people attended this meeting, including representatives from Franklin Borough, NJDOT, and the Project Team. The Project Team described the study's objectives, schedules, funding, and implementation to the other attendees. Specific issues discussed at the meeting include access management, development, pedestrian accessibility, mass transit, the Highlands Act, and Safe Routes to School. Meeting minutes are included in **Appendix B**.

### *Stakeholder Interviews (March 1, 2007)*

Stakeholder interviews were led by the Project Team on Thursday, March 1, 2007 at the Franklin Borough municipal building. A public notice was developed and distributed prior to the meeting. Over 48 stakeholders attended these interviews at various points throughout the day. The interviews were conducted in a round-table fashion, with several attendees present at any given time. Comments received throughout the day are depicted graphically on **Figure 3**.

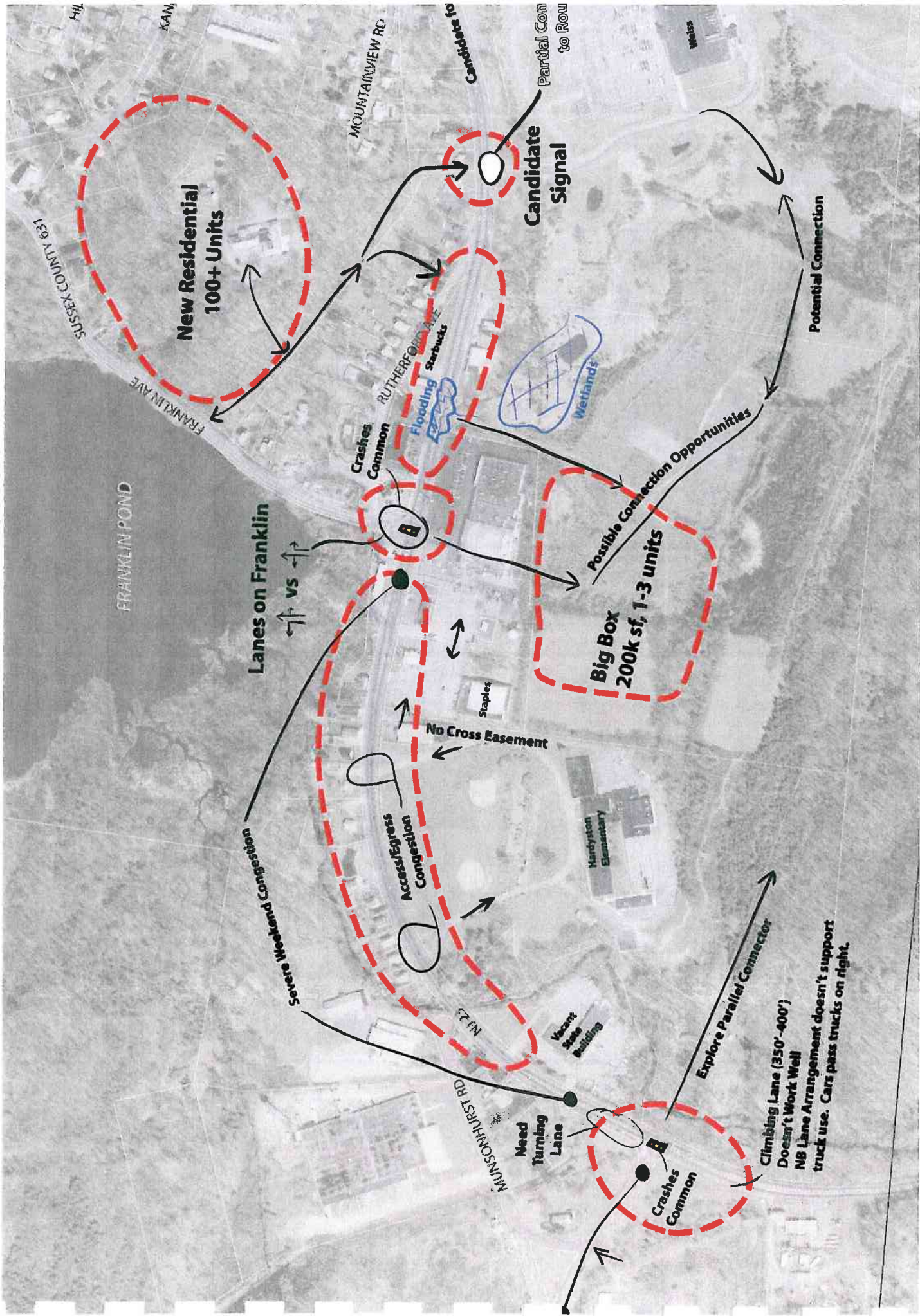
### *Stakeholder Meeting (August 8, 2007)*

The second stakeholder meeting was held on Wednesday, August 8 at the Franklin Borough municipal building. A public notice was developed and distributed prior to the meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to present the consultants' draft concepts to local officials and Borough residents and receive feedback. Attendees included school board personnel and members, planning board members, developers, the mayor and council members, county planners, Senator Littell's staff, and NJDOT representatives.

### *Planning Board Workshop (July 15, 2008)*

This last project meeting was held to present the study's findings to Franklin's Planning Board and members of the general public. A public notice was posted in the New Jersey Times Herald prior to the meeting, and approximately 15 people attended. Urban presented the draft plan and solicited input from attendees for incorporation into the final study report. Comments from the meeting are included in **Appendix B**.





**New Residential  
100+ Units**

**Candidate  
Signal**

**Lanes on Franklin**

**Big Box  
200k sf, 1-3 units**

**Crashes  
Common**

MOUNTAINVIEW RD

RUTHERFORD AVE

FRANKLIN AVE

MANSURST RD

SUSSEX COUNTY 631

Crashes  
Common

Flooded  
Starbucks

Wetlands

Staples

No Cross Easement

Access/Egress  
Congestion

Severe Weekend Congestion

Need  
Turning  
Lane

Explore Parallel Connector

Climbing Lane (350'-400')  
Doesn't Work Well  
NB Lane Arrangement doesn't support  
truck use. Cars pass trucks on right.

Potential Connection

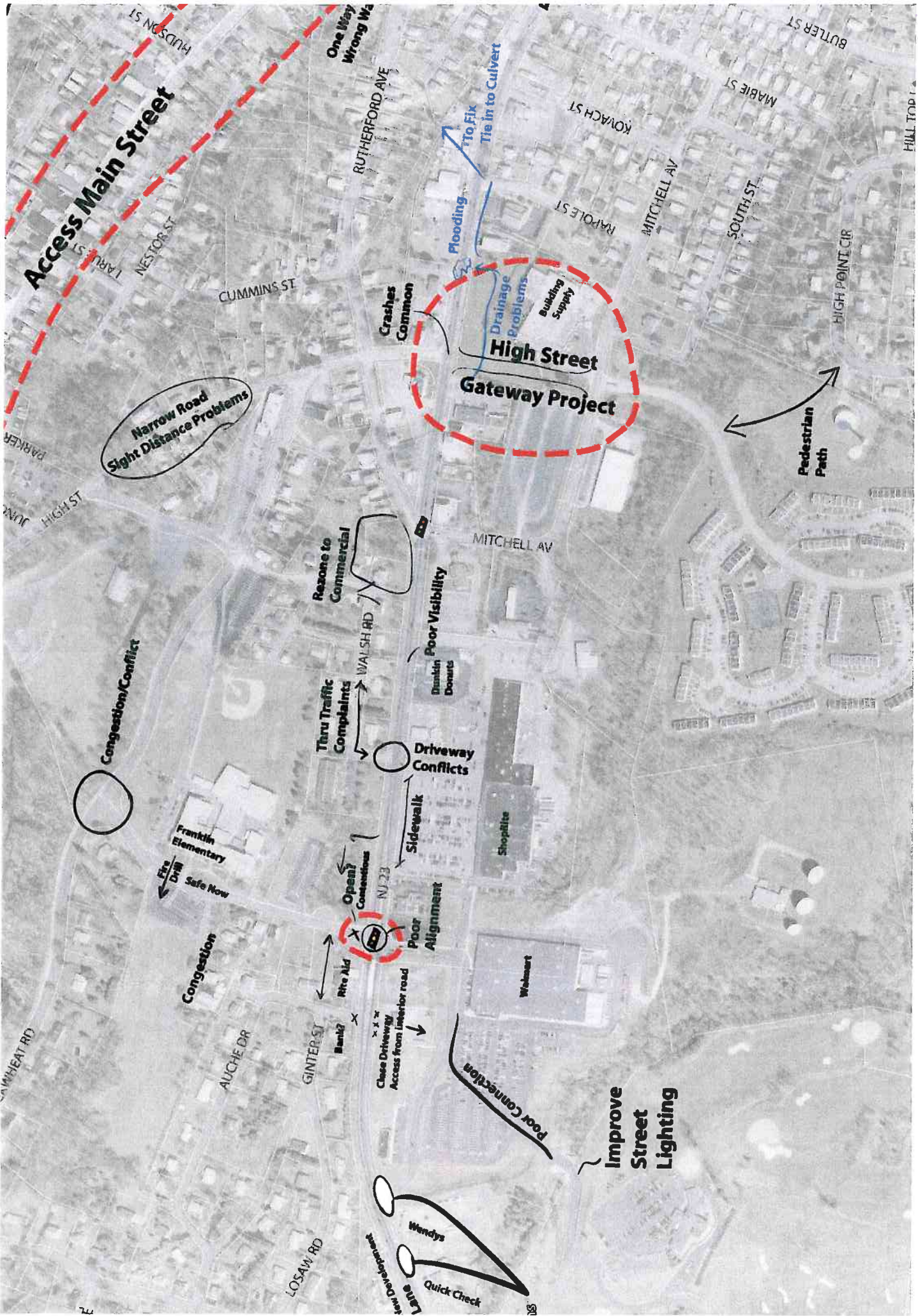
Possible Connection Opportunities

Partial Con  
to ROW

Weiss

Hendryson  
Elementary

Vacant  
Store  
Building



**Access Main Street**

**Narrow Road  
Sight Distance Problems**

**Crashes Common**

**Flooding  
To Fix  
Tie in to Culvert**

**Drainage Problems  
Building Supply**

**High Street  
Gateway Project**

**Pedestrian Path**

**Congestion/Conflict**

**Reason to  
Commercial**

**Poor Visibility**

**Thru Traffic  
Complaints**

**Driveway  
Conflicts**

**Open?  
Concessions**

**Poor  
Alignment**

**Congestion**

**Rite Aid**

**Close Driveway  
Access from Interior road**

**Improve  
Street  
Lighting**

**Wendys**

**Quick Check**

**Lane Development**

**Franklin  
Elementary  
Safe Now  
Fire Drive**

**Poor Connection**

**Shoprite**

**Webmart**

**Drinking  
Donuts**

**Mitchell Av**

**Mitchell Av**

**Kovach St**

**Rapolet St**

**Mitchell Av**

**South St**

**High Point Cir**

**Hill Top**

**Butler St**

**Marie St**

**Ruthersford Ave**

**One Way  
Wrong Way**

**Cummins St**

**Nestor St**

**Larson St**

**Juniper St**

**High St**

**Parker St**

**Juniper St**

**Wheat Rd**

**Auche Dr**

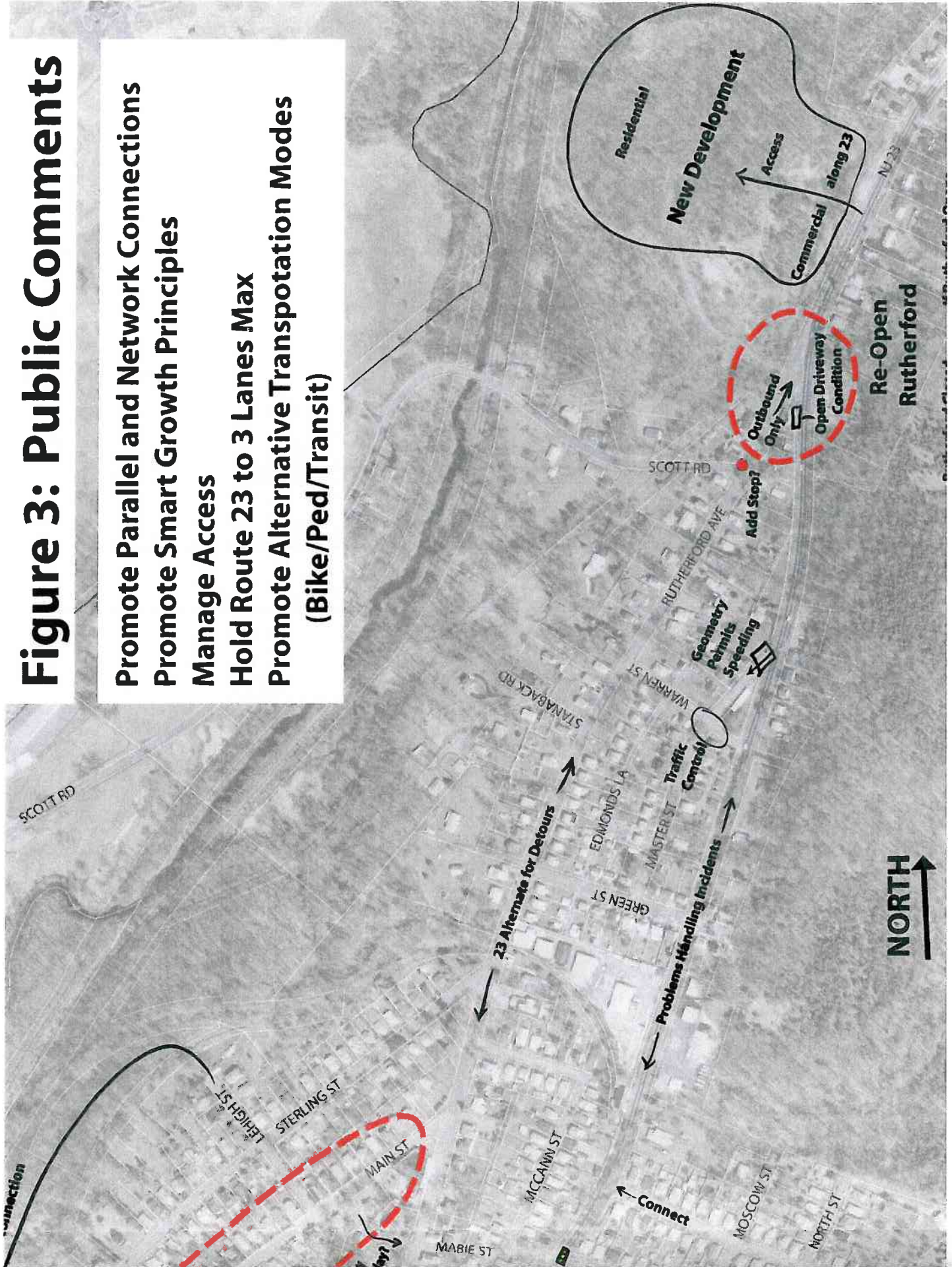
**Ginter St**

**Losaw Rd**



# Figure 3: Public Comments

- Promote Parallel and Network Connections
- Promote Smart Growth Principles
- Manage Access
- Hold Route 23 to 3 Lanes Max
- Promote Alternative Transportation Modes (Bike/Ped/Transit)



### Summary of Major Themes

Comments were summarized to develop five common goals or themes for the Route 23 corridor:

#### *Promote parallel and network connections*

New roads or connections running north-south parallel to Route 23 would enhance capacity and mobility through the Borough by providing alternatives to Route 23. Better east-west network connectivity would increase access to the Main Street redevelopment area and the retail areas east of Route 23. Overall improvements to Franklin's existing roadway network would also help to segregate local and through traffic, thus easing congestion and saving time for both local residents and regional travelers.

