

RESOLUTION NO. _____-2008

**RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HARRISON
ENDORING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF PENNONI ASSOCIATES, INC. RELATING
TO THE PROPOSED U.S. ROUTE 322 BYPASS PROJECT**

WHEREAS, U.S. Route 322 and State Highway Route 45 provide an important integral transportation corridor for the Township of Harrison, adjoining municipalities, and intra-state and inter-state commerce; and

WHEREAS, in the last fifteen (15) years, the municipalities serviced by the U.S. Route 322 corridor beginning at the Commodore Barry Bridge and continuing through Monroe Township have experienced residential and commercial growth rates substantially in excess of those rates experienced throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, the residential and commercial growth along the U.S. Route 322 corridor has caused and created traffic congestion, infrastructure degradation and decreased mobility issues which cannot be corrected by typical road widening and/or traffic signalization solutions; and

WHEREAS, the problems and concerns of the inadequacy of the Gloucester County portion of U.S. Route 322 were recognized by the DVRPC in the 1960's when the first study was commissioned to determine alternate routes around Harrison Township, specifically at the intersection of U.S. Route 322 and State Highway Route 45; and

WHEREAS, the intersection at U.S. Route 322 and State Highway Route 45 serves as a major transportation thoroughfare connecting the Township, County and State in Easterly/Westerly and Northerly/Southerly directions; and

WHEREAS, in _____, 2007, the Gloucester County Board of Chosen Freeholders announced a cooperative agreement with the State of New Jersey Department of Transportation whereby Gloucester County would provide planning, testing, engineering and subsequent construction of a bypass and related infrastructure and intersectional improvements throughout Harrison Township to address and solve the existing and expected future residential and commercial growth and associated traffic volume; and

WHEREAS, the Gloucester County Board of Chosen Freeholders has agreed to provide the required traffic and safety improvements costing approximately \$22,000,000.00 at no cost to and without reimbursement from the Township of Harrison; and

WHEREAS, the County of Gloucester hired professional traffic consultants to analyze historic, existing and future traffic safety and mobility issues, and infrastructure and environmental degradation; and

WHEREAS, Gloucester County's traffic consultant proposed four (4) distinctly different alternate alignments; each alignment had unique positive and negative points including, but not limited to, impacts upon wetlands, endangered species, the taking of real property, realignment of certain Township roads, proximity to the cemetery adjoining the Holy Name of Jesus Church on Earlington Avenue, proximity to the cemetery adjoining the Richwood United Methodist Church Historic District, additional signage, lighting and vehicular and pedestrian safety and accessibility improvements; and

WHEREAS, the Harrison Township Planning Board retained the services of traffic engineers, Pennoni Associates, Inc., for the purpose of reviewing various reports and plans prepared by Gloucester County's transportation consultants to determine whether the needs of Harrison Township are being addressed during the planning, design and engineering stages of the project; and

WHEREAS, Pennoni Associates, Inc. was retained for the purpose of providing comment, both positive and negative, and to make recommendations as to which proposed alignment serves the best interests and meets the needs of Harrison Township; and

WHEREAS, Pennoni Associates, Inc. presented its review and findings at the Harrison Township Planning Board meeting on March 20, 2008, and again on April 17, 2008; and

WHEREAS, Pennoni Associates, Inc. presented its review and findings to the Township Committee of the Township of Harrison on May 5, 2008; and

WHEREAS, Pennoni Associates, Inc. determined that the alignment identified as Alignment "C" was clearly an alignment that had the least impact upon the residents of Harrison Township overall, including the least amount of residential property to be taken, as well as limited interference with the Historic District, and wetlands and endangered species; and

WHEREAS, Pennoni Associates, Inc. observed that the proposed bypass would provide many benefits to the Township of Harrison including, but not limited to, the creation of approximately one hundred (100) acres of open space for walking/nature paths; improved roadway alignments; reduced traffic volume by approximately 40%-50% on Main Street; and significantly reduced queues and wait-time at the traffic light located at U.S. Route 322 and State Highway Route 45; and

WHEREAS, Pennoni Associates, Inc. unequivocally confirmed that the proposed bypass would significantly improve traffic mobility and intersectional safety throughout Harrison Township while providing a safer, pedestrian-friendly environment on Main Street that would rejuvenate and/or create economic opportunities for those businesses situate on Main Street; and

WHEREAS, the Harrison Township Planning Board has reviewed the proposed bypass alignment and concurs that it is consistent and complements the Harrison Township Master Plan circulation elements, and the proposed bypass achieves the goals and objectives of same; and

WHEREAS, the Gloucester County Board of Chosen Freeholders and their professionals and consultants have consistently and without objection cooperated with the Harrison Township officials and their professionals in an effort to resolve any issues and concerns that the proposed bypass may affect throughout Harrison Township including, but not limited to, impacts upon wetlands, endangered species, the taking of real property, realignment of certain Township roads, proximity to the cemetery adjoining the Holy Name of Jesus Church on Earlington Avenue, proximity to the cemetery adjoining the Richwood United Methodist Church, Historic District, additional signage, lighting and vehicular and pedestrian safety and accessibility improvements; and

WHEREAS, Main Street in downtown Mullica Hill is a coveted historic treasure which has, unfortunately, degraded over the years as a result of overwhelming traffic volume that has created extremely unsafe vehicular and pedestrian conditions; and

WHEREAS, the proposed bypass, when successfully implemented, will create a window of opportunity for the State, County, surrounding municipalities and, most notably, the citizens of Harrison Township to reduce the traffic congestion and related problems crippling our Town while simultaneously stimulating an economic, social and cultural environment that will benefit the residents of Harrison Township for many years in the future.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Harrison, County of Gloucester and State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The Mayor and Committee of the Township of Harrison hereby endorses the recommendations of Pennoni Associates, Inc. as to the proposed U.S. Route 322 bypass alignment that best serves and meets the needs of the citizens of the Township of Harrison.

ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Harrison, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey held on May 19, 2008.

TOWNSHIP OF HARRISON

BY: _____
LOUIS F. MANZO, MAYOR

ATTEST:

DIANE L. MALLOY
Municipal Clerk

ROLL CALL VOTE				
COMMITTEE MEMBER	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Manzo				
Clowney				
Trunk				
Thomas				
Woods				

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above resolution is a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Harrison, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey, at a meeting held by the same on May 19, 2008 in the Harrison Township Municipal Building, 114 Bridgeton Pike, Mullica Hill, New Jersey 08062.

DIANE L. MALLOY
Municipal Clerk