



**COUNTY OF MORRIS**  
**Local Concept Development Study for**  
**Martin Luther King Avenue Bridge over the Whippany River**  
**Town of Morristown, New Jersey**



## Purpose

The overall purpose of this project is to address structural, geometric, and operational deficiencies of the Martin Luther King Avenue Bridge (Structure 1400-118) over the Whippany River and to provide safe, efficient, and reliable passage for all users and modes of transportation.

## Identified Needs

### Bridge and Roadway Deficiencies

The Martin Luther King Avenue Bridge is in overall poor condition, structurally deficient, and functionally obsolete. The structure is classified as structurally deficient due to the poor condition of the superstructure and functionally obsolete due to the substandard bridge roadway width. Originally built in 1900 and widened in 1928, the stone arch bridge will require extensive rehabilitation or replacement to remain functional. The superstructure is in poor condition and the substructure is in fair condition based on the latest bridge inspection report performed in 2017.

The superstructure is in poor condition due to the deteriorated voided masonry arches and section loss of the steel stringers as well as numerous voids with an increase in voids in the intrados across all spans. Additionally, there are the misalignment of the ring stones and wide gaps/separation, cracking and voids in the spandrel walls, and significant losses and heavy rusting with undermining at the sidewalk stringer supports. Since the previous inspection, the overall condition of the bridge has not changed.

### System Linkage

Martin Luther King Avenue is an Urban Minor Arterial that provides an important multimodal link within the regional transportation network. The bridge is utilized by cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists; its connectivity is vital to the local economy and community.

The Martin Luther King Bridge is a critical piece of Morris County's infrastructure. The bridge is a critical transportation connection for the community and roadway users attempting to cross the Whippany River. Due to its local importance, bridge closures and detours are highly burdensome to the community. There are few bridge crossings over the Whippany River, with the shortest detour being 1.4 miles.

In addition to vehicles, the Martin Luther King Avenue Bridge is utilized by bicyclists and pedestrians. As of November 20, 2018, Morris County has not adopted the NJDOT Complete Streets Policy; however, the Town of Morristown adopted the NJDOT Complete Streets Policy in 2012. The NJDOT Complete Streets Policy, dated December 2009, requires a complete streets design (includes investigation of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities to support mobility for all users, including those with disabilities) for new and retrofit transportation facilities within public right of way that are federally or state funded. Sidewalks are provided along both sides of the bridge. Shoulders to accommodate bicycles are currently not provided; however, based on the existing traffic volumes and posted speed limit of 25 MPH, the roadway is bicycle compatible.

## Goals & Objectives

- Address structural and geometric deficiencies
- Meet AASHTO/NJDOT safety standards for bridge and roadway approach
- Avoid delays or disruptions caused by aging infrastructure.
- Avoid or minimize impacts to social, economic and environmental resources.
- Provide bicycle compatibility and connectivity within the project limits.
- Provide ADA compliant pedestrian facilities and crossings within the project limits.
- Provide pedestrian lighting on the structure.
- Implement context sensitive design solutions.
- Maintain pedestrian accessibility during construction.
- Avoid or minimize complete or long-term roadway closures during construction.

