Smart Growth in New Jersey

Presented by New Jersey Future
New Jersey Future

- New Jersey Future is a statewide research and policy group advocating a smarter way to grow: one that protects our open lands and natural resources, revitalizes neighborhoods, keeps housing affordable, and provides more transportation choices.
New Jersey Future

• Promotes sensible land-use policies, including:
  – Transit Oriented Development
  – Redevelopment
  – Open Space Preservation
  – Complete Streets
Land-Use in New Jersey: Overview

- New Jersey is the most developed state in the nation and has the highest population density.
- New Jersey has the second highest rate of transit ridership in the nation.
- New Jersey is unique in that a large portion of its land is either protected open space or falls under the jurisdiction of one of three regional areas (The Pinelands, Highlands and Meadowlands).
Land-Use in New Jersey: Overview

- New Jersey is one of the few states to have a statewide land use plan that shows where growth is desirable and which areas should be preserved.
- Divides the state into 5 separate planning areas.
Land-Use in New Jersey: Recent History

• Several trends characterizing land-use in New Jersey over the last 50 years:
  – Declining population of urban areas
  – Dispersal of jobs
  – “De-densification”
  – Loss of housing choice
Land Use in New Jersey: Declining Population of Urban Areas

NJ Urban Center Population 1930-2000

- Atlantic City
- Camden
- Newark
- Jersey City
- Trenton
- New Brunswick
- Paterson
- Elizabeth
Land Use in New Jersey: Declining Population of Urban Areas

• Between 1950 and 2000, the 8 Urban Centers, as identified by the State Plan, lost a combined 305,000 residents.
Land-Use in New Jersey: Declining Population of Urban Areas

- County population growth 2000-2007

Lost population
- + 0 to 5%
- + 5 to 10%
- + 10 to 20%
- + 20% or more
Land Use in New Jersey: Dispersal of Jobs

- Jobs have followed residents to the suburbs
Land Use in New Jersey: Dispersal of Jobs

20 largest job-gaining and job-losing municipalities, 1980-2003

20 largest job losses

20 largest job gains
Land-Use in New Jersey: “De-densification”

- Much of that growth has come in the form of low density, auto-dependent sprawl.
- Newly-developed acres grew 1.3 times as fast as population between 1995 and 2002 (down from 2.3 times as fast between 1986 and 1995).
Land-Use in New Jersey: “De-densification”

% of NJ’s population living at various densities

density (persons per square mile):
- urban/compact (5,000 and up)
- suburban (1,500 - 4,999)
- exurban (500 - 1,499)
- rural (< 500)
Land-Use in New Jersey: Loss of Housing Choice

- Housing production has focused on large-lot, single family homes.
- In the 2000s, the supply of units with nine or more rooms has grown more than twice as fast as the overall housing supply – an increase of 11.1 percent between 2000 and 2007, compared to an increase of only 4.9 percent in the total number of housing units.

Legend:
- decrease
- incr 0 - 7.6 % (NJ rate for all HUs)
- incr 7.6 - 23.3 % (NJ rate for 9+ rooms)
- incr 23.3 - 49.9 %
- incr 50 - 99.9 %
- incr 100 % or more
Land-Use in New Jersey: Loss of Housing Choice

- On the other hand, the production of multi-family housing has lagged.
- Between 2000 and 2008, more than half the towns in NJ issued zero permits for multi-family housing construction.
- During that period, four municipalities (Jersey City, Newark, Hoboken and West New York) accounted for ¼ of multi-family permits issued.
Land Use in New Jersey: Impacts

Land-use patterns over the last century have had a number of deleterious effects:

- Rapid loss of open space
- Increasing Vehicle Mile Traveled (VMT)
  - Less active transportation!
- Concentration of poverty
- Increasingly unaffordable housing
Impacts:
Loss of Open Space

• New Jersey averaged about 14,900 acres of new development annually between 1986 and 1995, increasingly slightly to about 15,100 acres annually between 1995 and 2002.

• Between 1995 and 2002, 36,000 acres of agricultural land and 58,000 acres of forest were converted to urban uses.
Impacts:
Loss of Open Space
Impacts: Increasing VMT

- Growth in per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) over the last 30 years has out-paced both population and the number of registered drivers in New Jersey.
Impacts:
Increasing VMT

- Lower densities make walking and biking less feasible
- As more jobs move to the suburbs, it becomes harder for people to take transit to work
Impacts:
Increased GHG emissions

- Transportation makes up the largest, and fastest growing, segment of NJ’s carbon footprint
- Transportation accounts for 33% of all emissions in NJ, compared to a national rate of 28%
- Personal vehicles account for the vast majority of transportation emissions

Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Sector; New Jersey, 2004
Millions of metric tons CO₂ equivalent

Transportation: 48
Residential: 18
In-state electricity generation: 11
Imported electricity generation: 14
Other, including LF methane: 13
Commercial: 20
Industrial: 18
Sequestration by forests: -7
Impacts:
Increased GHG emissions

- Projected growth in VMT will negate the effect of projected gains in fuel efficiency on GHG emissions
Impacts: Concentration of Poverty

- Inflation-adjusted percent change in per-capita property tax base, 1990-2002

- down 20% or more
- down 10 - 19.9%
- down 0 - 9.9%
- up 0 - 9.9%
- up 10 – 19.9%
- up 20 – 39.9%
- up 40% or more
Impacts:
Concentration of Poverty

- Newark
- Jersey City
- Trenton
- Atlantic City
- Camden
- Paterson
- Hoboken
- East Orange
- Elizabeth
- West New York
- Orange
- North Bergen

