

*During the challenges of 2020, New Jersey Future (NJF) continued to focus on our four key areas—infrastructure (especially water), redevelopment, climate risk, and coordinated development, with a commitment to advancing policies and practices that support strong, healthy, and resilient communities for everyone; an equitable and fair recovery; and a better future for New Jersey.*

## INVESTING WISELY IN INFRASTRUCTURE

*Make smart, cost-effective investments in water and transportation infrastructure to increase New Jersey's competitiveness and support healthy equitable communities.*

New Jersey Future launched a new project, Lead-Free NJ, to ensure lead-free children and a lead-safe environment through changes to state and local policy. Staff and partners worked to lay the groundwork for a diverse coalition of state-level policy advocates, grassroots groups in impacted communities, and practitioners. In 2021, this group will become a powerful coalition pushing for action to address legacy lead hazards in low-income communities and communities of color while also creating the conditions for lead-free children statewide.

New Jersey Future continued to facilitate the broader Jersey Water Works collaborative, which grew to over 600 members in 2020. The collaborative released a soft launch of its new data dashboard, called Jersey WaterCheck, to make water system performance accessible to consumers and utilities. Jersey Water Works played an integral role in ensuring systems, policies, and structure were in place to help communities cope with water-related impacts of COVID-19, advising the Governor on water access and affordability during the pandemic.

The Jersey Water Works Lead in Drinking Water Task Force, which published a statewide blueprint to address this problem in a report issued in October, 2019, continued to pursue implementation of its strategy in 2020. The task force provided research findings to help shape and advance critical and comprehensive statewide lead service line removal legislation. A task force subcommittee identified provisions for legislation requiring disclosure of lead in drinking water in rental properties as well as a regulatory strategy for disclosure during home sales. In anticipation of the federal Environmental Protection Agency plans to adopt lead and copper regulation amendments in early 2021, the task force participated in NJDEP's stakeholder process in support of the state's more restrictive regulatory version to maximize public safety in New Jersey.

New Jersey Future successfully shepherded amendments to the Water Quality Accountability Act, which are advancing through the New Jersey Legislature. The bill is critical for ensuring New Jerseyans have safe, healthy drinking water.

The State of New Jersey adopted amendments to its stormwater management regulations requiring the use of green infrastructure in March 2020 which will take full effect in March 2021. New Jersey Future advocated for the change for years through convening meetings, working to gain consensus among environmental, municipal, and builder stakeholders, and submitting formal comments to the State. In addition, New Jersey Future updated its Mainstreaming Green Infrastructure program websites for developers and municipalities.

New Jersey Future developed and launched a new one-of-a-kind tool to help localities determine if a stormwater utility is right for their communities. The New Jersey Stormwater Utilities Resource Center is a one-stop shop, housing technical, legal, and financial information, case studies, and helpful guidance on stormwater solutions, community process, and public engagement.

The Sewage-Free Streets and Rivers (SFSR) campaign elevated community priorities, including climate change and green infrastructure, in the review of CSO plans and their implementation. The campaign's forum on Climate-Ready Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Solutions brought together community members, state and local representatives, and climate change experts. The campaign and the Jersey Water Works CSO Committee sponsored a series of workshops with NewarkDIG to assist community members in reviewing the CSO Long Term Control Plans. The campaign also released resources on the plans, including a series of fact sheets. Members of the SFSR advisory committee are participating on an advisory committee to help NJDEP develop a stakeholder process for the next CSO permit cycle.

## SUPPORTING GOOD LOCAL REDEVELOPMENT

*Empower cities and towns to take the bold and difficult steps needed to meet future demographic, economic, and environmental challenges that support equitable growth.*

New Jersey Future continues to expand its work to assist towns in becoming more aging-friendly. In collaboration with local representatives and leaders, New Jersey Future completed a land use implementation plan for the Village of Ridgewood and land use assessments for the Borough of Pompton Lakes and the Village of Ridgfield Park. Additionally, New Jersey Future participated as a partner organization to initiate a statewide coalition to advance aging-friendly policy and practice across the state.

New Jersey Future worked with its partner JGSC Group to assess economic development and land use opportunities and develop new strategies in the Borough of Bloomingdale. While COVID-19 forced a pause in the process, work will resume again in 2021.

The New Jersey Economic Recovery Act of 2020, which would support place-based economic development, awaits the Governor's signature after passing both houses in December. New Jersey Future made a number of smart growth recommendations for the legislation late last year and again this year which were incorporated into the final bill.

## INCORPORATING CLIMATE RISK IN DECISION-MAKING

*Prepare our communities for the consequences of climate change and sea level rise through long-term planning and education about the growing risk and inequitable impacts of flooding.*

New Jersey Future became an inaugural member of the Rise to Resilience campaign, a regional effort to advocate for local, regional, and national solutions to the climate change challenges threatening our communities. New Jersey Future plays a leading role coordinating the New Jersey arm of the campaign to work on state-specific solutions.

New Jersey Future developed a Community Rating System (CRS) implementation tool to provide a template for municipalities to navigate the FEMA CRS application process, enabling more towns to address flooding in their communities and practice better floodplain management to achieve greater resilience.

New Jersey Future played an integral role in the introduction, amendment, and movement of legislation that would require the land use plan element of municipal master plans to include climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessments. The bill awaits the Governor's signature after passing both houses in December.



## COORDINATING STATE DEVELOPMENTS EFFORTS

*Provide leadership from the Governor's office to direct state investments and incentives to ensure a prosperous, equitable, and sustainable state and to support communities' efforts to create great places to live, work, and play.*

New Jersey Future board members Jose Lozano, Gil Medina, and Executive Director Peter Kasabach were appointed to Governor Phil Murphy's Restart and Recovery Advisory Council. The council was created as part of Governor Murphy's efforts to recover stronger and fairer than before the pandemic. Lozano was appointed council co-chair, and Medina and Kasabach were appointed to the Facilities and Construction Subcommittee and the Main Street Subcommittee, respectively.

