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"Proposed Bergen County bus rapid transit routes narrowed to three"

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HACKENSACK " A **study** on bringing **bus rapid transit** to **Bergen County** has culled a list of potential routes down to three.

They are:

* Montvale Park and Ride to Secaucus Junction, with stops at Paramus Park Mall, Bergen Community College, Garden State Plaza, a future Summit Avenue bus stop in Hackensack, the Meadowlands and Harmon Meadow.

* Paramus Park to Secaucus Junction, with stops at Bergen Town Center, downtown Hackensack, the Meadowlands and the Bergen Community College Lyndhurst campus. The downtown Hackensack stops include Hackensack University Medical Center, the Essex Street train station, the Bergen County Courthouse and the Hackensack bus terminal.

* Paterson's Broadway Bus Terminal to Englewood Hospital, with stops at St. Joseph's Medical Center, Garden State Plaza, downtown Hackensack and Overpeck County Park.

Bergen County, NJ Transit and a team of consultants presented the routes Thursday night at the Bergen Community College Hackensack campus. Their aim, said Joseph Barr, a consultant with Parsons Brinckerhoff, is to bring faster, more reliable and easier to use bus service to the county.

The team estimates the three routes will carry about 9,000 riders a day.

The routes focus on travel within the county rather than to New York City. There are two reasons for that, Barr said. One, many bus routes in **Bergen County** are already New York oriented. Two, the Port Authority Bus Terminal is already over capacity.

"There's really no ability to put more buses into the Port Authority Bus Terminal," he said.

The latest presentation cut the number of routes under consideration from five to three. Englewood residents complained that one of the routes, Englewood Hospital to Secaucus Junction, missed the cut.

"The one part of **Bergen County** that is not served is the Northern Valley," Adam Brown, director of the Englewood Development Corporation, said.

Residents of parts of Englewood have been left with limited bus service since Rockland Coaches stopped service through the area earlier this year.

Eugene Clements, a resident of the 3rd Ward of Englewood, said his neighborhood sees very little city-bound bus service during rush hour.

"I was very disappointed to not see more possible routes in the Northern Valley," he said.

Brown, who had been pushing for the team to include the Englewood route for months, said the destinations chosen by the **study** team are already well served.

"We don't need to get to the Garden State Plaza," he said. "We already have buses that go the Garden State Plaza."

Barr said the eliminated routes may be considered for future bus rapid transit service.

"Just because we eliminated a service from nine (routes) to five or going down from five to three doesn't mean those routes don't have potential," he said.

"Bus rapid transit" can mean any number of features. In Newark, the Go-Bus service offers express service with limited stops.

Potential features for a **Bergen County bus rapid transit** system could include exclusive bus lanes, allowing buses to drive on the shoulder and giving buses preferential treatment at traffic lights.

The **study** is expected to finish in early 2015.

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