#### *Hold Route 23 to three lanes*

Limiting widening of Route 23 to three lanes will minimize impacts to adjacent properties and the community in general. It will also avoid the negative aesthetics and high speeds associated with a typical four-lane section, which are apparent along stretches of Route 23 in Morris and Passaic Counties.

#### *Manage access*

Managing access to homes and businesses along Route 23 is an essential tool that can help promote efficient and orderly redevelopment of the corridor. Reducing or limiting the number of driveways off of Route 23 helps to preserve the road's traffic capacity and is more supportive of a three-lane concept for Route 23. Better access management also promotes safety by reducing the number of potential conflict points.

#### *Promote alternative transportation modes (bike/pedestrian/transit)*

There is a continuing need within the Borough to meet the mobility needs of all roadway users, including bicycles, pedestrians, and transit riders. Pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and bike compatibility should be considerations along the entire Route 23 corridor. Developing better transit opportunities is an important goal for both Franklin Borough and Sussex County. Specifically, there is a local interest in providing additional transit service along the Route 23 corridor.



*Promote smart growth principles*

Route 23 is a major regional corridor that not only has a regional presence, but offers a tremendous potential for local economic development. This potential, however, is not supported by current development patterns and zoning. The Borough must capitalize on the roadway's regional magnetism and create new retail/mixed-use opportunities that can be marketed in concert with Main Street for Main Street to be successful.



**Main Street Commercial District**



**Main Street Core**

From Main Street Revitalization Plan (March 2006)

## Chapter 4: Recommended Concepts

Route 23 functions as both a through route for regional traffic and a local route for shopping, schools and residential neighborhoods. Congestion along Route 23 arises when too many vehicles have too few choices for getting to or from a particular destination. As development and redevelopment take place along Route 23, this condition may worsen for local residents, businesses, and regional travelers if the overall network does not provide better options.

An interconnected, multi-modal roadway network consisting of parallel routes will help support future development that contains automobile uses and encourages other travel modes. When the roadway network is enhanced to provide multiple routes, vehicles have the option of using more local routes for local trips without using Route 23. This network would help to relieve some of the traffic burden that Route 23 is increasingly handling as the primary north-south transportation route through the Borough. Recommended concepts for enhancing the network are described below in more detail:

### *Munsonhurst Extension*

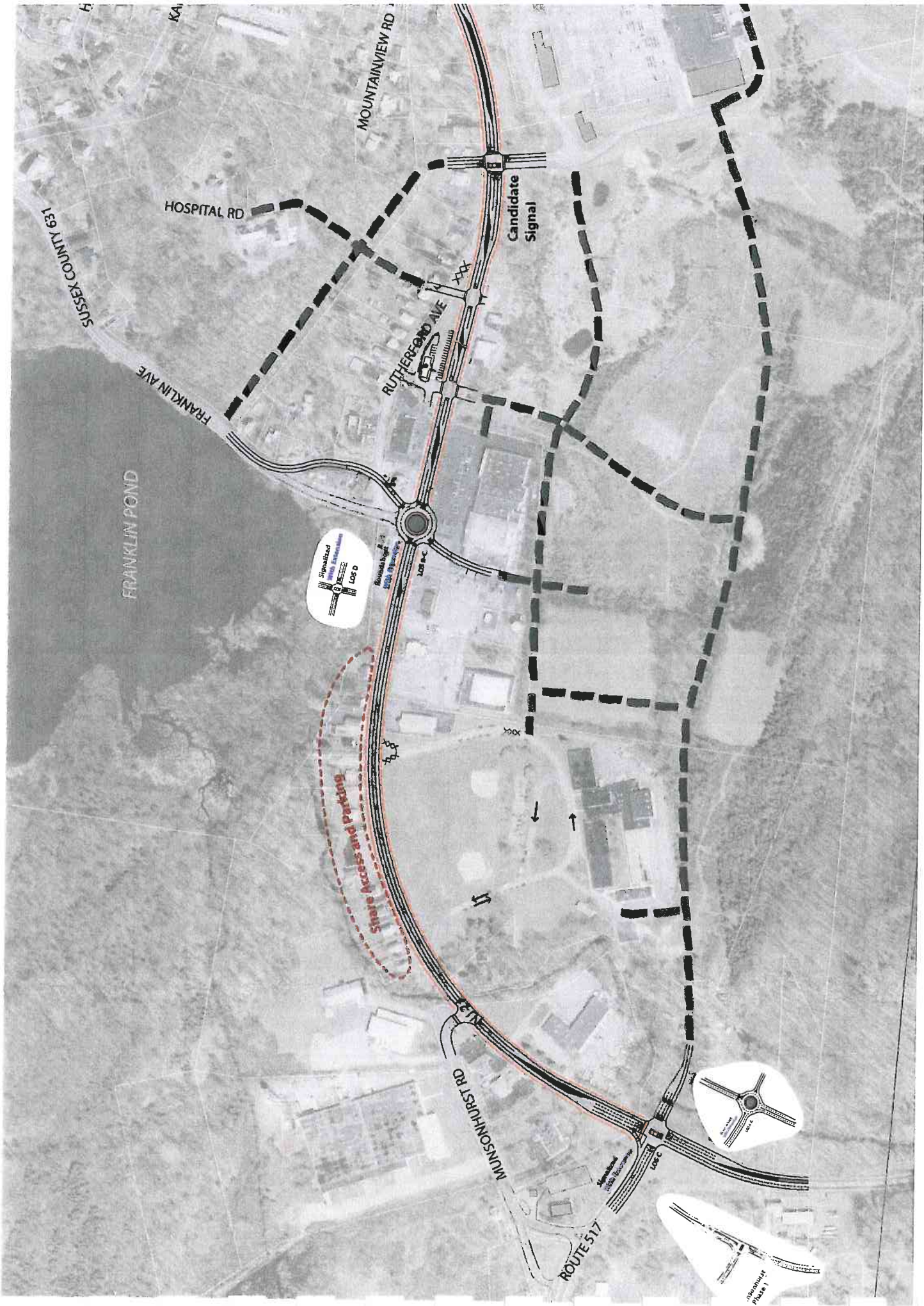
The Borough has improved north-south mobility and preserved Route 23's capacity by connecting the driveways of major retailers on the east side of Route 23. Extending the connecting system to the Munsonhurst Avenue intersection increases the connector's utility and presents a regional alternative to Route 23. The Vision Plan builds upon this framework to create a continuous, regional north-south facility east of Route 23.

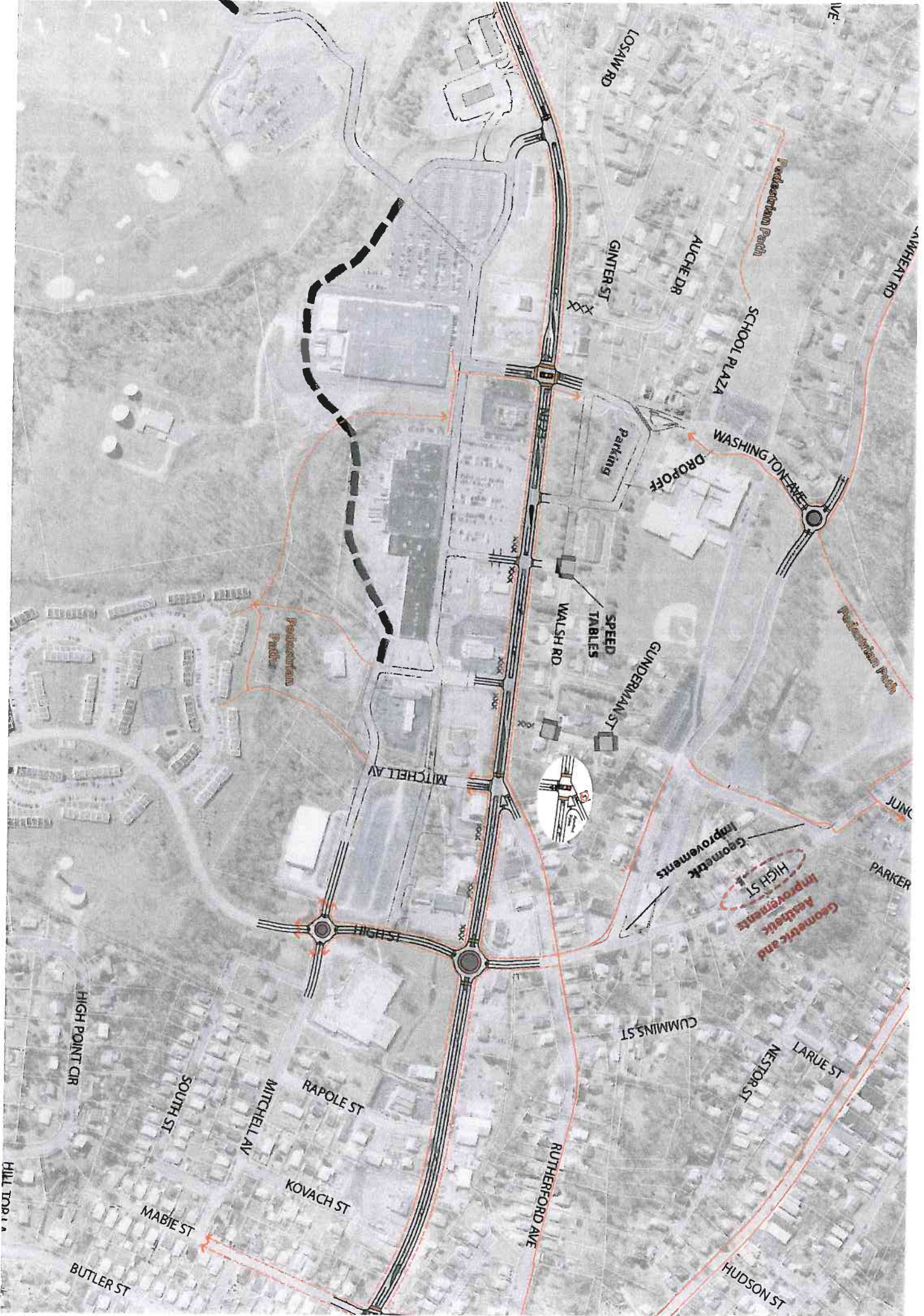
As shown in **Figure 4**, the Munsonhurst Extension ("Extension") concept creates a new terminus for the roadway parallel and offset to the east of Route 23. The roadway is envisioned to be a collector type facility. The proposed concept extends Munsonhurst Road (CR 517) north through the existing intersection with Route 23, creating a four-way intersection. The roadway would continue

north behind the Hardyston School, run through several potential development properties, and connect into the existing service road for Weis Market. Several east-west streets are also proposed to link the Munsonhurst Extension with Route 23. This includes a new road at Franklin Avenue and two new roads between Franklin Avenue and the Weis Market driveway.

The Munsonhurst Extension would provide greater network connectivity and better access to development east of Route 23. It would also relieve some of the traffic burden from Route 23 by providing a secondary north-south route through the Borough. It is important to note that implementation of the Munsonhurst Extension directly influences the performance of Route 23. Without future network expansion, many of the intersections along Route 23 would need to be expanded to accommodate future traffic volumes. By sharing some of the north-south traffic burden, the Munsonhurst Extension allows for the consideration of smaller, more pedestrian-friendly intersections along Route 23, with less corresponding impacts to their surroundings.

The Munsonhurst Extension would most likely need to be implemented in several phases. The section between Hardyston School and the Weis Market could be implemented through the local development process. The remaining section between Munsonhurst Road and Hardyston School should be advanced as a separate initiative. Each of these sections has independent utility. The completion of the connection to Munsonhurst Avenue provides the most benefit to regional travel needs and the best alternative service system to Route 23. Due to the steep topography east of Route 23, grades will be a significant challenge in developing the Munsonhurst Extension.





