MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2026 SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES SINCE 1882 AFFILIATED WITH NJ.COM

The Times



Birds snap skid: Eagles beat Steelers, 19-16, breathing life into Philly's season with its first win in two months. SPORTS



A commuter asks a question of an NJ Transit ambassador in Hoboken Terminal on Oct. 13. Riders and NJ transit officials disagreed about progress made to deliver Gov. Sherrill's improvement mandate. *Photos by Larry Higgs, NJ.com*

NJ Transit says Gov's rapid response plan is working, but riders disagree

Commuters cite crowded trains, safety incidents, and a troubled app despite the agency claiming $175 million in progress.

Larry Higgs *NJ.com*

It's been almost six months since Gov. Mikie Sherrill and NJ Transit unveiled a rapid response plan aimed at fulfilling her March executive order to improve the commuting experience.

But as the half-year anniversary of that May 12 announcement approaches, commuter complaints — from crowded trains and stations that reek of urine to safety concerns — have not abated.

And a mobile app that has undergone several iterations since a May relaunch is still being criticized by commuters for its reduced functionality and inaccurate information.

NJ Transit officials say the agency has made tangible improvements and provided a list of accomplishments when asked by NJ.com.

"Since the Plan's submission, NJ Transit has made noteworthy progress across the four priority areas identified in the Executive Order: cleanliness, accessibility, public safety, and digital experience," said John Chartier, an agency spokesperson. "The initiatives included in the Plan represent over $175 million in existing funding."

"The plan is a throw away for riders. We need real improvements — trains that don't breakdown every day, a reduction in cancellations, crews to be available at all scheduled times, and better on time performance."

Commuter James Richardson in response to NJ.com questions on Facebook.

Still, social media posts have rippled with daily commuter complaints, with some saying the plan doesn't address core issues affecting delays and on-time performance.

"The plan is a throw away for riders. We need real improvements — trains that don't breakdown every day, a reduction in cancellations, crews to be available at all scheduled times, and better on time performance," said commuter James Richardson in response to NJ.com questions on Facebook.

"The doubling of cancellations, the increased delays, the poor communication around cancellations and delays and the safety issues these delays and cancellations cause are big issues for me," said Morris & Essex Lines commuter Lisa Hackett.

"I was punched in the eye by an intoxicated woman. Due to the delays, I was on a train home at 9 p.m. at night when a drunk man started antagonizing me and made masturbation gestures at me," she said. "I filled an NJ Transit police report, and nothing was done."

Another commuter on Facebook complained about standing outside a platform level waiting area at Newark Penn Station to escape the smell of urine inside.

"I am freezing my butt off outside because the station waiting room reeks of urine. Absolutely disgusting. I don't get why people have to urinate inside the building," he said. "That air freshener does nothing. NJT needs to put some bleach in the stations. ASAP. Newark Penn is the worse. They finally removed that brown glob near the track 5 ticket machines after 6 months."

WHAT WAS PROMISED?

On March 24, Sherrill issued Executive Order 16, giving NJ Transit 45 days to deliver a "comprehensive, binding plan" to address a myriad of issues and improve rider experience.

It gave the agency another 45 days after delivery of the plan to fast-track implementation of the highest priority initiatives. A June 22 goal was set for NJ Transit riders to see immediate improvements.

SEE TRANSPORTATION, A3

BURLINGTON COUNTY

Township seeks gun ban after shots fired near school

Southampton proposal would restrict firearms near homes, schools, parks and other sites.

Anthony G. Attrino *NJ.com*

Two incidents in which the same man allegedly shot guns near a school campus in Southhampton have prompted township officials to propose an ordinance that would ban carrying or shooting firearms near homes, schools, parks and other sites.

Mark Cozens, 62, a retired firefighter, was in the Burlington County Jail on Friday, a day after turning himself in to the New Jersey State Police on a fourth-degree charge of recklessly creating a risk of widespread injury or damage.

Cozens also faces a charge of third-degree terroristic threats, fourth-degree endangering and a disorderly persons offense of recklessly discharging a firearm, court records show.

The charge for which Cozens was arrested Thursday occurred on Nov. 10 and resulted in a two-day shelter-in-place order at the district campus on Main Street. The campus includes 700 students and staff across three school buildings and an administration building.

SEE BURLINGTON COUNTY, A2

GLOUCESTER COUNTY

District is $1M in the hole; residents demand answers

West Deptford superintendent says he learned of deficit months after school year ended.

Nyah Marshall *NJ.com*

A South Jersey school district has frozen nonessential spending after discovering it ended the last school year more than $1 million in the hole.

At a West Deptford Board of Education meeting last week, district officials said the shortfall was between $1 million and $2 million. Shocked residents asked the board how the Gloucester County district had gone over budget in several areas and why it took until this school year for the superintendent to find out.

The district spent more than it had budgeted for health benefits, maintenance, student tuition, transportation and staffing, the business administrator said.

SEE GLOUCESTER COUNTY, A2



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