



**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.

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## SAVE THE DATE!

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

### Redevelopment Forum

Friday, March 9, 2012  
Hyatt Regency Hotel  
New Brunswick, NJ  
<http://forum.njfuture.org>

### Smart Growth Awards

Thursday, June 7, 2012  
The Newark Club  
Newark, NJ

## Highlights from 2011

### 1) Christie Administration Releases Much-Anticipated State Strategic Plan

With significant input from New Jersey Future, including an introduction to the nationally recognized Governor's Institute on Community Design, the Christie administration unveiled a new [State Strategic Plan](#) in October to replace the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The new plan focuses state policies and investments on "vibrant regions" by fostering targeted job growth, supporting effective regional planning and preserving critical resources. It also sets up a cabinet-level steering committee to ensure that state agency functional plans are consistent with the State Strategic Plan.

### 2) Poll Shows New Jersey Residents Support State Planning

A [Monmouth University poll](#) commissioned by New Jersey Future and partners found that residents feel the way the state has grown and developed over the past two decades has made it both less affordable and more difficult to travel. The poll found that nearly 70 percent of New Jersey residents support a coordinated, statewide plan to steer growth and development to existing population centers in order to preserve farming communities and open spaces.

### 3) County Wastewater Planning Efforts Make Progress

Eleven of New Jersey's 21 counties have adopted, submitted or are expected to submit plans by the end of 2011 to the Department of Environmental Protection designating where sewers are allowed, and four more counties are expected to follow with submissions in 2012. The county plans map regions where compact growth can occur, and identify areas where investments in wastewater facilities are needed before more development can take place. This framework enables state and local planners to be strategic in identifying and preparing locations for private investment, as well as to prioritize land preservation and natural resource protection.

### 4) Promising Trends for Redevelopment Seen in Building Permit Data

New Jersey Future's look into [building permit activity](#) revealed that the 2000s were a much better decade for redevelopment, and for construction activity in built-out places, than the 1990s were, thanks in no small part to the introduction of the Department of Community Affairs' Rehabilitation Subcode, which made the rehabilitation of existing buildings much cheaper and easier. Moreover, construction activity in these same locations has not been affected as adversely as the rest of the state by the recession of the late 2000s.

### 5) State Funding for Transit and Pedestrian Infrastructure Increased

Although the Christie administration's five-year plan for replenishing the Transportation Trust Fund failed to identify a sustainable source of funding, it suggests moving away from exclusive reliance on debt and back toward the "pay-as-you-go" model. The plan provides a small increase in funding for NJ Transit and the Department of Transportation's FY 2012 capital program, which emphasizes a "fix-it-first" approach rather than capacity expansion and increases the amount of funding available for pedestrian and bicycle projects.

### 6) West Windsor Advances Plans for Equitable Transit-Oriented Development

After a seven-year debate over one of New Jersey's most desirable transit-oriented development sites, the West Windsor Township Council adopted a redevelopment ordinance for the area around the Princeton Junction train station. The development will feature a mix of retail and 800 residences, including 49 moderate-income, 39 low-income and 10 very-low-income units, in accordance with a settlement among West Windsor Township, InterCap Holdings, Fair Share Housing Center, the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey, the Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness and New Jersey Future.

## **7) NJF Files Amicus Briefs with NJ Supreme Court Regarding Affordable Housing Policy**

New Jersey Future joined four other nonprofits in filing “friend of the court” briefs in opposition to rules promulgated by the Council on Affordable Housing. The briefs argued that the rules would undermine the fundamental principles of the *Mount Laurel* doctrine by allowing municipalities to decide for themselves whether to incur any affordable housing obligation, and by permitting municipalities to consider only their local interests in making such decisions, ignoring the housing needs of families throughout the region.

## **8) Mercer County Residents Clarify Concerns about Redevelopment**

New Jersey Future convened [two focus groups](#) of interested Mercer County citizens to gain insight into how residents feel about certain aspects of redevelopment, where they get their information about local redevelopment initiatives, and how they perceive the future of their county. Participants saw two significant barriers: a perceived lack of interest and engagement in redevelopment issues among residents until the threat of change brings out their opposition; and a lack of trust between residents and those who are charged with communicating about such initiatives.

