



ROUTE ONE PLANNING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Findings and Recommendations From the Front Lines

*A REPORT OF NEW JERSEY FUTURE'S INTERVIEWS
WITH 14 MAYORS, 3 COUNTIES, AND
2 METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS
ALONG THE ROUTE ONE CORRIDOR*

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Explanatory Note for Frequently Used Abbreviations

BID	Business Improvement District
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
CJTF	Central Jersey Transportation Forum
COAH	Council on Affordable Housing
DCA	Department of Community Affairs
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection
DOT	Department of Transportation
DVRDC	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
MLUL	Municipal Land Use Law
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NJTPA	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
OEG	Office of Economic Growth
RCA	Regional Contribution Agreement
RPA	Regional Plan Association
SID	Special Improvement District
TDD	Transportation Development District
TDR	Transfer of Development Rights
TOD	Transit Oriented Development

Executive Summary

Governor Corzine set the foundation for this study of Route 1 corridor on September 7, 2006 when he announced his Economic Growth Strategy. The Strategy represents a “systems” approach to economic development – connecting the goal of economic development with a range of policies and actions that include urban revitalization, center-based, mixed-use development, transportation choices, and the protection of environmental resources. Governor Corzine has stated that growth should be undertaken consistent with the State Plan in order to target infrastructure investments and respect environmental constraints. The attainment of economic growth within these principles advances the mission for which New Jersey Future was founded.

The Governor’s Office of Economic Growth (OEG) launched the “Route One Planning Through Partnerships” project in October 2006 to advance the Strategy by supporting prosperity and sustainable economic growth in this region. Project partners included New Jersey Department of Transportation, New Jersey Transit, the League of Municipalities and New Jersey Future. OEG chose to focus on Route 1 in part because the region has been an engine for economic growth in the last two decades—which some suggest is faltering, and in part because an innovative planning exercise was already underway—the Route 1 Regional Growth Study—led by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT). The Regional Growth Study is designed to develop supportive plans for economic growth, center-based development and transportation improvements.

OEG asked New Jersey Future to initiate this conduct outreach with local governments in the regional study area to determine what is needed to help achieve growth that is consistent with the Strategy and the Growth Study. This project is a breakthrough model for regional, sustainable economic development because it reviews regional economic development planning from the standpoint of county and municipal based input. The project also initiates a communication and negotiation process between state, county and local governments connected to specific places, projects and outcomes. The project connects the planning goals and concepts from people making decisions with support from the Governor’s office and relevant state agencies.

To implement the project, New Jersey Future interviewed each of the 14 municipalities, the three counties and the two Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The interviews uncovered a variety of obstacles to center-based growth, the most compelling of which are described in this report. (Summaries of each interview can be found in Appendices C and D.) In a general order of importance, the obstacles are:

- Increasing traffic and lack of mobility caused by new development projects, regardless of the design or location;
- Resistance to housing, generated by concerns about school costs, density and traffic;
- Lack of regional coordination necessary to achieve projects that have components or effects that cross municipal boundaries;
- Need for state intervention or support for local decisions that advance statewide priorities;
- Need for compromise and action on complex transportation issues.

The interviews also generated a variety of policy recommendations to help achieve the Strategy generally, and center-based growth specifically. Local officials suggested many of the recommendations, while New Jersey Future raised others in the interview process as a means of eliciting feedback. Presented in this report are those recommendations that received substantial support, which fall into three broad categories:

- *Statewide* policy recommendations, including state government support for center-based growth (such as subsidies, incentives, and public outreach), and means to sponsor regional planning through either state or county intervention;
- *Regional* hot spot recommendations, including an east-west connector and a Bus Rapid Transit system; and
- *Local* hot spot recommendations, including several transit villages.

