

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Passaic County Strategic Infrastructure Investment Plan identifies Priority Investment Areas (PIAs) where public investment in transportation improvements can be implemented strategically to spur private investment, development, and redevelopment with the goal of creating more economically competitive, equitable, and sustainable communities. The PIAs are intended to promote job growth in Passaic County and achieve equity goals to address the needs of Passaic County's underserved communities. The Plan serves as a roadmap to developing funding strategies, partnership opportunities, and value-added policy recommendations.

Five objectives were established for the study:

1. Engage and collaborate with study partners, stakeholders, and the public
2. Establish agreement around strategic priorities and vision
3. Identify five PIAs
4. Consider strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints
5. Recommend equitable, feasible, and sustainable transportation investment strategies to support the PIAs

This study was completed with support from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), with technical guidance from state and regional agencies and local governments, and public and community input via stakeholder meetings, public meetings, and a web-based mapping tool. Engagement included:

- **A Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC)** – comprised of representatives from Passaic County, the NJTPA, and various state and regional agencies. The SAC met three times during the study's process and provided input, oversight, and direction for the study.
- **Public Engagement** – virtual public meetings were held at three milestones of the study. Spanish translation was provided on-demand at each meeting.
- **Stakeholder Outreach** – the project team met with host municipalities, major employers, and other key stakeholders to reach consensus on the PIAs and the recommendations for each PIA.

Stakeholders and the public made valuable contributions to the study, including sharing information about relevant documents and other studies related to the PIAs and identifying additional issues and problem areas, including flooding and poor pavement condition in specific locations.

In addition to the stakeholder and public outreach, the study also:

- Evaluated **socio-economic and market trends** to identify the County's economic strengths and constraints, growth industries, and the needs of underserved communities.
- Assessed data to define, select, and analyze the **PIAs**, including land use, crash analysis, multimodal connections, safety, network connectivity, proximity to public transit, projected growth in population and employment, environmental issues, geographic and circulation constraints, land development projects, and recent public and private infrastructure investments.
- Selected **transportation strategies** focused on low-cost, short-and mid-term recommendations to improve circulation and safety while spurring economic development. These are detailed in the implementation plan and matrix.

Data drove the selection criteria of preliminary PIAs. Eight candidate PIAs were identified throughout the County based on the presence of variables capable of supporting growth, such as public transit, a mix of nearby land uses, recent public and private investments, and industry and market trends. Population and employment projections from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority was also analyzed. These geographic areas presented the appropriate conditions to benefit from transportation infrastructure improvements. Once these areas were identified, they were reviewed for all existing and planned transportation infrastructure.

The socio-economic and market analysis findings are included below:

- **Land Use** – Much of the northern half of the County (West Milford, Ringwood, Wanaque, and Bloomingdale) comprises forest, recreational land, and other greenspace. This includes a large portion of the Highlands region. Besides these natural land uses, portions of each municipality are used for medium-density residential units (including cluster developments). Much of the County’s southern half includes medium-density and high-density residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
- **Population** – The highest existing and projected population densities are found in Paterson and Passaic. Moderate densities are found in parts of Paterson, Passaic, Clifton, and Haledon. The lowest population densities are found in the northern half of the County, in West Milford, Ringwood, Wanaque, and Bloomingdale. The County’s three largest municipalities (Paterson, Clifton, and Passaic) are each projected to gain at least 10,000 residents between 2022 and 2050. Prospect Park’s total population is expected to grow by the highest percentage (36 percent) during the same period.
- **Employment** – Most (52 percent) jobs in Passaic County are in the Service industry, with smaller but significant portions in Retail and Manufacturing. Compared to the State, Passaic County’s employment has significantly above average concentrations in Manufacturing, Construction, Retail Trade, Utilities, Other Services (except Public Administration), and Health Care and Social Assistance. The only industries that experienced growth of more than 10 percent from 2017 to 2021 are Utilities (13.3 percent) and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (13.9 percent).
- **Equity Assessment** – Municipalities with the most underserved communities are found in Clifton, Passaic, and Paterson. Though these municipalities are home to the highest number of underrepresented communities, all municipalities except Bloomingdale have underrepresented communities.
- **Market Trends** – Retail, logistics, and other industries are growing; there is also significant growth in fields requiring an advanced degree, including the medical field. High-density housing is expanding into more suburban communities, including Hawthorne and Wayne.
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- **Planned and Approved Developments** – There were 217 site plan and subdivision applications submitted to the Passaic County Department of Planning and Economic Development between 2021-2023. Cumulatively, these applications proposed 7,742 residential units, and a mix of retail, commercial, and industrial uses accounting for 17 million square feet. Nearly a quarter of this development is in each of Paterson, Wayne, and Clifton, respectively.

Passaic County Strategic Infrastructure Investment Plan: Priority Investment Areas

Of the eight candidate PIAs selected based on the previously mentioned criteria, five were prioritized for further analysis as part of this Passaic County Strategic Infrastructure Investment Plan.

The five selected PIAs are listed below and mapped in Figure 1.

