



New Jersey Future is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that brings together concerned citizens and leaders to promote responsible land-use policies. We employ original research, analysis and advocacy to build coalitions and drive land-use policies that help revitalize cities and towns, protect natural lands and farms, provide more transportation choices beyond cars, expand access to safe and affordable neighborhoods and fuel a prosperous economy.

SAVE THE DATE!

Be sure to put New Jersey Future's two premier events on your calendar today!

Redevelopment Forum

Friday, March 4, 2011
Hyatt Hotel
New Brunswick, NJ

Smart Growth Awards

Thursday, June 9, 2010
Newark Club
Newark, NJ

Highlights from 2010

1) Christie Transition Teams Recommend Smart Growth Solutions

New Jersey Future's key proposals made their way into the findings and recommendations of incoming Governor Christie's strategic transition teams and committees. The Economic Development team echoed New Jersey Future's call for reconstituting and elevating the State Planning Commission, and the Community Affairs team adopted New Jersey Future's longstanding goal of relocating the state planning function to another, more neutral agency of state government.

2) Office of Smart Growth Moved to Department of State

New Jersey Future worked closely with key administration officials and the Governor's Office to move the state planning function from the Department of Community Affairs to the Department of State, where the Office of Smart Growth has been reconstituted as the Office of State Plan Advocacy, reporting to the Lieutenant Governor. New Jersey Future will continue to monitor the development and activities of this new office to ensure that it promotes effective state planning.

3) Move NJ Forward Campaign Created to Press for Rational, Dedicated Transportation Funding

New Jersey's Transportation Trust Fund is headed toward insolvency; unless new revenue is found, it will revert to paying only debt by next summer. To build support for responsible refinancing of the fund, New Jersey Future—along with the Tri-State Transportation Campaign—spearheaded creation of the Move NJ Forward campaign, a diverse coalition that advocates closer alignment of transportation funding with smart land-use practices, and will advance this agenda in the coming months.

4) Transit Riders Show Their Support for the ARC Tunnel

When Governor Christie announced that his administration was considering abandoning New Jersey's commitment to the Access to the Region's Core (ARC) trans-Hudson rail tunnel project, New Jersey Future and its allies rallied support for the project on the platforms of NJ Transit rail stations. Hundreds of early morning commuters signed petitions urging the governor to keep the project on track, demonstrating their support for investing in transit and investing in New Jersey's future. New Jersey Future also published several pieces articulating the benefits of the project and debunking popular myths.

5) Chasing the Commercial Ratable Doesn't Always Pay Off for Municipalities

A New Jersey Future analysis of 2006 property tax data exposed the popular, but mistaken belief that a high proportion of commercial property in a municipality's tax base necessarily corresponds to a lower-than-average property tax rate. In fact, the analysis found that many municipalities were able to keep their property tax rates low even with very little commercial property, suggesting that some municipal officials' aversion to residential development (because it attracts schoolchildren, which in turns raises property tax rates) has little basis in fact.

6) Transfer of Development Rights Task Force Presses for Reforms

New Jersey Future pulled together a task force of experts to review state policies regarding Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and identify impediments to TDR at both the regional and municipal level. The group released its findings and recommendations in August, after numerous meetings and hearings and stakeholder input. New Jersey Future continues to develop and advance the recommendations of the group, focusing first on fixes to the clustering tools.

7) Route 1 Group Moves Toward Formal Regional Decision-Making

With support from New Jersey Future, the Central Jersey Transportation Forum, which includes representation from Route 1 Corridor municipalities between Trenton and New Brunswick, took steps to improve its efficiency and decision-making functions to allow for collective action and response to critical issues in the region. The group formally established “action teams” and adopted a voting structure to help tackle their shared problems, including workforce housing, transportation and environmental protection and adoption of a common regional growth strategy.