Introduction

Governor Corzine set the foundation for this study of Route 1 corridor on September 7, 2006 when he announced his Economic Growth Strategy designed to revitalize the state's prosperity. The strategy represents a "systems" approach to economic development – connecting the goal of economic development with a broad range of policies and actions that include urban revitalization, center-based, mixed-use development, transportation choices, and the protection of environmental resources. Governor Corzine has explicitly stated that growth should be undertaken consistent with the State Plan, in order to target infrastructure investments and respect environmental capacity constraints. The attainment of economic growth within these principles advances the mission for which New Jersey Future was founded.

The strategy recognizes the critical importance of workforce housing and transportation mobility to attracting and retaining businesses in New Jersey. The strategy therefore calls for a coordinated effort to link new and existing jobs with new sources of workforce housing and improved mobility choices. The Governor's Office of Economic Growth (OEG), which is responsible for implementing the strategy, understands that urban redevelopment and center-based development are the principal strategies that will enable jobs, housing, transportation choices—the sum and substance of prosperity.

On October 3, 2006, Gary Rose, the Director of the OEG, initiated one of the first steps to implement the strategy by launching the "Route One Planning through Partnerships" project in Plainsboro. Joined by Kris Kolluri, the Commissioner of the NJDOT, Pete Cantu, the Mayor of Plainsboro, Bill Dressel, the Executive Director of the New Jersey League of Municipalities, and George Hawkins, the Executive Director of New Jersey Future—Gary Rose introduced a project to strengthen the capacity to plan for and construct center-based development in the corridor.

The Route 1 corridor has been an economic engine for New Jersey for the last two decades. Considerable growth has been focused in the region, particularly from companies in the highly desirable financial and pharmaceutical sectors. This growth has been fueled by, and has demanded, both substantial road improvements to the region, as well as extensive new housing for the workforce – although the housing is frequently located in distant municipalities to the north, south, and west. A recent build-out analysis commissioned by NJDOT indicates that future growth in the area is planned to include 13 new jobs for every new home. However, due to the difficulty of attracting employees to the region without additional housing choices, few believe that this growth is likely to happen. Ominously, many are concerned that the opposite may occur—existing employers moving out of the area due to housing and mobility challenges that seem intractable.

The OEG chose to focus on Route 1 in part because an innovative planning exercise was already underway—the Route 1 Regional Growth Study—led by NJDOT. The goal of the Regional Growth Study is to develop mutually supportive plans for economic growth, center-based development and transportation improvements. The Governor's Office asked New Jersey Future to conduct outreach with local governments in the study area, to determine what was needed to get them to plan for recommended growth.

Project Goals NJ Future was asked to interview the mayors of each of the 15 municipalities, any officials they invite, and the chief planning officers in the three counties and two Metropolitan Planning Organizations, to understand and evaluate the issues pertaining to the potential for center-based growth that connects to public transportation when possible, and that includes work force housing and the potential to support job growth. NJ Future conducted the interviews, evaluated and wrote this cover report, and submitted this final product to the OEG and the Case Team.

The project is managed by a case team comprised of OEG, NJ Department of Community Affairs – Office of Smart Growth, NJDOT, NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), NJ TRANSIT, the Voorhees Transportation Center – Bloustein School, Rutgers University, and DMJM Harris (consultants to NJDOT). The project is co-sponsored by the NJ State League of Municipalities. A joint letter from the League and the Governor's office initiating this project is attached as Appendix A.

The interviews were undertaken consistent with an agreed upon script (attached as Appendix B). Executive Director George Hawkins conducted 19 of the 20 interviews, and a summary of the each was transcribed by NJ Future staff. Interviews were sent back to each municipality for comment, additions or changes. NJ Future presents information discussed in the interviews without direct attribution. NJ Future attaches highlights from each of these interviews in Appendices C and D. This report presents observations and analysis from the interviews, particularly focused on common themes and areas for further discussion and engagement.