1. **Pompton Lakes – Wanaque Avenue**
2. **Wayne – Route 23 Willowbrook**
3. **Paterson – Presidential Boulevard**
4. **Paterson – Hospital Complex**
5. **Clifton – Route 3**

The PIA process can later be replicated for future investment areas within Passaic County to achieve similar goals and promote additional opportunities for job creation, equity, resilience, and other County economic goals pursued in this study. Recommendations will require coordination with State, County, municipal, and private entities.



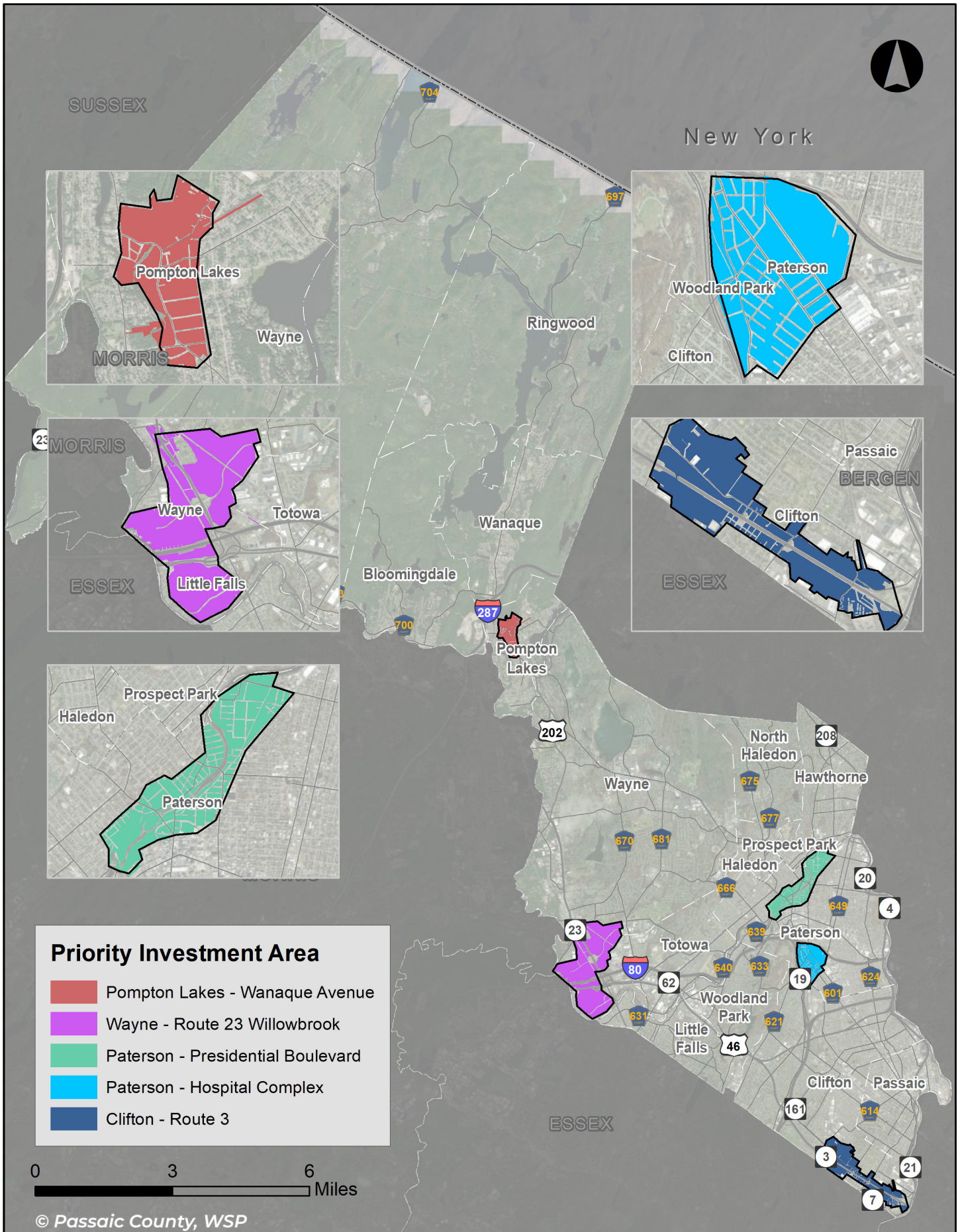


Figure 1 - Selected Priority Investment Areas in Passaic County, NJ

Pompton Lakes – Wanaque Avenue

The vision for the Pompton Lakes - Wanaque Avenue PIA is to have a vibrant multimodal downtown Main Street where people live, work, and play. Retail will thrive with successful businesses utilizing active sidewalk cafes and parklets. People will feel safe walking, biking, taking the bus, or driving along Wanaque Avenue. Parking and loading will be clearly marked and mainly occur behind businesses to promote a safe, accessible, and active corridor. The proposed changes will support improved mobility and job creation.

This vision will be pursued through investigating the following recommendations:

- Improve vehicular and pedestrian access to the parking lot west of Wanaque Avenue.
- Consider widening sidewalks to enhance a walkable streetscape and downtown “Main Street” atmosphere.
- Implement traffic calming to slow traffic and improve biking and walking conditions.
- Install a network of bicycle facilities to connect trip generators, destinations, and recreational opportunities.