New Jersey Future advocated for reduced greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector through a reduction in vehicle miles traveled and submitted comments to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection on its Global Warming Response Act report calling for increased attention to this critical tool.

## JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

New Jersey Future has an active justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) board/staff committee that prioritizes board and staff education and engages in specific steps to move the organization along this path. New Jersey Future recognizes that a core component of sustainable development, smart growth, and conservation is equity and that we are at a time and place where equity needs to be elevated in our work and in New Jersey.

The JEDI 2020 work plan includes internal, external, and programmatic goals approved by staff and board. Staff and board engaged in JEDI activities, training, and conversations that expanded knowledge of inclusive language, unconscious bias, and systemic racism. New Jersey Future participated as a pilot organization for the national Building Movement Project's (BMP) organizational race equity assessment. The assessment provided vital insights on areas to strengthen. Staff are using all of these lessons learned to expand our equity work and support each other in fostering a culture of equity.

In 2020, New Jersey Future kicked off its Geography of Equity and Inclusion initiative. New Jersey is a racially and economically diverse state when looked at in total, but a highly segregated state when broken down by smaller geographies. This initiative seeks to answer the question, "how do we break down the barriers causing geographic segregation and become a geographically more inclusive state?"

## EVENTS AND AWARDS

New Jersey Future held its annual Redevelopment Forum in New Brunswick, drawing more than 500 developers, local and state officials, planners, community group members, and other professionals. Using redevelopment to achieve more equitable communities was a prominent theme. The morning plenary Building Healthy Communities examined ways in which the built environment impacts the health of the people within in it, and Smart Growth America's Leadership Institute President and Former Governor of Maryland Parris Glendening delivered a powerful keynote warning about climate change and inequity as two of the greatest threats to our future.

Dr. Jalonnie White-Newsome from the Kresge Foundation kicked off the sixth annual Jersey Water Works conference with a keynote address entitled "The Race For Clean Water: Racial Equity, Collaboration, and Resilience." The event had a record-breaking 355 participants, 29 speakers, and 10 sessions over a first-ever virtual, multi-day conference. Governor Murphy's remarks highlighted the state's new budget line item on water. The plenary and multiple sessions led by national and local leaders explored initiatives on paying for water infrastructure, and community members joined to discuss green infrastructure initiatives. The conference heavily focused on the need for continued collaboration to ensure clean water for all.

The annual Smart Growth Awards was held before a virtual audience. The 2020 awards honored six projects that best exemplified smart growth principles around the state: the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center; Murphy Varnish Works in Newark, the Social Profit Center at Mill One in Hamilton; Whitlock Mills in Jersey City; the Washington Street Redesign Project in Hoboken, and the City of Newark Lead Reduction Program. The Cary Edwards Leadership Award was given to New Jersey Future Board Chair and former director of the Monmouth University's Kislak Real Estate Institute Peter Reinhart for his career-long commitment to smart, fair, and resilient growth across the government, nonprofit, academic, and business sectors.

New Jersey Future was invited to partner with the New Jersey District of Key Club International and the District Project Steering Committee for the group's service year project "Keeping the Garden State Green." As a partner organization, NJF participated in the club's virtual student rally to kick off the new service year and created a video on our work to mainstream green infrastructure that was shown during the rally.

## RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Creating Great Places to Age in New Jersey: A Community Guide to Implementing Aging-Friendly Land Use Decisions is a comprehensive step-by-step resource for communities to effectively engage in aging-friendly land use programs and initiatives.

Developers Green Infrastructure Guide 2.0, released in partnership with the New Jersey Builders Association, is an updated guide specifically designed for professionals in the real estate sector featuring detailed information and guidance on New Jersey's amended stormwater management rules, which now require the use of green infrastructure.

New Jersey Future issued a series of fact sheets on the combined sewer overflow Long Term Control Plans as part of the Sewage-Free Streets and Rivers campaign. The purpose of the fact sheets is to assist community members and those who are interested in these plans with reviewing them.

New Jersey Future worked on a number of publications with the Jersey Water Works Combined Sewer Overflow Committee, issuing three new resources on workforce development, including case study reports on innovative programs in Camden and Newark and a water workforce training inventory.

New Jersey Future published a number of reports as part of a larger Geography of Equity and Inclusion Series, which seeks to examine segregation in New Jersey through a land use perspective, including: *School District Fragmentation and Residential Segregation*; *The Geography of Poverty and Race in New Jersey*; *Broadband for All: The Geography of Digital Equity in New Jersey*; *The Black-White Homeownership Gap in New Jersey*; and *Municipal Strategies to Diversify Housing Stock for an Aging Population: A Case Study Report*

*A Shift to Working From Home Raises Many Questions About Potential Effects on Other Aspects of Daily Life* looks at some of the potential long-term effects of a significant portion of New Jersey's employed population continuing to work from home permanently.

## IN THE NEWS

New Jersey Future was mentioned in 30 news stories, published four op-eds, one feature magazine article, and issued 14 press releases and media statements on topics including a stronger and more equitable pandemic recovery for New Jersey, ensuring the delivery of safe drinking water during the pandemic, our aging-friendly work with New Jersey towns, and New Jersey's new environmental justice law. New Jersey Future's Redevelopment Forum was featured on NJTV. Additionally, New Jersey Future wrote 51 blog posts that were published on the organization's website and shared via a monthly newsletter.

New Jersey Future continues to expand its reach through social media. By the end of 2020, New Jersey Future's followers on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn totaled approximately 17,680, a nearly three thousand increase over its 2019 social media audience.