LOSAY RD

GINTER ST

AUCHE DR

SCHOOL PLAZA

WASHING TOGETHER

WALSH RD

GUNDERMAN ST

MITCHELL AV

HIGH ST

RUTHERFORD AVE

CUMMINGS ST

LARUE ST

NESTOR ST

HUDSON ST

RAPOLE ST

KOVACH ST

SOUTH ST

MITCHELL AV

MABIE ST

BUTLER ST

HIGH POINT CIR

HILL TOP

SAWHEAT RD

PARKER

JUNO

Pedestrian Path

Pedestrian Path

JUNO

Geometric Improvements

Geometric and Aesthetic Improvements HIGH ST

Parking

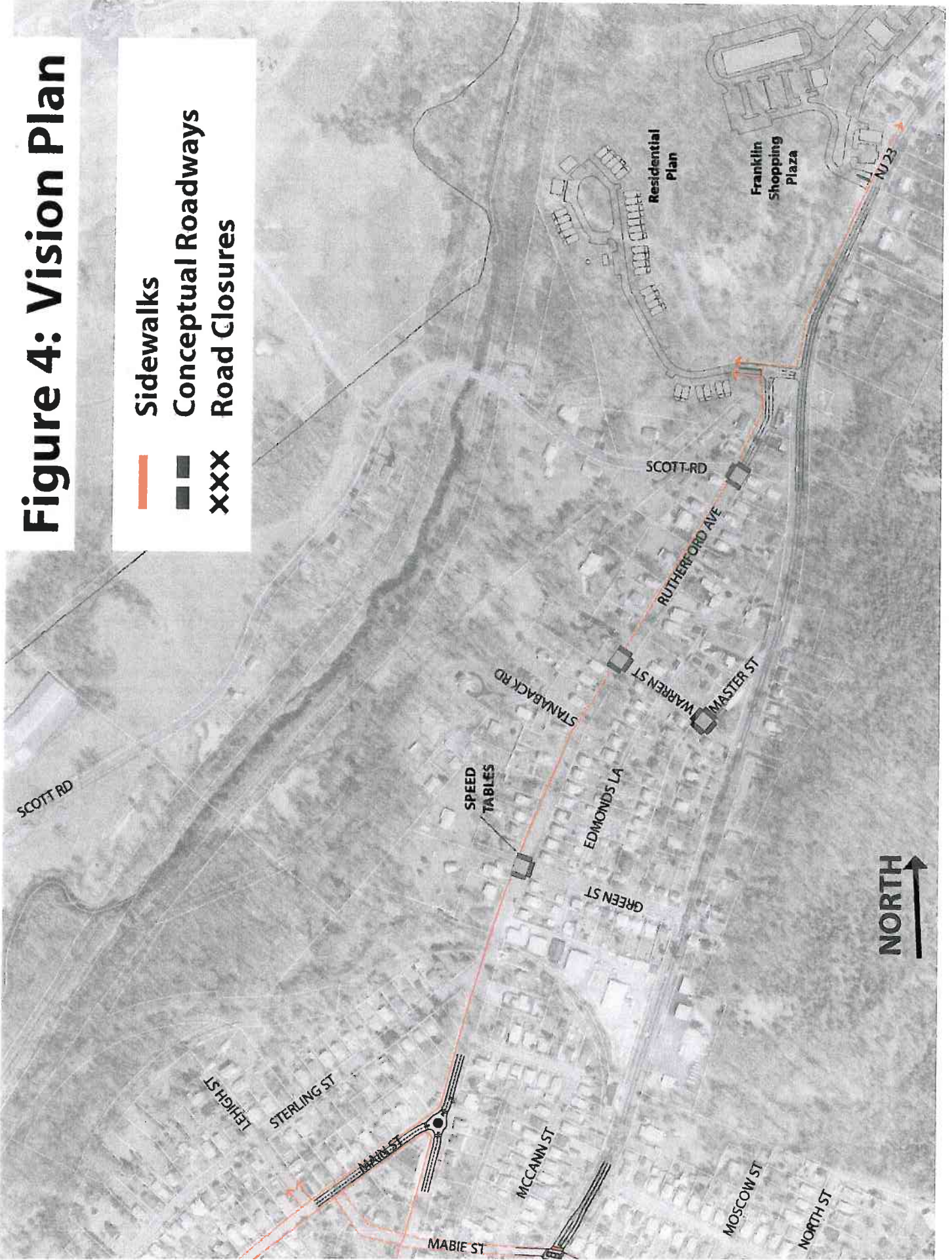
SPEED TABLES

DROPOFF



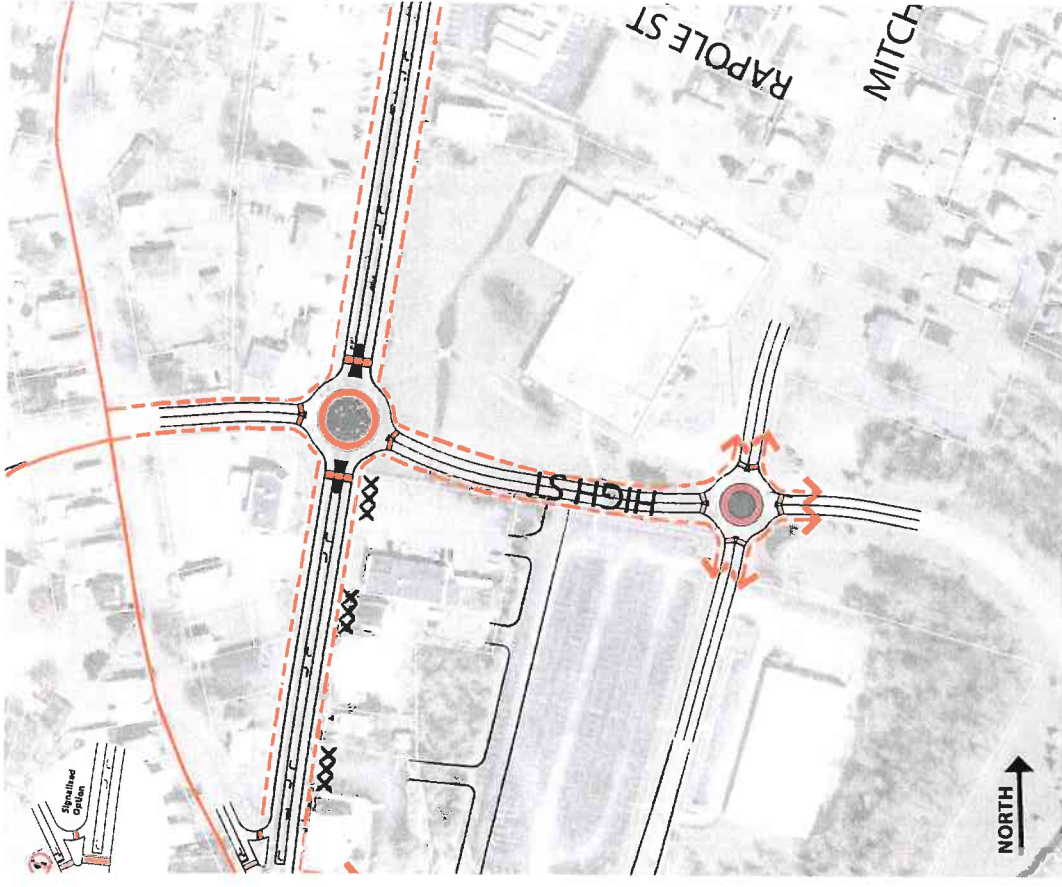
# Figure 4: Vision Plan

-  Sidewalks
-  Conceptual Roadways
-  Road Closures



### *High Street Connector and Gateway*

The Vision Plan incorporates Franklin Borough's plans for an extension of High Street across Route 23 to Mitchell Street. This new link, shown in **Figure 5**, will improve connectivity between the Main Street redevelopment area and the neighborhoods east of Route 23. The Route 23 and Mitchell Street intersections are candidates for a roundabout due to a roundabout's ability to accommodate pedestrian crossings, reduce vehicular speeds along the High Street corridor, promote safety, and provide a gateway feature. The roundabout at Route 23 and High Street would serve as a major gateway into Franklin's downtown area along Main Street, while the roundabout at Mitchell and High would be a smaller, neighborhood circle signaling the end of the connector system and a transition to the residential neighborhood north of High Street. Improved safety along Route 23 in the vicinity of High Street could be achieved by closing several driveways near the intersection and creating alternate access by means of an alley off of High Street.



**Figure 5: High Street Gateway**



## Corridor Improvements

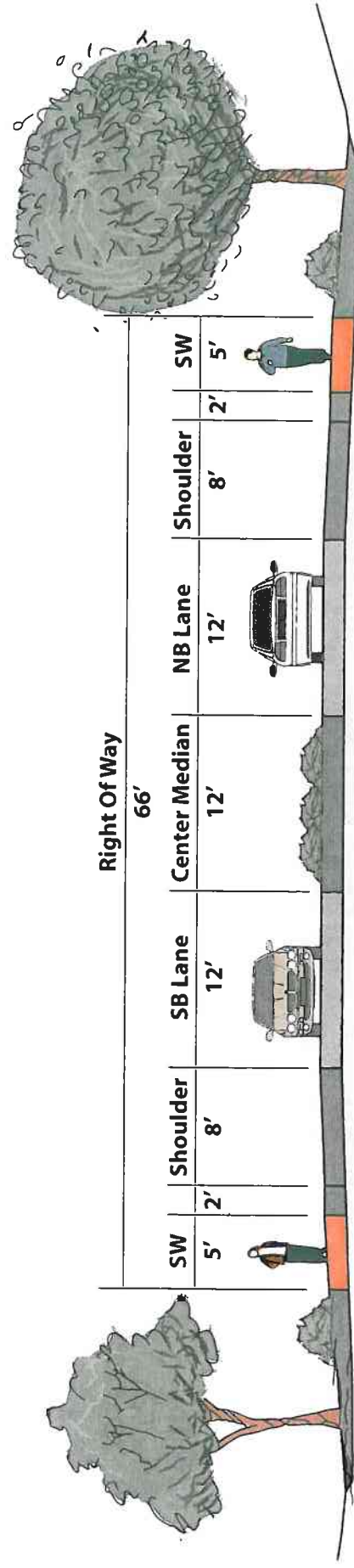
A series of recommendations were developed that apply to the entire length of Route 23 through Franklin Borough. These corridor improvement concepts are integrally tied to the network expansion and access management recommendations. Specific intersection and parcel-related improvements mentioned later in this report are meant to fit within the context of these general corridor improvements.

### Route 23 Three-Lane Section

As shown in **Figure 6**, the Vision Plan proposes replacing Route 23's existing two-lane section with a three-lane section between Munsonhurst Road and Mabie Street. The proposed three-lane section would feature one 12-foot wide traffic lane in each direction and a 12-foot wide median. Bicycle-compatible shoulders that are between 5 and 8 feet wide would be located adjacent to the roadway. The existing 66-foot wide NJDOT right-of-way could accommodate the proposed cartway along its entire length.

The median area would be designed to accommodate left turns at key locations along Route 23. This would be accomplished by providing dedicated left turn lanes at intersections and a third traffic lane with center left turns in other locations. The sections of the median that are not used by vehicles would either be raised or marked with a painted gore. Various aesthetic treatments could be applied to the raised portions of the median, including hardscaping and/or landscaping features. Aesthetics, maintenance, and traffic concerns would need to be addressed when designing the median.

In several areas, the median would be used as a pedestrian refuge area to break the Route 23 pedestrian crossing into two movements. When located mid-block, the refuge area is typically angled to face oncoming traffic. This encourages a pedestrian or bicyclist to stop after crossing the first lane and evaluate oncoming traffic before completing the crossing. Refuge areas are proposed just north of Franklin Avenue (across from the proposed Starbucks), between Taylor Road and Washington Avenue, and near North Rutherford Avenue.



**Figure 6: Route 23 Three-Lane Section**

The access management and network expansion concepts described elsewhere in this section are critical for the successful functioning of a three-lane Route 23 section. Managing access through the approval process and consolidation of existing driveways enables the left turn lanes shown in **Figure 4** to fit within the median turn lane. By providing additional capacity and route choice, roadway network expansion allows Route 23 to remain as one travel lane in each direction.

#### *Route 23 Sidewalks and Improved Pedestrian Crossings*

Sidewalks are a critical element to encourage walking trips through the Borough. The presence of sidewalks enhances both the comfort and safety level for pedestrians by providing a designated place for people to walk. A sidewalk network is particularly relevant along Route 23 because Franklin Borough is relatively compact, with a variety of land uses within walking distance along Route 23 and from the adjacent neighborhoods.

**Figure 6** shows how sidewalks would fit into the proposed three-lane roadway cross-section. Sidewalks should be at least 5 feet wide and separated from the roadway shoulder by a minimum 2-foot wide buffer. This buffer should be increased where room is available to provide additional separation between pedestrians and traffic. For the most part, the existing 66-foot wide NJDOT right-of-way could accommodate the proposed sidewalk. However, sidewalk would most likely be located outside of the right-of-way at intersections where additional turning lanes are present.

The absence of existing right-of-way should not be an impediment to establishing sidewalks along the Route 23 corridor. Sidewalks can and should be provided outside the public right-of-way where necessary. For developing and redeveloping properties, the Borough should require the provision of sidewalks on the part of each developer at the time of approval. Large scale retrofitting of sidewalks onto an existing roadway is difficult, disruptive, and more costly when compared to planning, designing, and building sidewalks through the site plan approval process.

A key element to enhancing pedestrian conditions along this corridor is providing better roadway crossing opportunities. The Vision Plan doubles the number of pedestrian crossing opportunities along the length of Route 23. By using the median afforded by a three-lane Route 23, four new pedestrian crossings can be created. Additionally, all existing intersections should have crosswalks on all legs of the intersection, sidewalks leading up to the intersection, ADA-compatible curb landings, and pedestrian signals.

## Intersection Improvements

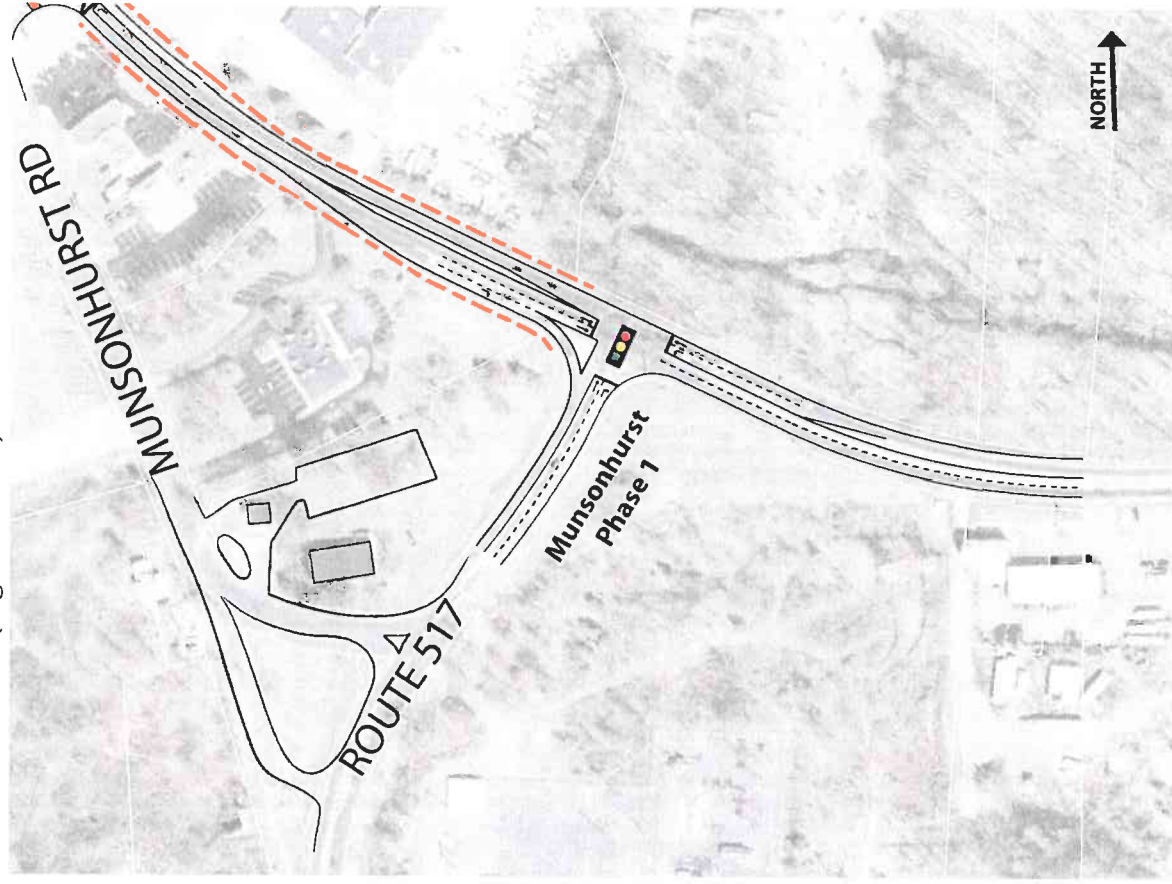
Due to high traffic volumes along Route 23, several intersections along the corridor do not function well during the peak travel periods. In tandem with the network expansion concepts described earlier, modifications to key intersections along Route 23 would better accommodate traffic volumes and improve accessibility to neighboring businesses. Multiple short-term and long-term concepts were developed for several key intersections including Munsonhurst Road, Franklin Avenue, the Weis Market driveway, Washington Avenue, and both ends of North Rutherford Avenue.

In several locations, modern roundabouts are presented as an alternative to the traditional signalized intersection. This alternative was studied at a concept level, and was designed to perform acceptably with the corridor's future traffic volumes. Benefits of roundabouts include reduced vehicular speeds, increased safety, and continuous traffic flow, as vehicles do not have to stop at traffic signals. The candidate roundabouts would function better if they are planned as a coordinated system along the corridor rather than an ad hoc approach to improving specific intersections. When spaced at fairly regular intervals, driver expectancy and awareness of navigating roundabouts is increased. Additional discussion of roundabouts is presented in **Appendix C**.

### *Munsonhurst Road/Route 23*

The Phase I layout shown in **Figure 7** is a short-term recommendation addressing the operational difficulties for trucks on southbound Route 23. The concept adds a second through lane along southbound Route 23 approaching the traffic signal. This new lane would be aligned with the climbing lane, which would allow a truck to position itself into the climbing lane prior to the intersection. This would eliminate the occurrence of cars passing slow moving trucks within the intersection and increase the intersection's capacity. Existing right-of-way appears to be available. If this is the case, it would reduce the complexity of the project, potentially making it eligible to move more quickly through the NJDOT project development process.

The existing Level of Service at this intersection is "B" in the AM peak and "D" in the PM peak. For comparison purposes and to address the functionality of the extension, intersection layout alternatives were developed for the recommended Build and No-Build Munsonhurst Extension scenarios at Munsonhurst and Franklin Avenues (**Figures 8 & 9**).