• Just **12 municipalities** have 52 percent of the affordable housing units in the state – but only 14 percent of the households.
Impacts: Increasingly Unaffordable Housing

- According to the Brookings Institution in 2004, New Jersey had the 5th least affordable housing in the nation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Housing price/income ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>7.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>6.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>5.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>4.93</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>4.75</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>4.67</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>4.30</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Impacts: Increasingly Unaffordable Housing

- Percent of households spending at least 35% of income on housing costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New Jersey Future: Smart Growth

• Compact, walkable development with a mix of uses in areas identified by the State Plan as appropriate for growth (with existing infrastructure, near existing development)

• Redevelopment
Benefits of Smart Growth

- Consumes less land than sprawl development, while making use of existing infrastructure
- Leads to lower VMT by placing more destinations within walking and biking distance of one another
- Provides more housing choice than traditional suburban sub-divisions
New Jersey Future: Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

- Dense, mixed-use development or redevelopment near transit (rail, light-rail, major bus centers)
- Designed to encourage transit use (not just transit-adjacent development)
Transit-Oriented Development: Benefits

- Takes advantage of New Jersey’s extensive public transportation network
- Reduces VMT by making it possible for more people to take transit
- Satisfies market demand for housing and office space in walkable, transit accessible communities
New Jersey Future: Open Space Preservation

- Supported recent bond issue on open space acquisition
- Supports other preservation methods like Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)
Open Space Preservation: Benefits

- Helps maintain New Jersey’s agriculture industry
- Provides innumerable environmental benefits (water quality, habitat protection, prevents flood damage)
- Contributes to New Jersey’s high quality of life
New Jersey Future: Providing Transportation Choices

- New rail service in Gloucester County
- Bus Rapid Transit on Route 1, Route 18
- Supports “Complete Streets” policies
Providing Transportation Choices: Benefits

• Improves safety. Nearly 200 pedestrians are killed in NJ every year, many on roads that were designed without pedestrians in mind.

• Increases mobility for the large population in New Jersey without access to a car (seniors, youth, low-income residents, disabled, etc.).

• Reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and thus greenhouse gas emissions.
Land-Use in New Jersey: More Recent Trends

• Growth in urban areas
  – In 2007 the 8 urban centers had a combined growth rate nearly equal to the state as a whole

• Reduction in VMT
  – VMT declined 4% in 2008

• Increasing transit ridership
  – NJ Transit ridership reached record levels in the second half of 2007
Issues in Smart Growth Today

- A number of issues confront the implementation of smart growth in New Jersey
  - Property tax/school funding concerns
  - Aversion to higher density development
  - Concerns over eminent domain
  - Lack of state level coordination around land-use policy
Issues:
Property tax/school funding concerns

• Municipal officials and residents fear that increased residential development, especially compact and multi-family development, will result in an increase in school funding costs, and thus property taxes.

• Many municipalities have responded by using their zoning power to allow only “clean” ratables: Retail/office development, warehouses, hotels, senior housing (no school costs) and large-lot single family homes that will cover any additional costs.

Cause for concern?
Issues: Property tax/school funding concerns

- Several NJ studies have shown that multi-family housing actually creates fewer school children per unit than single family housing.
- To truly address this problem, tax reform is needed to shift the burden away from local governments and to county or state governments.
 Issues:  
Aversion to Density 

• Many communities in NJ have fought development proposals that they fear are too dense
• Several transit oriented developments have been thwarted in part because opponents argued the density was too high
Issues: Aversion to Density

• Much of the impact of higher density development depends on design
• Density has many benefits, including: affordability, energy efficiency and reduced VMT
• Some of the most desirable places in New Jersey have relatively high densities
Issues:
Concerns over Eminent Domain

- Cases like *Kelo* and *Long Branch* have raised awareness about the use of eminent domain for redevelopment projects.
- Property owners fear their property will be taken solely for the benefit of a wealthy developer.
Issues:
Concerns over Eminent Domain

- Reforms are needed to make the eminent domain process in New Jersey more transparent
- As a tool, eminent domain can play a useful role in redevelopment projects that can have broad benefits for a municipality or region.
Issues:
Lack of State Level Coordination

- Various state level land-use initiatives, including COAH, DEP’s sewer service planning, the State Plan, and transportation investment decisions have come in conflict with one another in recent years
Issues:
Lack of State Level Coordination

- More coordination between state agencies is needed
- The State Planning Commission should be the arbiter of conflicts between state agency rules related to land-use
New Jersey Future: Specific Initiatives

- Reform of the State Planning Act
- Improving the TDR process
- Linking GHG reduction to land use
- Sustainable Transportation Policy
- Complete Streets
Specific Initiatives: Improving the TDR process

- Current program is daunting for municipalities
- No successes since statewide law has passed
- Costs must be controlled while still preserving land-owner equity
Specific Initiatives:
Linking GHG reduction to land use

- Working with the DEP to integrate land-use solutions into their greenhouse gas reduction plan
- Providing grants to municipalities to change their land-use policies in a way that will lead to reductions in ghg emissions
Specific Initiatives: Sustainable Transportation Policy

- The Transportation Trust Fund is nearly out of money
- Long-term, responsible funding sources must be found
- More support for transit, link transportation investments to GHG goals, increased safety
Specific Initiatives: Complete Streets

- Require any new or repaired road to be designed with the needs of all users in mind, not just drivers.
- NJ Future worked with the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, the AARP, Disability Rights NJ, Environment NJ and others to push for a statewide Complete Streets policy in NJ, which was implemented in 2009.
New Jersey Future: Learn More

- Sign-up for Future Facts
- Check out our website: www.njfuturer.org
- Find us on social media – Facebook – Twitter – LinkedIn – Youtube