

## **Lack of Progress on Clarksville Road Bridge**

Every day people ask me about the status of the Clarksville Road Bridge. I have given updates when there has been specific news to report, but unfortunately due to slow responses by Amtrak to NJ DOT there has not been much progress. I have been actively at work with both NJDOT and Amtrak, as well as the County, to make everyone understand the urgency of moving this project forward.

The bridge was taken out of service on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2025. Since, we have had meetings with NJ DOT and Amtrak on November 10<sup>th</sup>, Jan 7<sup>th</sup>, and Jan 28<sup>th</sup>. In addition, we had a meeting with only NJDOT on Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>.

I am very disappointed with the lack of progress on fixing the bridge. During the meeting on Jan 7<sup>th</sup> Amtrak first claimed that it will take 3 weeks to issue a permit to inspect the bridge. When I challenged their plan, they agreed to expediate it and issue it in one week by Jan 14<sup>th</sup>. I was very disappointed that the permit was not issued even on Jan 28<sup>th</sup>. Now I have been told that the permit will be issued on Monday Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> almost three months after the bridge was taken out of service. That is for the first step of inspecting the bridge.

Amtrak and NJDOT do work on bridges over railroad track every week for the past 50 years. There is nothing unique or special about the Clarksville Road Bridge. I can't understand why it takes Amtrak over 3 months to simply issue a permit, something that they have done thousands of times over the past 50 years. No senior member of Amtrak operations attends our meeting and the PR people have refused to attend the council meeting on Monday Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> to explain why it's taking 3 months to issue the permit.

Amtrak is funded by taxpayers and has shown complete disregard to them.

On Friday (30<sup>th</sup> Jan) NJ DOT informed me that they expect to get the permit by Monday Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> and finish their inspection by Friday Feb 6<sup>th</sup>. They will then let me know what our options are to get the bridge open, how long each option will take and what exactly is involved. I have also been told that Amtrak will make it difficult to get necessary track outages to fix the bridge in a timely fashion.

I am very frustrated with the "business as usual" attitude displayed by Amtrak. I have tried to work with them for over 3 months now and very disappointed that they don't treat this as an emergency that it is. I want to make sure that they give us the necessary outages to get the bridge fixed as fast as NJDOT possibly can. I have contacted the Governor, Senator Kim and sent an email to chairman of Amtrak's board and it's president.

I can use your help on two fronts.

First, contact our senators to make sure Amtrak gives us the necessary outages to complete the project expeditiously.

Senator Kim - <https://www.andykim.com/contact/>

Senator Booker - <https://www.booker.senate.gov/contact/write-to-cory>

Second, contact our representatives to ensure NJDOT has enough resources for timely repair of the bridge.

Governor Sherrill - [https://www-njlib.nj.gov/GOV\\_TRANS\\_APPLICANTS/BTCustomServlet](https://www-njlib.nj.gov/GOV_TRANS_APPLICANTS/BTCustomServlet)

Senator Turner – <https://nj-15-senate.web.fireside21.app/forms/writeyourrep/?to=Senator%20Shirley%20K.%20Turner>

Assemblywomen Jackson - <https://nj-15-assembly-reynoldsja.web.fireside21.app/forms/writeyourrep/?to=Assemblywoman%20Verlina%20Reynolds-Jackson>

Assemblyman Verrille - <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/legislative-roster/416/assemblyman-verrelli>

Hemant Marathe

Mayor