**Figure 7: Munsonhurst Road/Route 23 (Phase I)**

#### a) *Munsonhurst Extension - Build*

For the Build condition, a fourth leg of the intersection is created to accommodate a future extension of Munsonhurst Road. The intersection is shown in two forms. The signalized intersection layout adds a through lane and a left turn lane along southbound Route 23, a through lane and a right turn lane along northbound Route 23, and a through lane from CR 517 at the intersection. A two-lane roundabout is proposed as an alternative concept to the signalized intersection. A pedestrian crossing is provided across the northern leg of the intersection to complete the sidewalk network along Route 23. A single lane in each direction is maintained on Route 23 north of Munsonhurst Avenue. The resulting Level of Service is “C” for the signalized intersection and “A/C” for the roundabout.

#### b) *Munsonhurst Extension - No Build*

The no-build condition modifies the existing three-way intersection and Route 23 corridor. In addition to the second through lane along southbound Route 23 shown in Phase I, this layout adds a second through lane on northbound Route 23 and a second left turn lane from CR 517. A two-lane roundabout, as shown, is an alternative concept to the signalized intersection. In both the signalized and roundabout alternatives two lanes are provided on Route 23 between the Franklin Avenue and Munsonhurst Avenue intersections. A pedestrian crossing is provided across the northern leg of the intersection to complete the sidewalk network along Route 23. The resulting Level of Service is “B” for the signalized intersection and “C” for the roundabout.

The Vision Plan also proposes that the Munsonhurst Road dead-end be re-opened to Route 23 by creating a new T-intersection west of the signalized intersection. Along with increasing access to the businesses along the dead-end, this would better disperse traffic between the two intersections by shifting traffic away from CR 517. A dedicated turn lane should be provided along Route 23 at the new T-intersection to accommodate northbound left turns onto Munsonhurst Road.

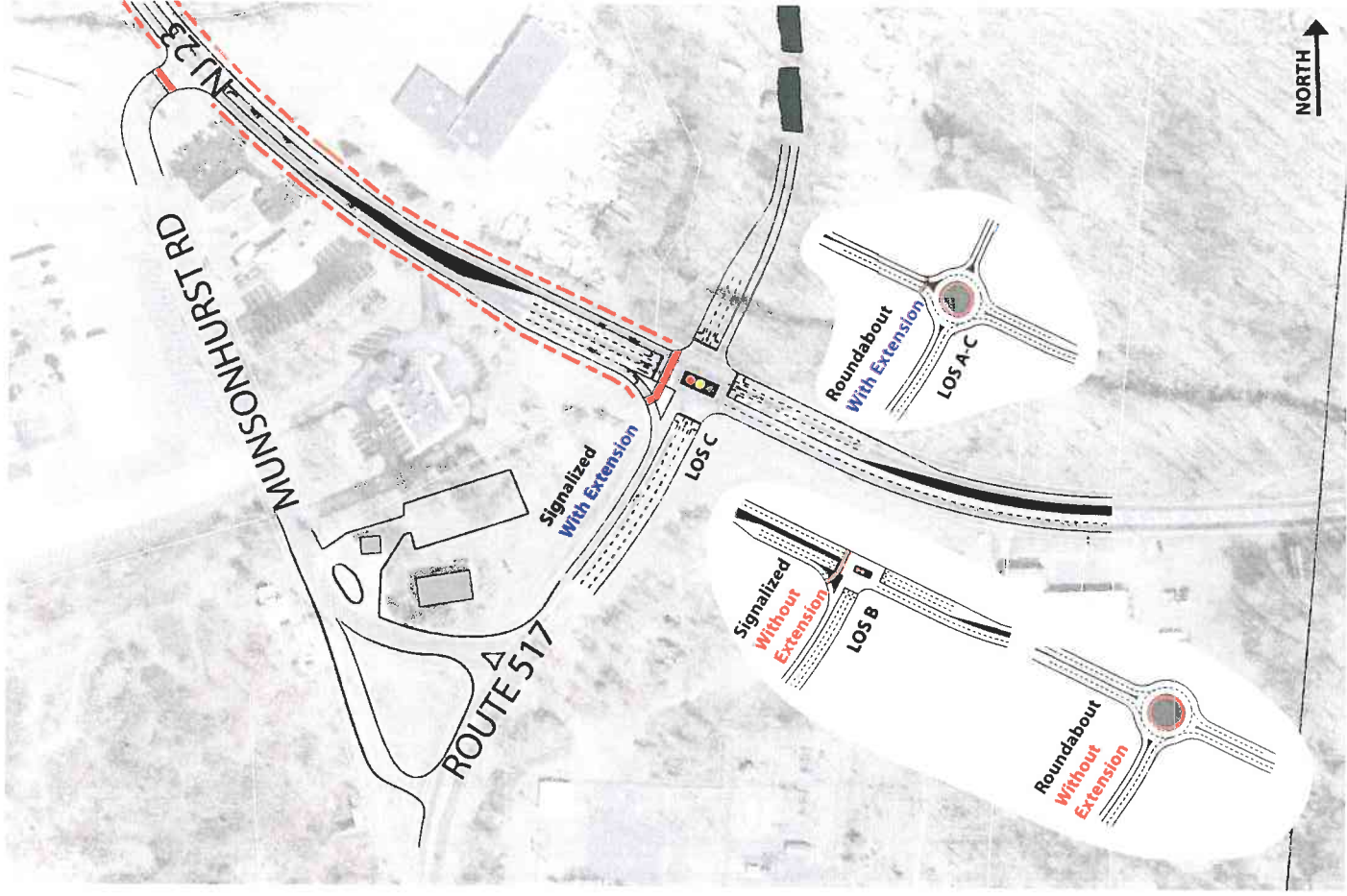


Figure 8: Munsonhurst Road/Route 23 Intersection Options

### Franklin Avenue/Route 23

Intersection concepts were developed at Franklin Avenue to enhance network connectivity in this area and better accommodate traffic flow along Route 23. The existing Level of Service at this intersection is “E” in the AM peak and “D” in the PM peak. Similar to the Munsonhurst intersection, layouts were developed for the recommended and No Build scenarios described below (Figure 9):

#### a) Munsonhurst Extension - Build

Due to the extra capacity provided by the extension, this layout can maintain the existing lane configurations without widening or adding lanes. A two-lane roundabout, as shown, is as an alternative to the signalized intersection. Under this alternative, traffic from the western approach of Franklin

Avenue could be shifted to Old Franklin Avenue to create more space for redevelopment along the edge of Franklin Pond. Independently, the eastern approach to the roundabout would be shifted to avoid the shopping center on the east side of Route 23. The resulting Level of Service is “D” for the signalized intersection and “B/C” for the roundabout.

#### b) Munsonhurst Extension - No Build

Without the extension, future traffic volumes along Route 23 indicate the need for a second through lane and right-turn lane along northbound Route 23, a shared right/through lane along southbound Route 23, and a shared right/through lane from Franklin Avenue. The resulting Level of Service is “C” for the signalized intersection.

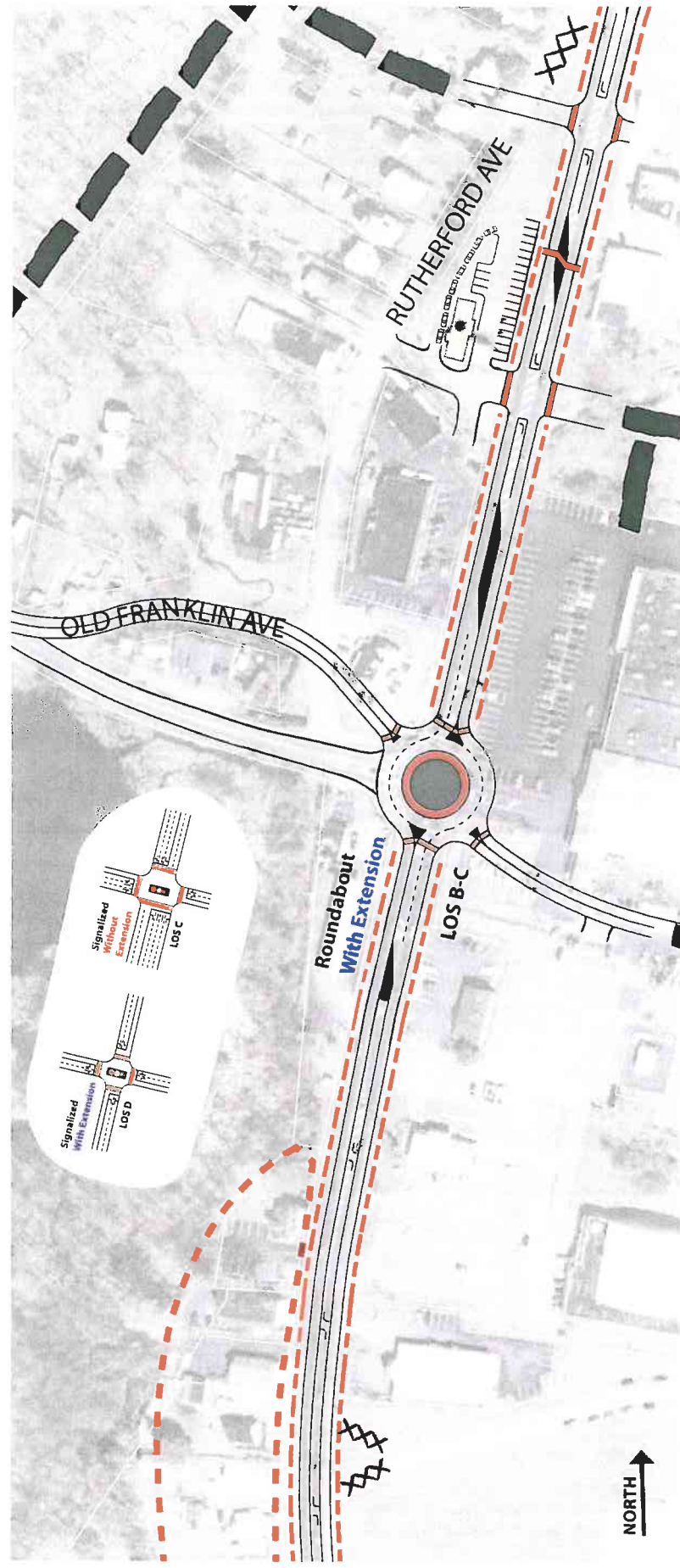


Figure 9: Franklin Ave/Route 23 Intersection Options

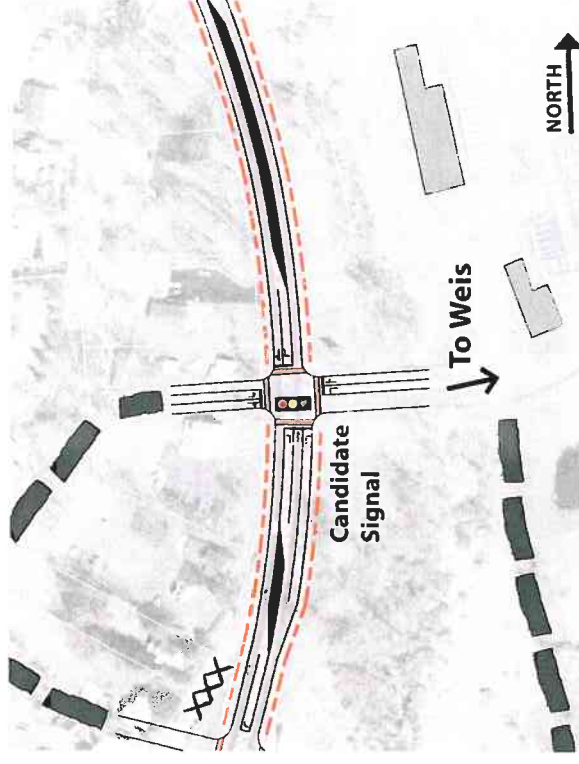
### *Weis Market Driveway/Route 23*

The Weis Market driveway is a candidate location for a traffic signal because of the high volume of turns in and out of the driveway. A signalized intersection would improve access to the Weis Market by providing dedicated left turn lanes for both directions of Route 23, and would also allow for protected pedestrian crossings. In tandem with a new road extending west from the intersection with Route 23, a traffic signal at Weis Market could also play a role in accommodating future development in this area. The signal would provide additional access and accommodate future traffic from the redevelopment area along Hospital Road, while the new road could increase the value of underserved commercially zoned parcels along Rutherford Avenue by enhancing their access, visibility, and roadway frontage.

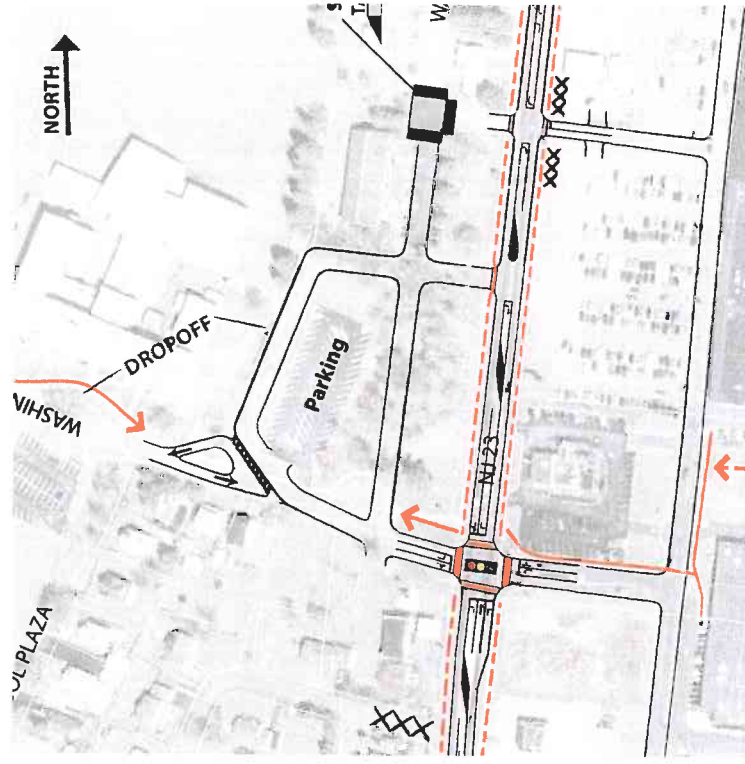
From a network perspective, this location appears to have reasonable spacing from the adjacent traffic signals at Washington Avenue and Franklin Avenue. However, a candidate signal at the Weis Market driveway would need to be evaluated and approved by NJDOT based on geometric, safety, and traffic volume considerations.

### *Washington Avenue/Route 23*

The eastern end of Washington Avenue terminates in a cul-de-sac and does not connect with Route 23. It functions as a driveway and parking area for the school. Although re-opening Washington Avenue is desirable from a network perspective, it is not consistent with community concerns over school children safety and the current usage of the roadway. However, the Washington Avenue closure has had traffic ramifications in neighborhoods close to the school. For this reason, and the desire to improve overall access to the school, a third school drop-off and pick-up zone is proposed in the area of the existing cul-de-sac. The drop-off zone would have access from Route 23, but would not allow through traffic on Washington Avenue. This new drop-off/pick-up zone would take pressure off of Buckwheat Road in the morning peak and reduce the number of school-related trips along Parker Street and Walsh Road.



**Figure 10: Weis Market Driveway/Route 23**



**Figure 11: Washington Avenue/Route 23**

Modifications to the existing intersection of Washington Avenue and Route 23 are desirable from a safety and functional standpoint, and would improve the operation of the new pick-up/drop-off zone. The existing offset condition sets up vehicular conflicts and impedes the full, effective use of the signalized intersection. A reconfiguration of Washington Avenue is proposed that would re-align the western leg in a Washington Avenue to meet the existing eastern leg in a standard design condition. A Rite-Aid was recently proposed for the southwest corner of Washington and Route 23. While this development is now inactive, **Figure 12** shows a preferred site development concept and revised access configuration from a re-aligned Washington Avenue, thereby implementing the intersection realignment and reducing conflict points and curb cuts along Route 23.