Wayne – Route 23 Willowbrook

The vision for the Wayne – Route 23 Willowbrook PIA is to have a regional live-work-play destination that leverages the strengths of its three activity centers (Willowbrook Mall, Mountain View train station, and Wayne Route 23 Transit Center), connecting to each other and the larger region. The Willowbrook Mall will feature pedestrian paths connecting the bus stops to retail. People will feel comfortable walking and biking to the Mountain View and Wayne Route 23 train stations. The Wayne Route 23 station will function mainly as a park & ride with limited adjacent land uses due to sensitive environmental constraints. The Mountain View station will be a walkable mini-retail area where transit riders can shop and eat. The proposed changes will support mobility and access to opportunities.

This vision will be pursued through investigating the following recommendations:

- Improve bus circulation and stops within the PIA and between its three distinct activity generators.
- Coordinate with Willowbrook Mall and surrounding property owners to improve pedestrian circulation and comfort.
- Improve multimodal circulation, access, and transit-oriented development near the Mountain View train station.
- Implement a bicycle network on select roadways near the two train stations, connecting to public transit and job sites.
- Improve pedestrian infrastructure along West Belt Parkway (County owned), redesigning the roadway for existing and projected multimodal demand.

Paterson – Presidential Boulevard

The Paterson – Presidential Boulevard PIA vision is to offer a range of passive and active recreational opportunities alongside the Passaic River, providing clear connections between the residential neighborhoods to the north and west, Hinchcliffe Stadium, and Great Falls National Historical Park to the south. The area will feature a revitalized waterfront, where once-industrial spaces give way to vibrant mixed-use developments, offering a blend of residential, recreational, and commercial amenities. This vision of renewal enhances the local landscape, environmental sustainability, and storm resilience while fostering a sense of community pride and well-being. The proposed changes will support mobility, access to opportunities, job creation, and resilience.

This vision will be pursued through investigating the following recommendations:

- Reclaim auto-oriented parcels for recreational, residential, or mixed uses that better serve the community.
- Implement Complete Streets measures on local connecting roadways.
- Enhance Larry Doby Lane as a destination, supporting adjacent Hinchcliffe Stadium.
- Install bicycle infrastructure to connect existing facilities and improve access to schools, residential neighborhoods, Hinchcliffe Stadium, and Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park.
- Capitalize on the presence of Great Falls National Historical Park in downtown Paterson by incorporating distinctive wayfinding that directs visitors to historically and culturally significant sites and educates them about the neighborhood and Paterson’s history.
- Install resilience measures that decrease the frequency and intensity of flooding.
- Improve freight movement between nearby highways and the Bunker Hill industrial area.

Paterson – Hospital Complex

The Paterson – Hospital Complex PIA vision is to grow the hospital into a world-class health campus serving Paterson and northern New Jersey, by capitalizing on the century-old strength of Saint Joseph’s University Medical Center, offering safe and accessible traffic-calmed streets and encouraging investment in businesses and services that complement the hospital operations and mission. The suggested recommendations will support mobility, pedestrian activity in and around the campus, access to opportunities, and job creation.

This vision will be pursued through investigating the following recommendations:

- Study further the feasibility of a train station to serve the hospital and community.
- Upgrade connecting roadways as unique “Health Campus Corridors” to promote well-lit, safe, traffic-calmed, and multimodal streets.
- Encourage the City of Paterson to implement transit-oriented development strategies that may enhance multimodality should a train station be warranted.
- Connect existing bike network links.

Clifton – Route 3

The Clifton – Route 3 PIA is envisioned as a regional business, residential, and transit hub. Route 3 would continue to serve regional traffic and transit, but consolidated driveway access to businesses would improve traffic flow and safety. Bus service would be accessible to pedestrians and close to businesses. The parcels around the Newark Industrial Line will feature premiere land uses designed for transit-oriented development appropriate for possible future transit enhancements. The proposed changes will support safety, mobility, access to opportunities, and job creation.

This vision will be pursued through investigating the following recommendations:

- Assess the potential to divert bus routes to better serve passengers' destinations while also improving traffic flow on Route 3; evaluate existing and potential bus stops for additional amenities.
- Fill sidewalk gaps to existing bus stops.
- Consider a multi-agency effort enhancing the connectivity of the Delawanna train station and local community with shopping opportunities via a new pedestrian/cyclist bridge.
- Support transit-oriented development around the Newark Industrial Line, capitalizing on recent investments to nearby office and industrial uses.
- Investigate consolidating driveway access on Route 3 to improve safety and traffic flow.

Next Steps

Each PIA includes a conceptual plan of recommendations. Passaic County will work with municipal partners and stakeholders and other facility owners to implement low-cost, near-term projects and conduct detailed assessments for those recommendations that require further study. Funding may be sought, as appropriate, from state, federal, and private sources.





Aerial View of Pompton Lakes ©AdobeStock



View of the Great Falls in Paterson, NJ ©AdobeStock