8) Trenton Train Station Advisory Committee Offers Recommendations to City Leadership

As facilitator for the Trenton Train Station Citizen’s Advisory Committee, New Jersey Future organized and helped moderate three well-attended public hearings to gain citizen input, address common concerns and promote sound transit-oriented development strategies for the area. The group presented its recommendations to the new mayor in June, suggesting that future redevelopment efforts prioritize workforce development, public safety and tangible community benefits.

9) Group Effort Prevents Affordable Housing Backslide

New Jersey Future worked with a large array of stakeholders to ensure that efforts to reshape the state’s affordable-housing policy were pursued through a consensus-building process. This collaborative effort was largely responsible for sidetracking a legislative attempt (S-1 bill) to revamp the state’s affordable-housing structure by dismantling the Council on Affordable Housing and authorizing municipalities to self-enforce their affordable-housing obligations. The groups identified serious weaknesses in this legislation and offered alternatives, working to educate members of the Legislature and governor’s staff to seek a better long-term solution.

10) More Towns Take Steps Toward Sustainable Land Use

At the annual League of Municipalities conference, 38 towns received “bronze-level” certification from the Sustainable Jersey program. New Jersey Future has been working as a program partner, reviewing municipal submissions and developing the land use and transportation actions for communities seeking certification. This year, 23 towns adopted the Sustainable Land Use Pledge as a priority action.

11) New Jersey Future Inaugurates Senior Fellow Program

New Jersey Future created the Senior Fellow program to offer an opportunity for experienced land-use scholars, policy analysts, policymakers and other experts to explore ideas and concepts that advance the goals of sustainable development and smarter growth in New Jersey. The program allows New Jersey Future to benefit from the senior fellow’s work products and expertise in

the field, while providing the senior fellow with a support system for conducting innovative work. Ingrid Reed, who recently retired as director of the New Jersey Program at Rutgers University’s Eagleton Institute of Politics, is New Jersey Future’s first senior fellow.

12) 2010 Redevelopment Forum Draws Large, Enthusiastic Crowd

Although inclement weather forced its postponement from late February to mid-March, the fifth-annual New Jersey Future Redevelopment Forum drew a crowd of nearly 500 local and state officials, citizen activists, development professionals, architects, attorneys, planners, business leaders and others. A provocative keynote speech by real estate expert Jeffrey Otteau highlighted the event, which featured 22 workshops and panel discussions.

13) Smart Growth Awards Honor Exemplary Projects; W. Cary Edwards Receives Leadership Award

In June, New Jersey Future honored six outstanding projects and plans in Trenton, Jersey City, Hoboken, Robbinsville, Neptune and Woolwich with Smart Growth Awards. The ninth-annual awards ceremony was also highlighted by a special Leadership Award presented to W. Cary Edwards, a founding member of New Jersey Future’s Board of Trustees who served as chief counsel and attorney general in the Kean administration and was a key player in passage of the State Planning Act in 1985. (Four months later, New Jersey Future mourned Mr. Edwards’ untimely passing at the age of 66.)

14) Media Broadcast Smart Growth Message

New Jersey Future reached out regularly to the news media via press releases and op-ed articles, and staff members were frequently contacted by reporters and editors to offer guidance, background information and statements on newsworthy matters. Several of New Jersey Future’s “Future Facts” were reprinted in daily and weekly newspapers; New Jersey Future was cited in articles on affordable housing, NJ Transit fare hikes, the Transportation Trust Fund, land use trends, the ARC tunnel, property taxes and a host of other issues; Smart Growth Award-winners received widespread newspaper coverage; and bylined opinion pieces on transit funding, red tape reduction, property taxes and the ARC tunnel appeared in many of the state’s leading newspapers.

15) New Jersey Future Embraces Social Media

With timely coverage of such issues as the ARC tunnel, state planning and transportation funding, New Jersey Future’s blog, “Garden State Smart Growth,” saw a steady increase in readership throughout 2010. In addition, New Jersey Future was selected to participate in Google’s nonprofit program and created a special youtube channel. New Jersey Future’s Twitter feed is now followed by more than 2,900 people and its Facebook page has attracted 450 friends.