Additional network roads west of Route 23, including an extension of Walsh Road south to connect with Washington Avenue, would help to better distribute east-west traffic through the Borough. These roads would also complement efforts to develop commercial uses along the western side of Route 23.



**Figure 12: Site Development Concept**

### *North Rutherford Avenue/Mitchell Drive*

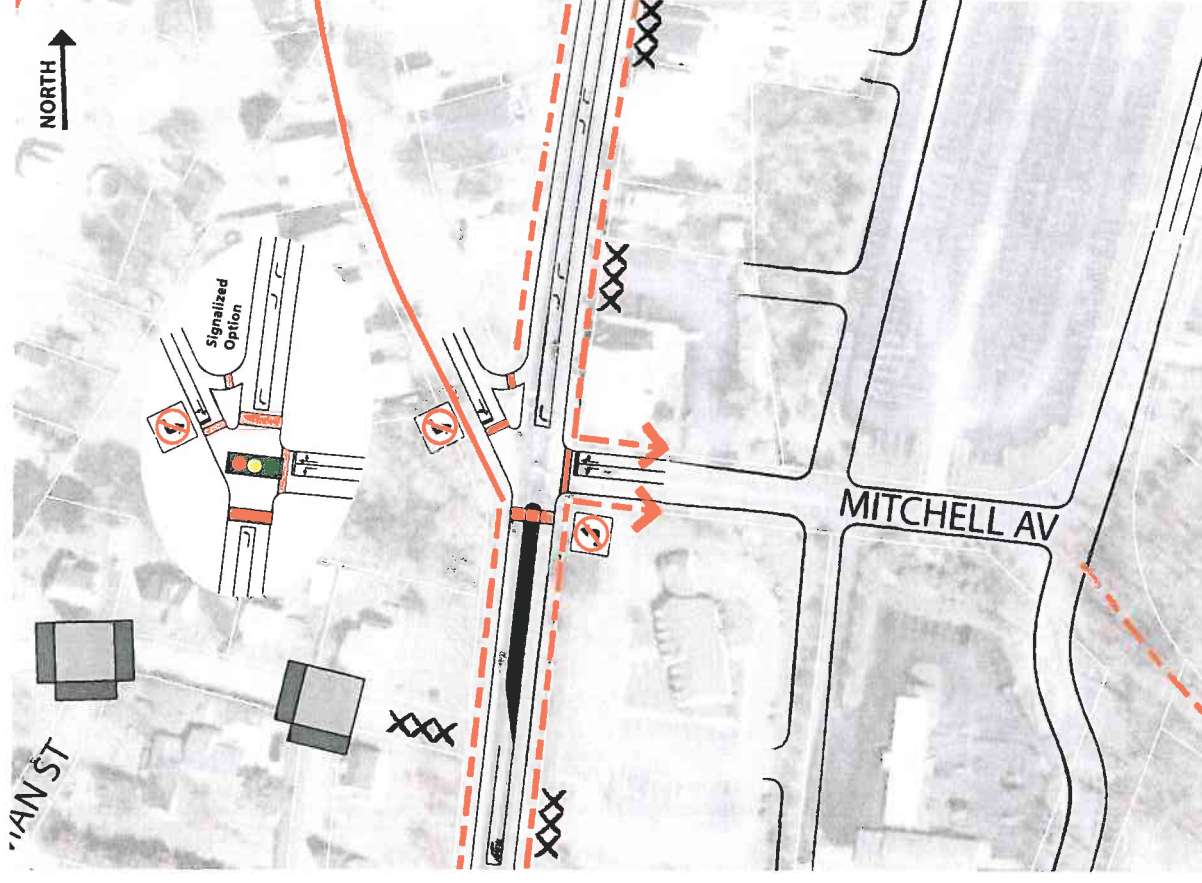
The existing intersection is characterized by a sharp skew and steep grade, which restricts left turns onto northbound Route 23 from Rutherford Avenue and right turns onto Rutherford Avenue from southbound Route 23. The geometry also makes it difficult to provide sidewalks and accommodate pedestrian crossings. Based on differing scenarios for the High Street Connector to the north, two intersection layout alternatives were developed to address these deficiencies (**Figure 13**):

#### **a) Without a traffic signal**

Signalization of the High Street/Route 23 intersection would likely cause the traffic signal at Rutherford Avenue to be removed. Accordingly, this layout maintains restrictions on left turns from northbound Route 23 onto westbound Rutherford and from eastbound Rutherford onto northbound Route 23. A right turn slot would be created to facilitate right turns from southbound Route 23 onto Rutherford Avenue. The layout accommodates pedestrian crossings on the south side of the intersection via a median refuge island.

#### **b) With a traffic signal**

With a roundabout at the High Street/Route 23 intersection instead of a traffic signal, the Rutherford Avenue traffic signal could potentially remain in place. This would allow for left turns from northbound Route 23 onto westbound Rutherford via a dedicated left turn lane. Due to the geometry, turns from eastbound Rutherford onto northbound Route 23 would still be restricted. A right turn slot would be created to facilitate right turns from southbound Route 23 onto Rutherford Avenue. The layout accommodates pedestrian crossings on both the north and south sides of the intersections.



**Figure 13: North Rutherford/Mitchell Drive/Route 23**

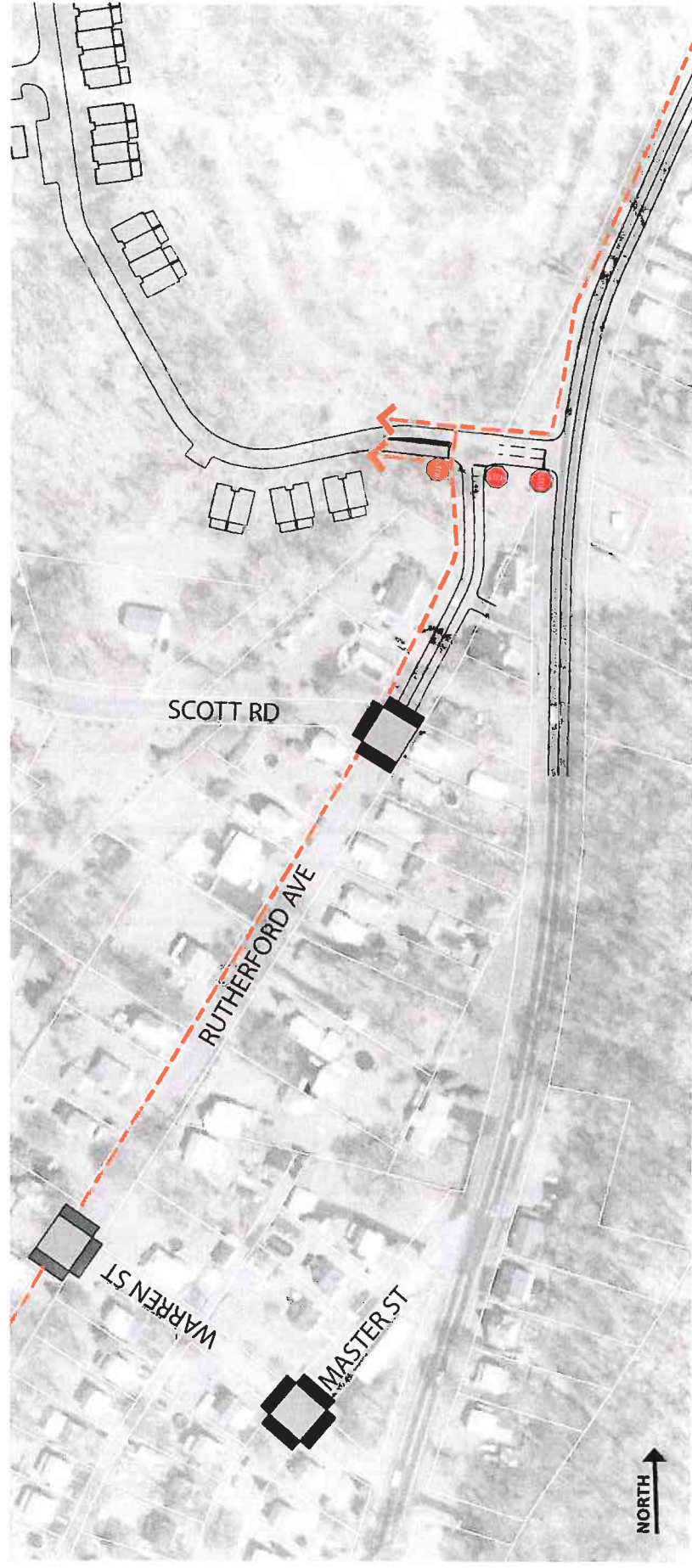


### *North Rutherford Avenue/Route 23*

Rutherford Avenue is currently closed to southbound Route 23 traffic, which diminishes regional access to the Borough's downtown from the north. The Vision Plan proposes re-opening southbound Route 23 into Rutherford Street at the northern end of the study area to restore access to Main Street redevelopment area and support economic development objectives. As shown in **Figure 14**, two T-intersections would replace the existing intersection. Both intersections would be stop-controlled, and a new road could be created leading west into the future Franklin Village development area.

The proposed intersection layout has several benefits over the existing configuration. Foremost, the layout would allow for direct access to Main Street from southbound Route 23. The layout would also improve sight distance for vehicles exiting North Rutherford Avenue. Finally, by pulling the roadway back from Route 23, this arrangement would create more usable retail space and parking for the corner property.

It is important that this connection does not come at the expense of residences along Rutherford Avenue. To this end, the two-intersection arrangement will naturally slow traffic by interrupting the existing free-flow off of Route 23 with a stop-controlled intersection. In addition, speed tables are proposed along North Rutherford Avenue at Scott Road, Warren Street, and Green Street as a measure to slow traffic in the area.



**Figure 14: North Rutherford/Route 23**

## Traffic Calming Features

The Vision Plan contains numerous elements that would help to calm traffic both along Route 23 and at other locations throughout Franklin Borough. Along Route 23, the median turn lane would separate the two travel lanes and present a visual cue to motorists to reduce their speed, especially where it is raised above the roadway surface. Other proposed features along Route 23 such as roundabouts, median pedestrian refuges, and sidewalks will help to change the character of the roadway and create a less hostile environment.

In more residential neighborhoods throughout the Borough, speed tables are proposed at key intersections to calm traffic and reduce speeds. The speed tables at Green Street /Rutherford Avenue, Warren Street/Rutherford Avenue, and Warren Street/Master Street are proposed to help calm traffic from southbound Route 23 onto North Rutherford Avenue. Speed tables are also proposed at Route 23/Walsh Drive, Walsh Drive/Parker Street, and Parker Street/Gunderman Avenue to help calm traffic related to school pick-up and drop-offs.

Small roundabouts or circles are proposed at several neighborhood intersections to calm traffic and minimize paved surfaces. These include the Main Street/Rutherford Avenue intersection and the Washington Avenue/Buckwheat Road intersection. The roundabout at Washington Avenue would be sized to handle school buses and would reduce peak period turning conflicts at the intersection of Washington Avenue and Buckwheat Road.



**Median Crossing**

## Access Management and Site Circulation Concepts

In addition to the overall transportation network, this study also addresses access management and site circulation issues, specifically for properties along Route 23. As parcels along the corridor continue to develop and redevelop, access and circulation issues have significant bearing on safety and congestion problems. In general, the Vision Plan attempts to consolidate driveways, create regularly spaced access points, and shift driveway access away from Route 23 by creating alternative access from side streets and access roads. This would help to reduce the congestion associated with the numerous turning movements generated by uncontrolled driveways. It would also improve safety by reducing the number of conflict points for turning vehicles.

### *Hardyston School Area*

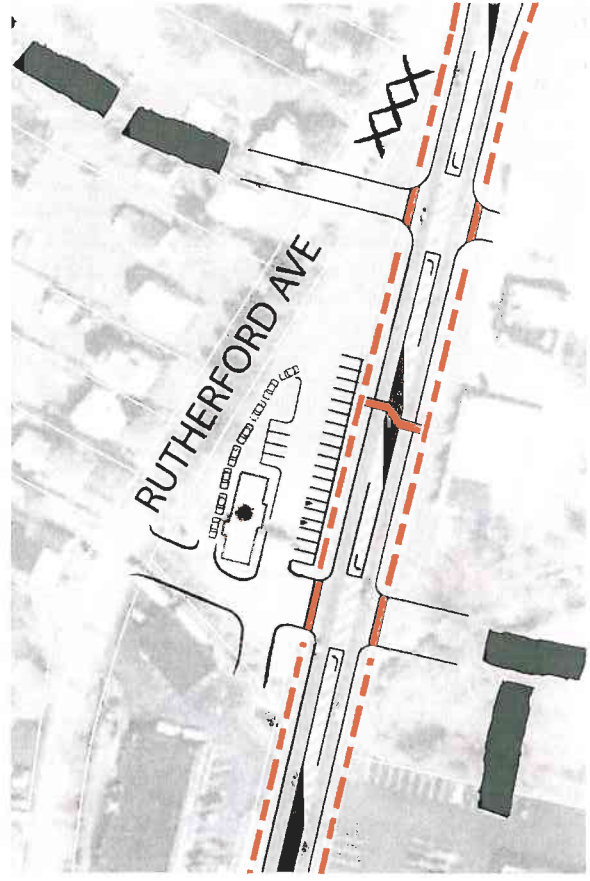
The section of Route 23 between Munsonhurst Road and Franklin Avenue has numerous access points onto the roadway, including driveways from each of the residential properties along southbound Route 23, the Hardyston School, and several commercial properties along northbound Route 23. As shown in **Figure 15**, access to the residential properties would be better managed by creating shared access and parking opportunities behind the buildings. This could be done through a back alley or interconnected parking lot. Across the street at Hardyston School, rear access from the Munsonhurst Extension could allow the existing driveways along Route 23 to be reconfigured or partially closed.

### *Starbucks Area*

**Figure 16** shows a revised access and site circulation plan in the vicinity of the proposed Starbucks along southbound Route 23. The overall concept calls for providing rear access to Starbucks from Rutherford Avenue and shared access with the property to the south. New driveways should be aligned across Route 23 to avoid overlapping left turns. As redevelopment occurs along the east side of Route 23 across from the Starbucks, a mid-block pedestrian crossing could be added to reduce walking distances and facilitate pedestrian movements between the retail uses.