## **9) BPU Halts Proposal to Eliminate Smart Growth Criteria from Clean Energy Incentive Programs**

In October, the Board of Public Utilities’ Office of Clean Energy issued a proposal that would have reversed its policy of targeting energy-efficiency incentives to growth areas identified in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. After hearing from New Jersey Future and others that reversing this policy would undermine efforts to encourage development in smart-growth areas, thus spurring economic growth and creating jobs without harming clean water, farmland and other natural assets, the BPU announced the following month that it would not adopt the proposal.

## **10) Regional Planning Advances in the Highlands**

The Highlands Council continues to receive and approve local petitions for plan conformance, a key vehicle for implementing the Highlands Regional Master Plan through changes to local master plans and associated ordinances. The latest plan approvals were granted to Alpha and Wharton boroughs, Oxford and Pohatcong townships and the town of Hackettstown. The council also approved a Transfer of Development Rights feasibility grant for Hackettstown.

## **11) Complete Streets Programs Show Steady Progress, Greater Potential**

Since adopting its Complete Streets policy, the state Department of Transportation has revised its project review process to give bicycle and pedestrian design considerations greater priority. It has also amended its Local Aid program to give priority to municipalities that have adopted their own Complete Streets policies. A recently published [NJF analysis](#) finds, however, that the quality of local policies varies widely,

in part because there are no uniform standards for what these policies should contain.

## **12) NJF Releases Citizen’s Guide to Transit-Oriented Development**

In March, New Jersey Future released [At the Heart of Your Community: A Citizen’s Guide to Transit Oriented Development](#). This easy-to-understand piece describes how a train station can provide increased mobility to and from a town and increase the number of people who can access goods, services and employment opportunities; how an active train station can be the core of a vibrant, walkable downtown; and how train stations are real estate assets paid for regionally that can be used to increase the values, services and amenities within a town.

## **13) Former Pittsburgh Mayor Headlines NJF Redevelopment Forum**

During his three terms as mayor of Pittsburgh, Tom Murphy presided over the economic resurrection of a city that had been crippled by the loss of nearly half its population since 1950, and more than 100,000 jobs in steel and related manufacturing industries in the 1980s alone. At NJF’s 2011 Redevelopment Forum, he explained that turning around the fortunes of Pennsylvania’s second-largest city required nine components: leadership; vision; clear public benefits, goals and values; institutional capacity; a transparent public process; financing; land control; design excellence; and trust and confidence.

## **14) Smart Growth Awards Honor Exemplary Projects; Jim Gilbert Receives Cary Edwards Leadership Award**

In June, New Jersey Future honored [seven outstanding projects and plans](#) in Trenton, Hoboken, Woodbridge, Hillsborough, Madison Borough, Byram, and Pilesgrove Township/Woodstown Borough with Smart Growth Awards. James G. Gilbert, the first chairman of the State Planning Commission who was a driving force behind the initial adoption of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan in 1992, received New Jersey Future’s Cary Edwards Leadership Award.

## **15) NJF’s First Senior Fellow Inquiry Focuses on County Planning**

New Jersey Future’s inaugural senior fellow, Ingrid Reed, retired director of the New Jersey Program at Rutgers University’s Eagleton Institute of Politics, is spearheading a study of county planning in New Jersey. The first part of the study, undertaken with the assistance of two NJF interns, focuses on statutory requirements for county planning. The second part will survey current county planning practice.

## **16) Special Event Honors Governor Brendan Byrne**

In November, New Jersey Future [honored former Governor Brendan Byrne](#), whose administration was marked by a series of landmark measures that have left an indelible impression on the state’s landscape, including adoption of a long-term program for protecting the Pinelands; establishment of NJ Transit, the first statewide public transit agency in the nation; and restoration of the Hudson waterfront.