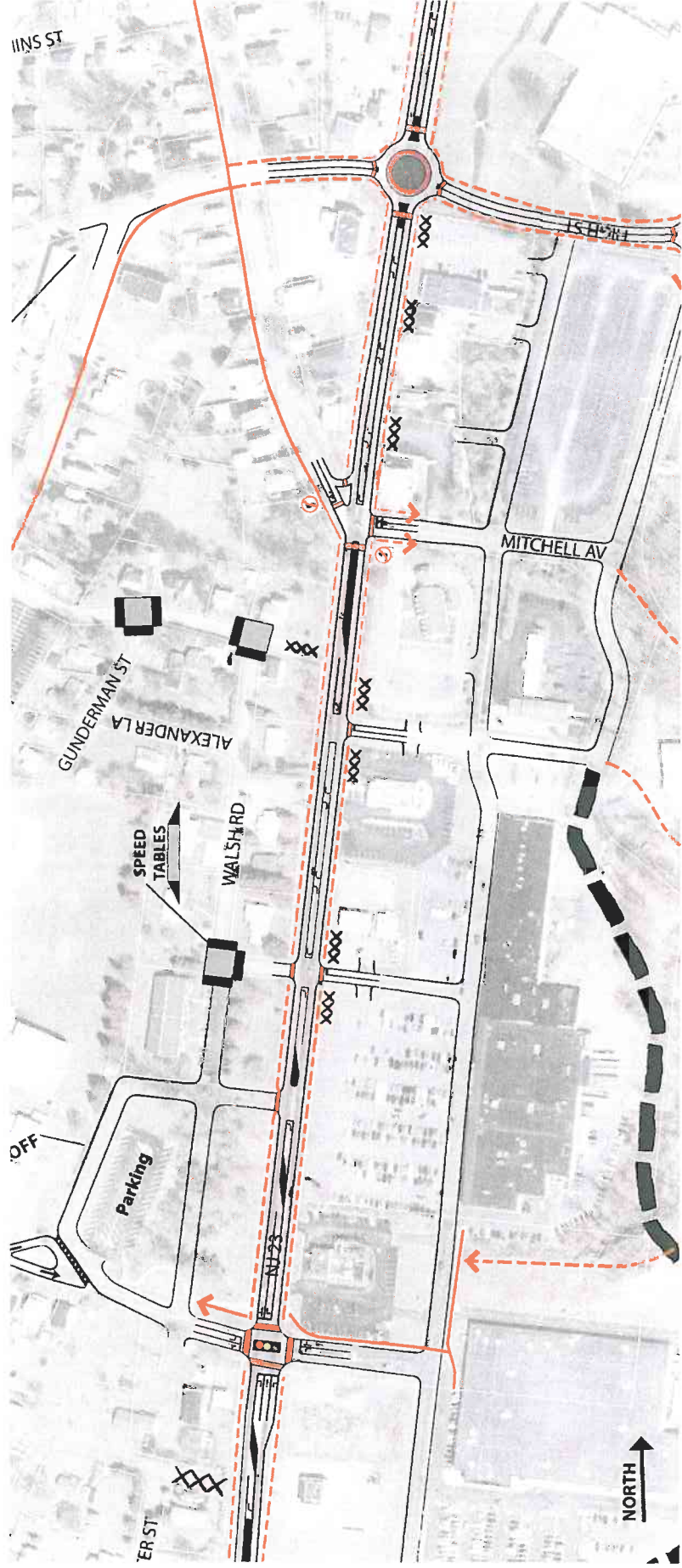
**Figure 15: Hardyston School Area**



**Figure 16: Starbucks Area**

### *Walmart/Shop-Rite Area*

The section of Route 23 between Washington Avenue and High Street is characterized by numerous driveways from the commercial properties along northbound Route 23. At the same time, this segment has the highest density of crashes in the study area. This high crash rate highlights a need to close and/or re-organize these driveways. A new north-south access road east of Route 23 connected to Route 23 with multiple east-west links is shown in **Figure 17**. By providing rear access to the commercial properties, this system of access roads would allow for the closure of driveways directly onto Route 23. Fewer driveways would result in decreased turning movements onto Route 23 from these commercial properties. The new roadway system would redistribute local traffic off of Route 23 and onto access roads, thereby increasing mobility and reducing congestion in this area.



**Figure 17: Walmart/Shop-Rite Area**

### Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

Franklin Borough submitted a Safe Routes to School Application to NJDOT in January, 2007 with the aim of receiving funding for specific pedestrian and bicycle improvement projects. Although the Borough's application was not selected, the three projects included in the application remain candidates for improving access and safety for school children in Franklin. Each project is described below and a preliminary cost estimate is listed:

#### *Shared Use Path between Auche Drive and School Plaza*

The first infrastructure project involves construction of a paved shared-use path connecting Franklin Elementary School to the residential neighborhoods south of Washington Avenue. Although some children currently use this connection, it becomes inoperable during inclement weather and is difficult for bicycles because it is not paved. The proposed 800 foot long asphalt path would begin at Auche Drive, run west between two houses and then north along the fence line of an existing school field, and then connect to School Plaza near the entrance to Franklin Elementary School.

The entire length of the Shared-Use path falls within public right-of-way that is owned by either Franklin Borough or the Franklin School District. The path would need to be at least eight feet wide so that it could be maintained and cleared of snow by existing school equipment. The school field is currently being used for soccer and field hockey practices, and the paved path will not interfere with these athletic uses.

#### Potential Connection Across School Field

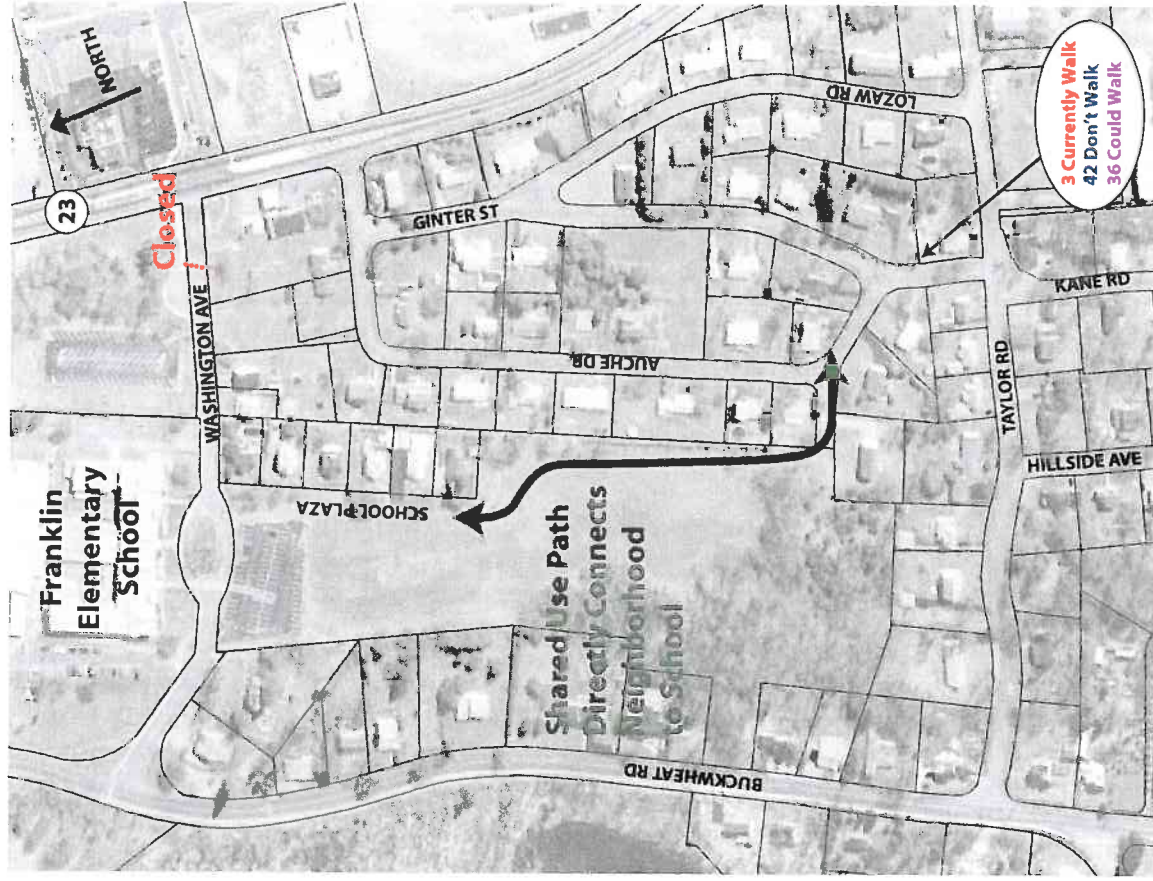


Figure 18: Shared Use Path between Auche Drive and School Plaza

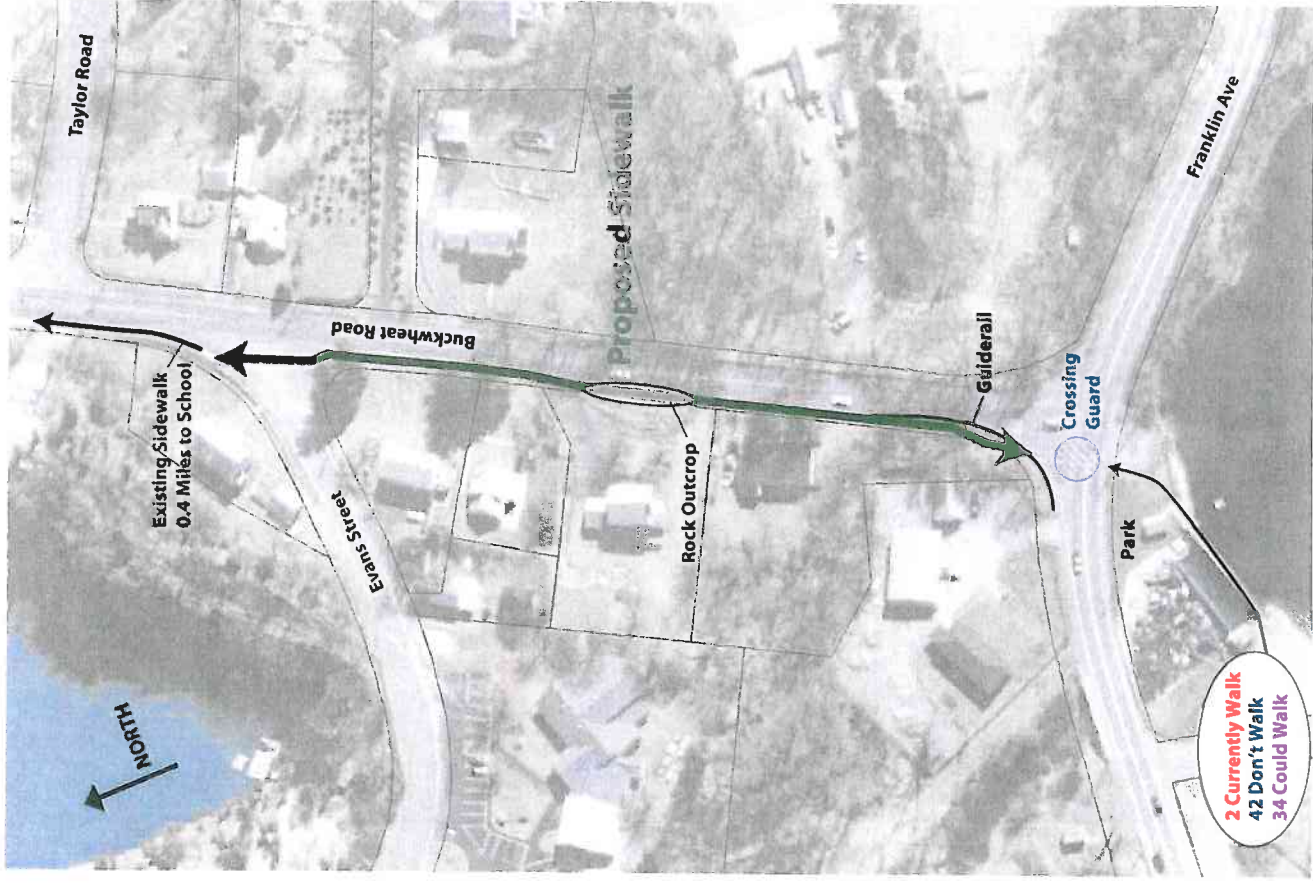
### *New Sidewalk along Buckwheat Road*

The second infrastructure project would add 600 feet of new sidewalk along the west side of Buckwheat Road between Evans Street and Franklin Avenue. Sidewalk currently exists on the west side of Buckwheat leading from Evans Street north to Franklin Elementary School. There is a crossing guard at the intersection of Franklin Avenue and Buckwheat Road, but no sidewalk for approximately 600 feet between this intersection and Evans Street. The new sidewalk would complete the pedestrian connection between Franklin Elementary School and the crossing at Franklin Avenue.

The sidewalk should have a minimum width of 5 feet and should be raised at least 8" above the roadway. Based on Sussex County parcel data, it appears that no right-of-way acquisition would be required. However, there is a parcel along the west side of Buckwheat Road with a rock outcropping that infringes into public right-of-way. To build the sidewalk, approximately 90 linear feet of rock would need to be broken up and removed using a backhoe. Further south, there is approximately 150 feet of guide rail along the roadway. This guide rail would need to be pushed back at least five feet to make room for the new sidewalk.



**Buckwheat Road approaching Franklin Avenue**



**Figure 19: New Sidewalk along Buckwheat Road**

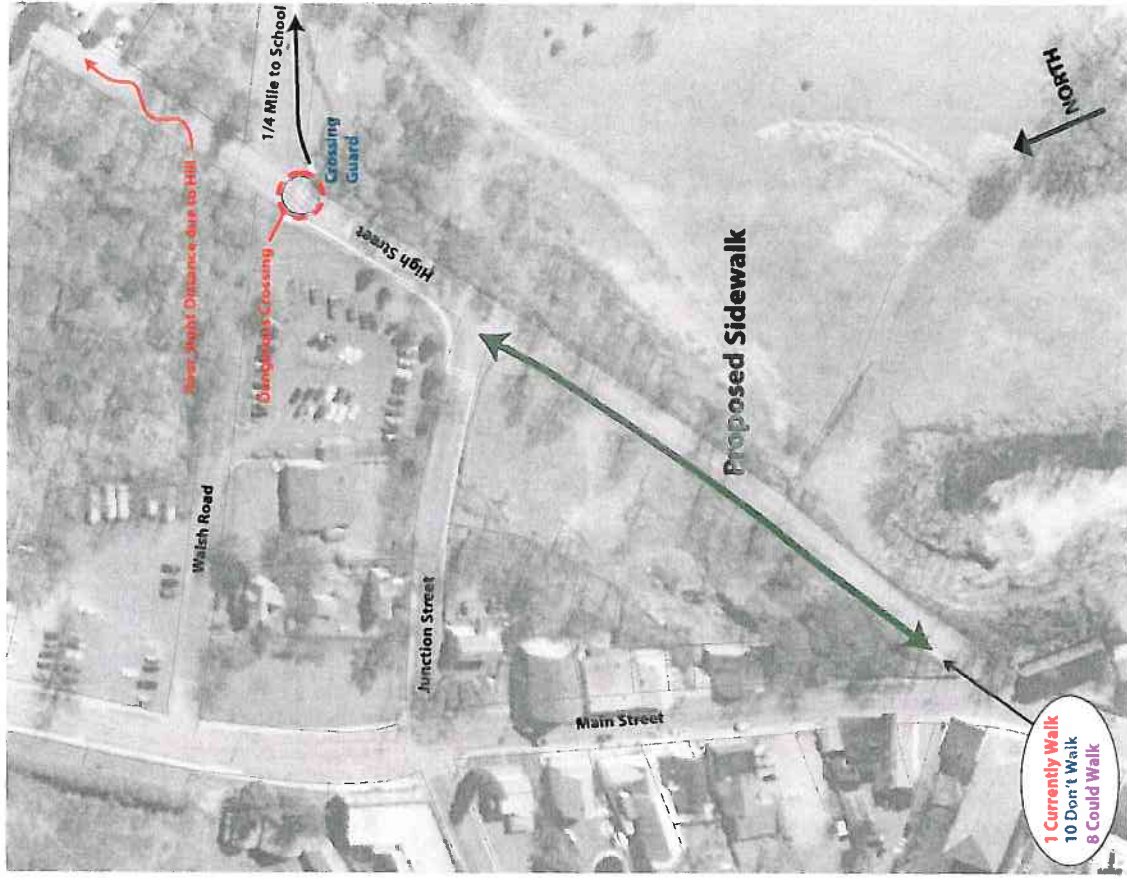
### *New Sidewalk along High Street*

The third infrastructure project would add 550 feet of new sidewalk along the west side of High Street between Main Street and Junction Street. Sidewalk currently exists on Main Street and on the west side of High Street between Junction Street and Parker Street. There is a crossing guard at the intersection of High Street and Parker Street, but no sidewalk for approximately 550 feet between Main Street and Junction Street. The new sidewalk would complete the pedestrian connection between Main Street near Borough Hall and the crossing at Parker Street.

The sidewalk should have a minimum width of 5 feet and should be raised at least 8" above the roadway. Based on Sussex County parcel data, it appears that a right-of-way easement would be required along the west side of High Street between Main Street and Parker Street to install the sidewalk. There is currently a fence along the roadway through this stretch. The fence would need to be pushed back at least five feet to make room for the new sidewalk.



**Fence along High Street, No Sidewalk**



**Figure 20: New Sidewalk along High Street**

### Alternative Transportation Modes

The Park & Ride initiatives are intended to provide opportunities for local residents to park along Route 23 and then car pool, vanpool or ride the bus to other locations around Sussex County. Over time, this could include NJT bus services outside of the County. **Figure 21** identifies potential Park & Ride locations within Franklin Borough. These locations primarily consist of existing large parking lots within a short walk of bus stops along Route 23 that could potentially be shared with neighboring uses.

As a corollary, the County and Borough should investigate the feasibility of extending NJT Route 194 approximately three miles along Route 23 from its terminus at the Stockholm Park & Ride to Franklin Borough. As an established population center in Sussex County, Franklin may be a good source of additional ridership, especially given the connection to New York City. An extension into Franklin would strengthen the Park & Ride concept, while the extra route length would be a relatively small percentage of the overall route length.

**Figure 21** shows opportunities within the Borough to extend the trail system along abandoned or active rail right-of-ways. Potential trails include a north-south route on the western edge of the Borough and an east-west route near Munsonhurst Road. The figure also shows off-road trail connections that have the potential to significantly enhance pedestrian mobility. In some instances, these paths would drastically reduce walking distances. For instance, a walkway connecting the condominiums along Independence Way to the shopping center just south of Mitchell Avenue would reduce walking distances from over ½ mile to under ¼ mile. Similarly, a path connecting Main Street/High Street area to Franklin School would reduce walking distances for schoolchildren. In both instances, steep grades would most likely necessitate the use of stairs and/or ramps.

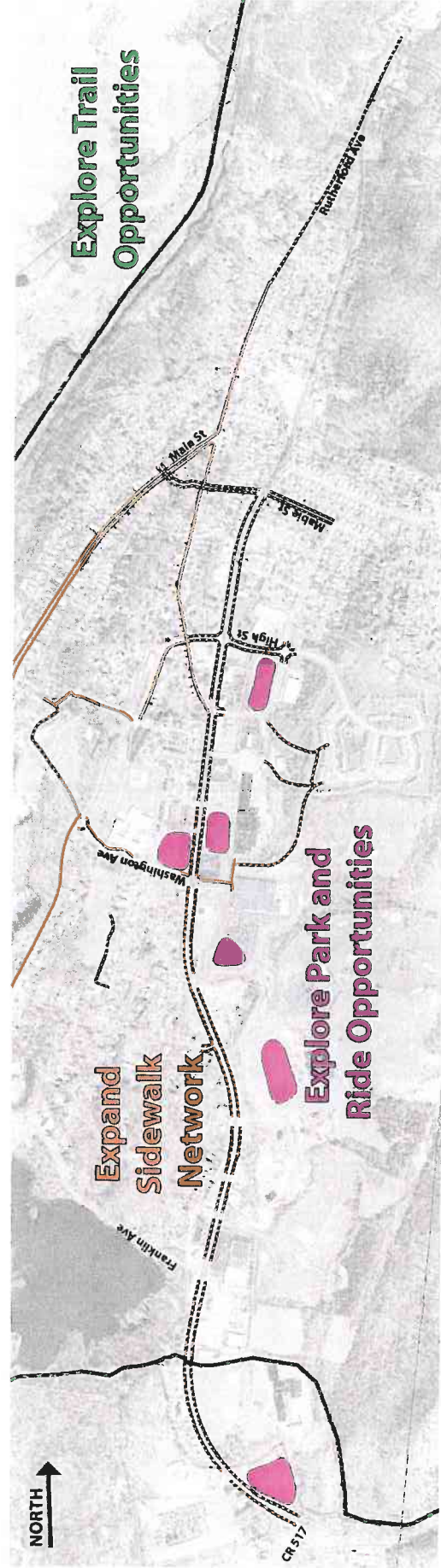


Figure 21: Alternative Transportation Modes



## Land Use Discussion

In the United States, there has been a growing recognition of the relationship between land use and transportation among politicians, planners, and citizens. When coordinated, transportation infrastructure and land use policies can create a positive framework within which communities can grow. This framework can influence economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social equity.

Across the country, communities are beginning to implement innovative “Smart Growth” ideas for meeting the needs of their residents; whether for transportation, housing, shopping, or recreation. Better coordination between transportation and land use allows communities to plan more comprehensively. This way they can more effectively provide for economic development, housing, commercial and retail uses, and for providing education and other public services, all in the context of accessible transportation.

The development of a multi-modal approach to transportation planning strengthens the transportation system by providing redundancy and reducing demand on any single mode.

Increased use of alternative transportation can also improve the environmental quality of an area by reducing air pollution and conserving open space. Further, the presence of multiple transportation modes in a community can offer much-needed alternatives for some populations, including children, the elderly, the disabled, and low-income residents.

The coordination of land use and transportation requires continual assessment of how land use decisions affect the transportation system. In turn, the transportation sector should be aware of the effects the transportation systems may have on land use development demand, choices, and patterns. The relationship is symbiotic. Land uses produce trips on the transportation system, and transportation infrastructure affects land values, possibly inducing development.



## Highway Commercial Development

Coordinating (or integrating) land use and transportation planning is considered one facet of “Smart Growth,” potentially leading to a more sustainable development pattern. This approach tends to foster a balance of mixed uses, (including housing, educational, employment, recreational, retail, and service) and recognizes the importance of spatial or geographic proximity, layout, and design. The consideration of long-term and broader impacts of land use decisions on our natural and human-made environment, including the supporting transportation systems and facilities, is critical to successfully implementing these “Smart Growth” concepts.

## Chapter 5: Recommended Action/Implementation Plan

An Action Plan (Table 3) was developed to summarize the potential staging and preliminary costs of the recommended initiatives and concepts. This Action Plan will serve as a guide for advancing the Vision Plan. For each element, the Action Plan lists the lead and support implementation agencies and an approximate timeframe and cost. Although listed under different categories, many of the recommendations are complementary and are meant to be evaluated comprehensively as part of the overall Vision Plan. For example, most of the intersection improvements go hand-in-hand with the three-lane section for Route 23 and network expansion concepts.

To develop preliminary costs for the overall program, the individual recommendations were divided into the categories outlined in Chapter 4. Order-of-magnitude costs were then established for each recommendation. Securing funding for plan elements and advancing projects from the concept stage to engineering design and construction will be critical next steps. Potential federal, state, and local funding sources are identified below:

### Table 3: Recommended Action Plan

Action	Lead	Support	Timeframe	Cost
<b>Network Expansion</b>				
Munsonhurst Extension	County/Local	NJDOT	M/L	\$\$\$
High Street Connector	Local	NJDOT	M	\$
Mabie/Lehigh Street Extension	Local		M	\$
<b>Corridor Improvements</b>				
Route 23 Three-Lane Section	NJDOT	County/Local	M	\$\$\$
Route 23 Pedestrian Amenities	NJDOT	Local	M	\$
<b>Intersection Improvements</b>				
Munsonhurst Road/Route 23 (Phase I)	NJDOT	County/Local	S	\$
Munsonhurst Road/Route 23 (long-term)	County	NJDOT/Local	L	\$
Franklin Avenue/Route 23	County	NJDOT/Local	M	\$
Weis Market Driveway/Route 23	Local	NJDOT	M	\$
Washington Avenue/Route 23	Local/NJDOT		M/L	\$
North Rutherford Avenue/Mitchell Drive	Local/NJDOT		M	\$
North Rutherford Avenue/Route 23	Local	NJDOT	S	\$
<b>Traffic Calming Features</b>				
Neighborhood Speed Tables	Local		S	\$
Main/Rutherford Circle	Local		S	\$
Washington/Buckwheat Circle	Local		S	\$
<b>Access Management/Site Circulation</b>				
Hardyston School Area	Local	NJDOT	S/M	\$
Starbucks Area	Local	NJDOT	M	\$
Walmart/Shop-Rite Area	Local	NJDOT	M	\$
<b>Safe Routes to School</b>				
Shared Use Path	Local		S	\$
Sidewalk along Buckwheat Road	Local		S	\$
Sidewalk along High Street	Local		S	\$
<b>Alternative Transportation Modes</b>				
Improved Transit Service - Studies	NJT	County/Local	S	\$
Bicycle/Pedestrian Recreation Trails	County/Local	NJDOT	M	\$

### **National Recreational Trails Program**

The National Recreational Trails Program, a part of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), provides monies to states for developing trails and trail facilities. It is the only funding available wholly for the use of trail projects. At the federal level, the program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration, and originates from federal gas taxes attributed to off-highway vehicle use. In 2009, New Jersey will receive approximately \$1 million for trail projects. These funds will be made available to federal, state, county and local governments, and non-profit agencies. New Jersey's program is administered by the Office of Natural Lands Management in the Division of Parks and Forestry.

### **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) is responsible for capital programming through an annual Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP lists the projects and programs scheduled for available funds. It contains all federal and state funding for surface transportation projects in the NJTPA region. Route 23 is eligible for project funding through the TIP. However, individual projects would need to compete for funds with all other needs and priorities in the NJTPA region.

### **Safe Routes to School Program**

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a federal, state and local effort to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school. Another major goal of the program is to increase bicycle, pedestrian and traffic safety. Successful Safe Routes to School programs usually includes one or more of these approaches: engineering, enforcement, education, and encouragement.

The goal of New Jersey's Safe Routes to School Program is to assist New Jersey communities in developing and implementing projects and programs that encourage walking and bicycling to school while enhancing the safety of these trips. Local and regional government, schools and community non-profit organizations ready, willing and able to implement SRTS initiatives are eligible to apply for funding. In 2008, NJDOT awarded \$4 million in federal SRTS funds, providing grants for projects in 33 municipalities, in amounts ranging from \$8,000 to \$300,000.

### **NJDOT Problem Statements**

A problem statement document can be submitted directly to NJDOT for specific areas of concern. NJDOT evaluates these problem statements and decides whether or not they will be pursued at the state level. This course of action is particularly effective with short term and/or low cost projects that lend themselves to rapid design. The Phase I improvements at the intersection of Munsonhurst Road and Route 23 would be a candidate problem statement.

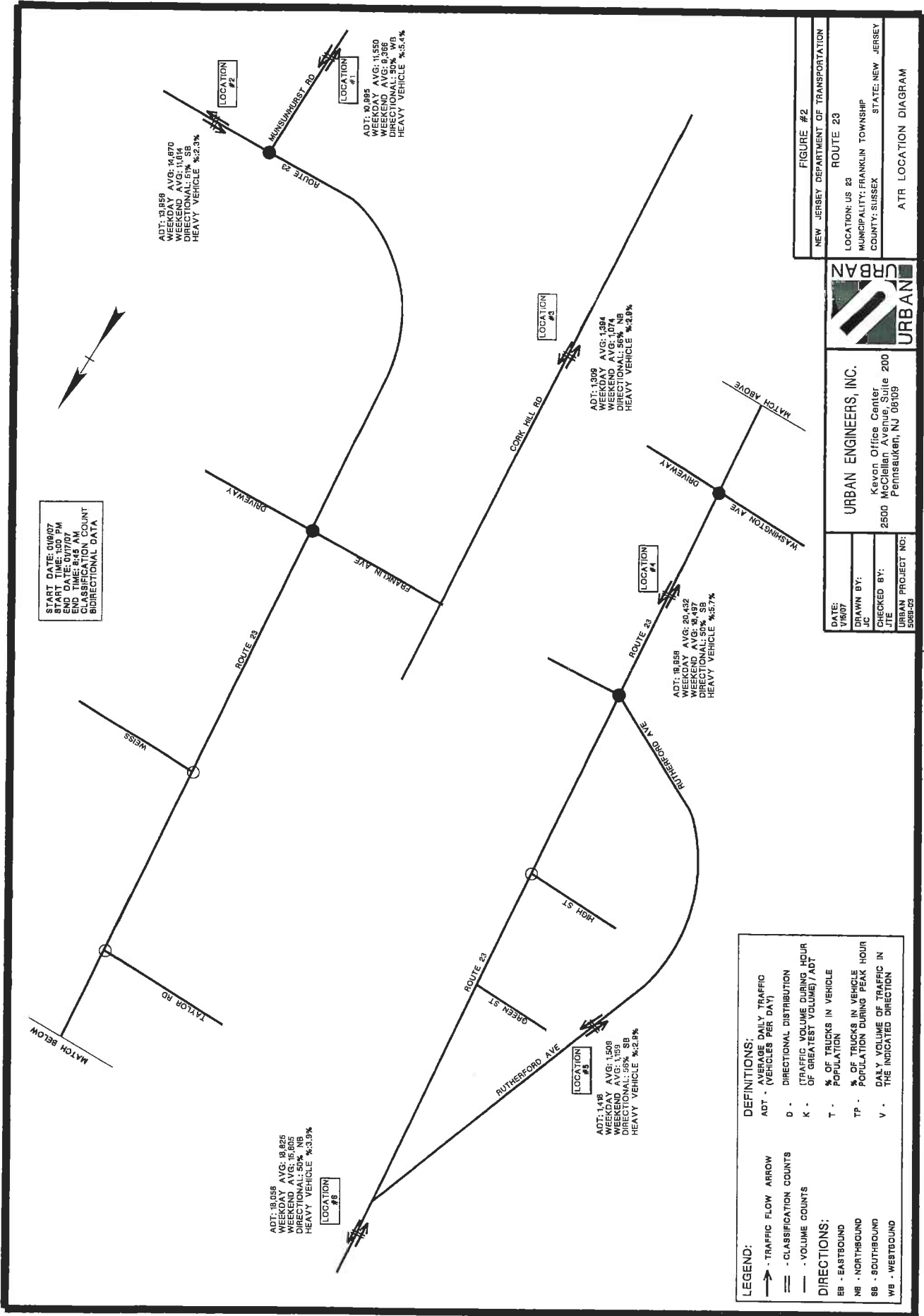
### **NJDOT Centers of Place Program**

At the state level, NJDOT's Centers of Place program assists municipalities who have participated in implementing the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP). Eligibility for this program is a benefit of becoming plan endorsed by the Office of Smart Growth. The program provides an opportunity to apply for funds to support non-traditional transportation improvements that advance municipal growth management objectives. Eligible projects include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, restoration or historic aesthetic treatment of transportation, traffic calming, signage, parking and circulation management, landscaping/beautification of transportation related facilities, and rehabilitation of transportation structures.

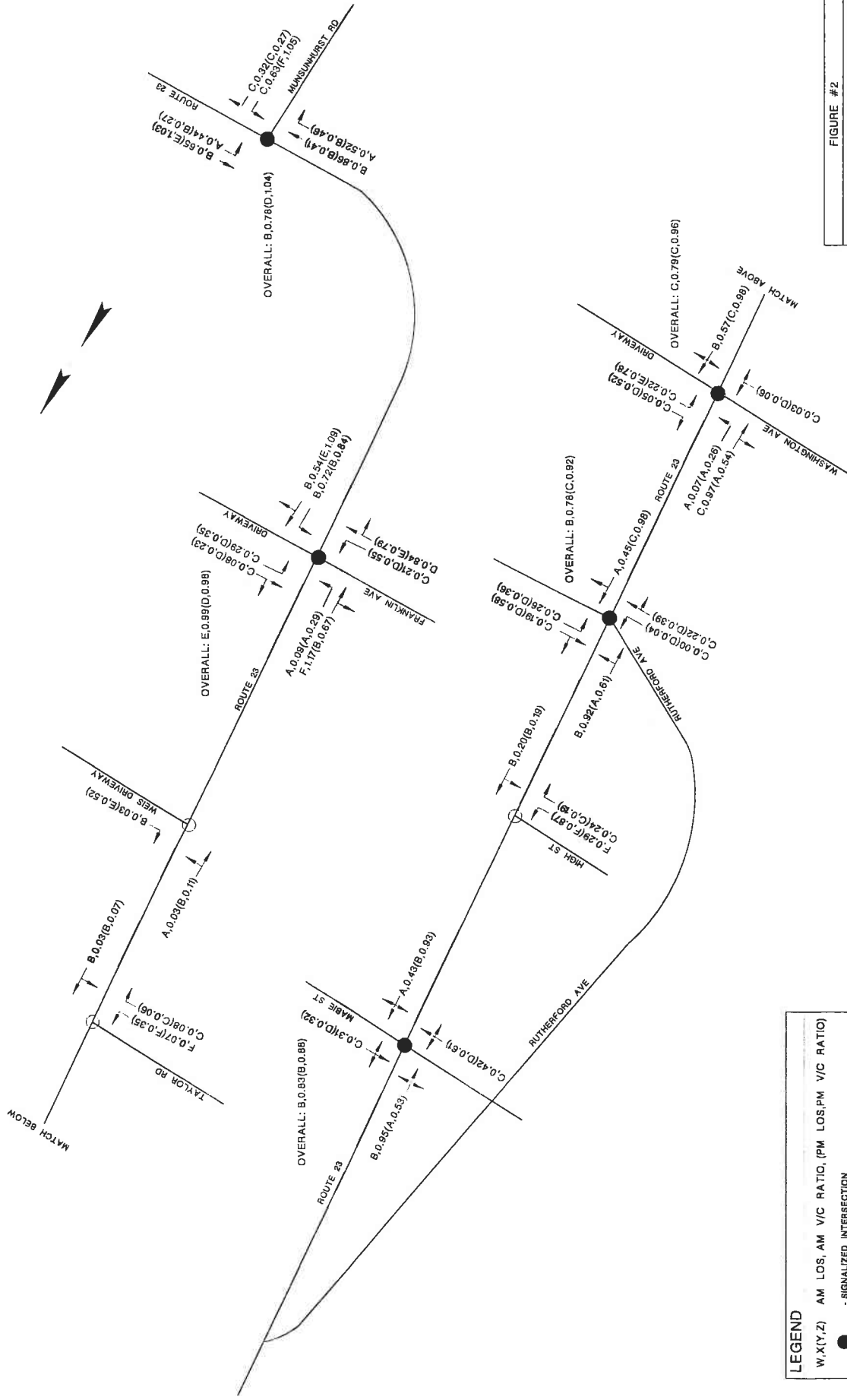
### **Local Cost-Sharing**

At the local level, cost-sharing with developers interested in development or redevelopment along the Route 23 corridor is another potential means to realize portions of the plan. As properties develop or redevelop, developers should be encouraged to make access management, site circulation, and pedestrian improvements in accordance with the Vision Plan. Local ordinances should be modified to require the installation of sidewalk along road frontage for new projects.

# Appendix A: Traffic Volume Summaries



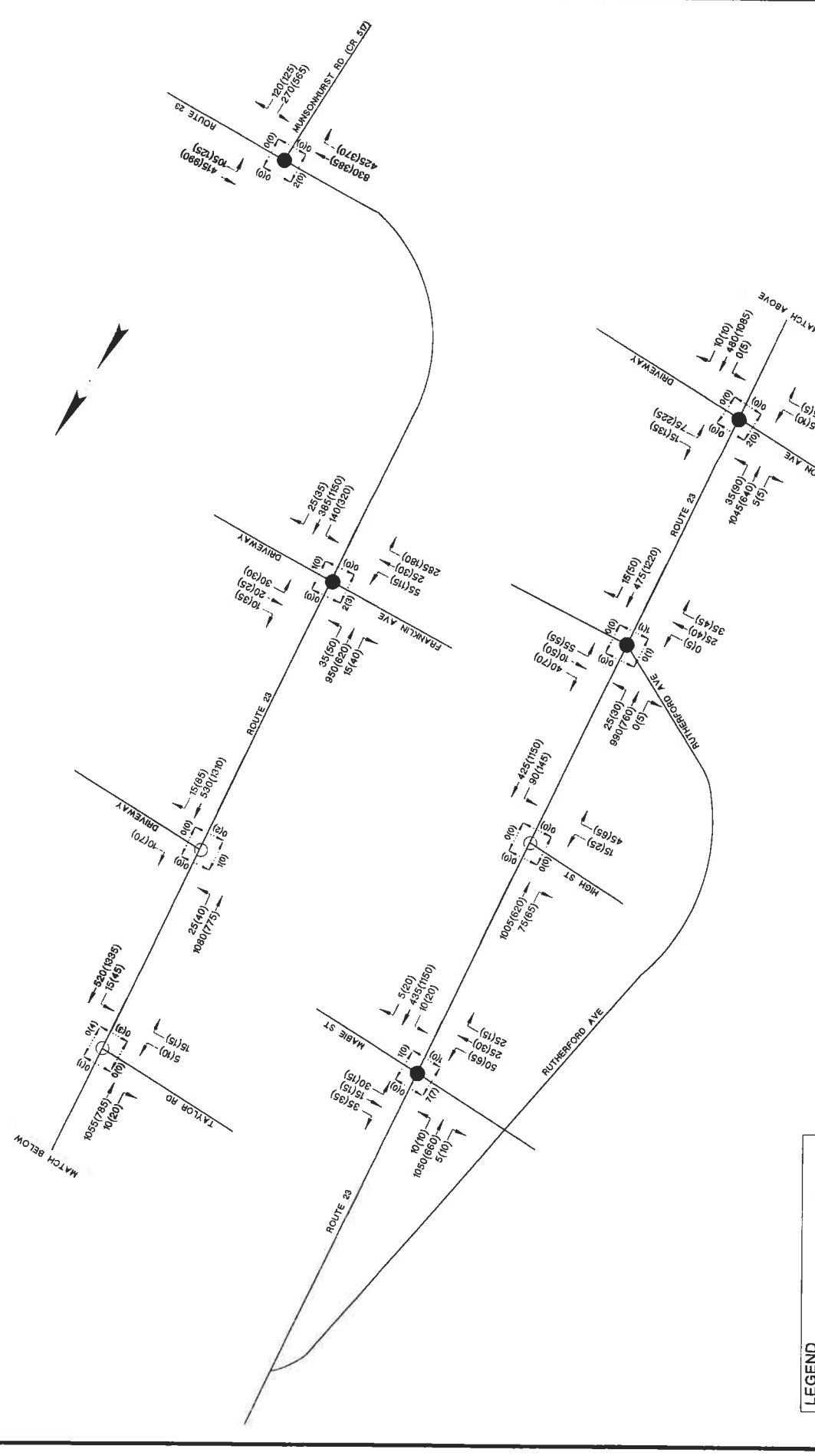
ATR Counts



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
 FIGURE #2  
 ROUTE 23  
 LOCATION: US 23  
 MUNICIPALITY: FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP  
 COUNTY: SUSSEX STATE: NEW JERSEY  
 2007 SEASONALLY ADJUSTED  
 LEVEL OF SERVICE



URBAN ENGINEERS, INC.  
 Keyon Office Center  
 McClellan Avenue, Suite 200  
 Pennsauken, NJ 08109  
 URBAN PROJECT NO: 5088-03  
 DATE: 3/20/2007  
 DRAWN BY: JC  
 CHECKED BY: JTE  
 URBAN PROJECT NO: 5088-03



**LEGEND**  
 XXX[YY][ZZZ] - AM[MDDAY][PM]  
 PEAK HOUR TRAFFIC VOLUMES  
 U[UV][W][WW] - AM[MDDAY][PM]  
 PEAK HOUR PEDESTRIAN VOLUMES  
 BOTH DIRECTIONS  
 ○ - SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION  
 ● - UNSIGNALIZED INTERSECTION  
 → - TRAFFIC FLOW ARROW

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
 FIGURE  
 ROUTE 23  
 LOCATION: US 23  
 MUNICIPALITY: FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP  
 COUNTY: SUSSEX STATE: NEW JERSEY  
 SEASONALLY ADJUSTED PEAK HOURS  
 TURNING MOVEMENT COUNTS

**URBAN ENGINEERS, INC.**  
 Kevon Office Center  
 2500 McClellan Avenue, Suite 200  
 Permsbauken, NJ 08109

DATE: 6/2/07  
 DRAWN BY: JC  
 CHECKED BY: JTE  
 URBAN PROJECT NO: 5085-03

**Turning Volumes 15%**



## Appendix B: Roundabout Operations

### Roundabouts

Roundabouts are increasingly being used where feasible to calm traffic and increase safety and efficiency at intersection locations. A roundabout is a yield controlled device that can be used in place of a traditional four way intersection. It typically is designed for 25 miles per hour or less, and can be single or multi-lane, depending on traffic volume. With a roundabout, traffic flows with fewer stops, providing air quality benefits as well.

The roundabout design consists of a center island and four approaches with splitter islands and marked pedestrian crosswalks (Fig B1). Splitter islands channel vehicles and provide a safe haven for pedestrians as they cross the road. The center island is mountable to accommodate emergency access vehicles and trucks.

### Navigating a Roundabout

Cars enter a roundabout and have the right of way (Fig B2). Vehicles entering the roundabout must yield to vehicles in the roundabout.

A typical intersection requires that the pedestrian consider motor vehicles entering and crossing the crosswalk from a number of different and simultaneous directions (Fig B3). A roundabout allows a pedestrian to observe motor vehicles from one direction while they cross the first half of the crosswalk. Once on the splitter island, the pedestrian can pause, look in the opposite direction for motor vehicles and then cross when safe.

Bike lanes are not recommended in a roundabout. Instead, bicyclists can negotiate a roundabout as either a vehicle or a pedestrian. Bicyclists who enter a roundabout as a vehicle continue within the right of way, or they may use the sidewalk and stop and walk their bicycle across the crosswalk as a pedestrian.

Figure B1: Roundabout Design Elements

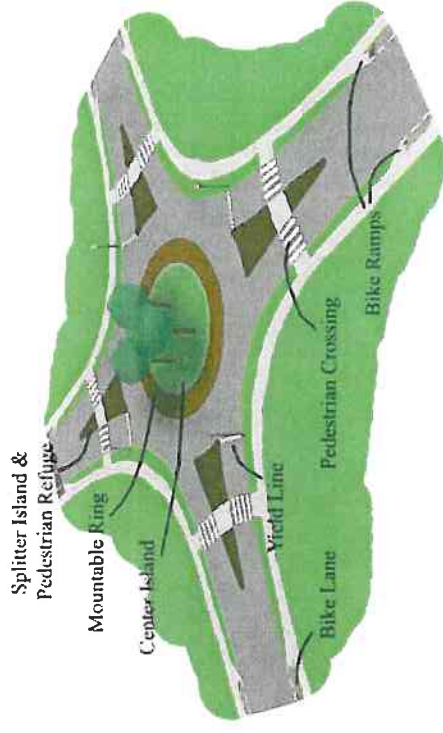
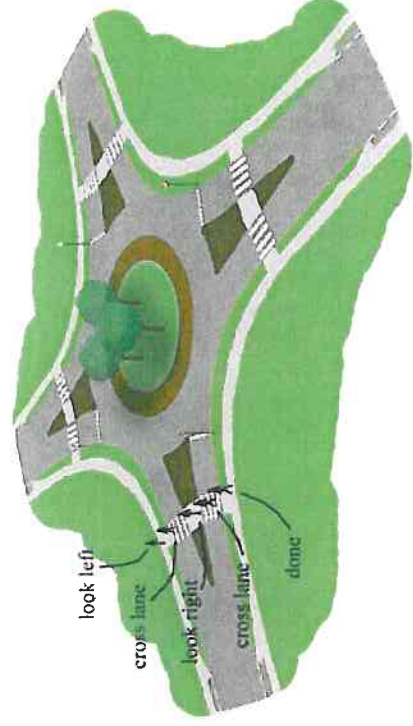


Figure B2: Vehicle Operation in Roundabout



Figure B3: Pedestrians in Roundabout

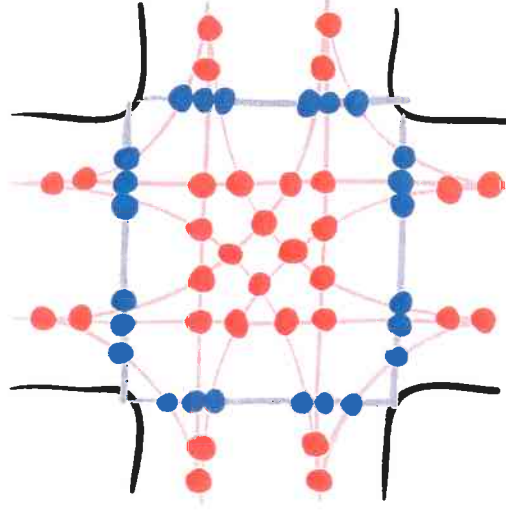


### *Intersection Safety*

Studies have shown that roundabouts when properly designed are safer than a typical four way intersection. Figure 13 shows a typical four way intersection, which has 32 conflict points. These conflict points are both high speed and high angle impact. A roundabout, by design, contains fewer conflict points, and at lower speeds and lower angle impacts (Fig B4). This leads to a 75% reduction in vehicle conflicts.

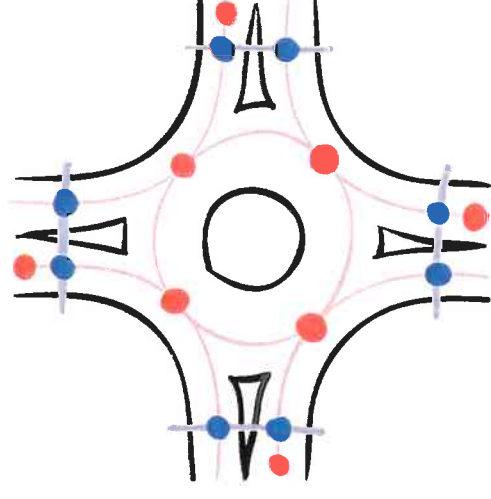
Figure B4: Intersection Conflict Points

## Typical Intersection



- 32 Vehicle to Vehicle Conflict
- 24 Vehicle to Pedestrian Conflicts

## Typical Roundabout



- 8 Vehicle to Vehicle Conflict
- 8 Vehicle to Pedestrian Conflicts