NJ Future reviewed each of the interviews with three criteria to trigger elevation of an issue to this report. First and foremost, NJ Future looked for issues, ideas or challenges that were mentioned that inhibit center-based growth in the region – and particularly the building of housing in connection to job retention and growth. Second, NJ Future looked for issues, ideas or challenges that were raised by multiple municipal officials as important for the region. Third, NJ Future looked for issues where the intervention of the Governor's office and/or a concerted focus by relevant state agencies could make a difference in the eventual solution or outcome. NJ Future understands that the capacity of the Governor's office to engage on any of these issues is a limited and valuable resource, and has sought here to identify those issues where such engagement might result in the most effective and far-reaching impact. NJ Future also sought to identify issues that have relevance for transportation corridors generally in the state.

NJ Future recommends that readers review both this report and the attached summaries of the interviews. We emphasize that the interviews are full of information, ideas and topics that are worthy of consideration, some of which are not reviewed in this cover report. We attach the interviews in Appendix D so that readers can delve into the source material, and come to their own conclusions about key issues or places to drive progress in the Route 1 corridor. NJ Future selected examples in Appendix C to demonstrate issues raised in the report, but did not list every example that was relevant.

NJ Future emphasizes that the issues and recommendations presented here are culled from interviews of public officials, conducted and analyzed by NJ Future. These issues do not represent positions or views of the Governor's office or any government agency, nor do they represent a commitment by any government agency to undertake any of the proposed actions. Again, NJ Future recommends that readers review the interviews to gain a full appreciation for all the many relevant issues and policy recommendations raised.

The following entities are included in the study group:

Municipalities: Cranbury, Franklin, Hamilton, Jamesburg, Lawrence, Monroe, New Brunswick, North Brunswick, Plainsboro, Princeton Borough, Princeton Township, South Brunswick, Trenton, West Windsor

Counties: Mercer County, Middlesex County, Somerset County

MPOs: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, North Jersey Transportation Planning Association

Note: Ewing Township is also in the study area. NJ Future conducted an interview with officials in November 2006; however, since that time the township administration has changed and the officials we met with are no longer with the township. As a result, we have removed references to the Ewing interview from this report.

NJ Future would like to acknowledge gratefully the generous support of The Fund for New Jersey, the Princeton Area Community Foundation, the Horizon Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Victoria Foundation, and the William Penn Foundation, for providing critical funds to support this project and the follow-up work to come. Organizations are only as strong as the people that work in them, so we are particularly grateful for the support and advice of Mark Murphy, Nancy Kieling, Andy Johnson, and Michelle Knapik.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

New Jersey Future in this section presents obstacles to center-based growth as identified and described in the interviews. We have ranked them in a rough order of importance, based on the frequency and significance the issues were accorded in the interviews. We provide specific examples of the obstacles whenever possible, but do not list every example from the interviews that are relevant. We recommend reviewing the interview summaries to gain a full appreciation for all the specific examples raised.

In developing these recommendations we selected obstacles to center-based growth – development that includes housing, mobility choices and job creation. We particularly focused on obstacles that were identified in the interviews, and for which the Governor’s office or the state is best suited to design and implement a response.

Readers should note that the obstacle descriptions are designed to be read as stand alone concepts. For this reason and the interconnected nature of many of the ideas, there is purposeful overlap and periodic repetition.

❖ Increasing Traffic and Lack of Mobility

Every participant emphasized that traffic congestion dominates discussion about the potential for new growth. Every municipality and county pointed to certain corridors and/or specific intersections that are bottlenecks to traffic flow, and are major obstacles to attracting new growth (that would in turn generate more traffic to already burdened roads). The public is skeptical that new growth could be designed in a way that would reduce traffic, and is inclined to oppose almost any new growth that generates new traffic – particularly roads near residential centers.

Obvious concerns about the road system parallel a sense that many of the infrastructure resources of the region are nearing their capacity limitations. Concerns are raised about the loss of remaining open space and limited capacity for sewer service and water supply. This connects to the disheartening fact that the Route 1 region suffers some of the worst air quality in New Jersey – suggesting that that capacity of the atmosphere to absorb more automobile emissions is already over a suitable limit.

Many understand that traffic and other infrastructure issues are both problems that need to be addressed on their merits, and symptoms of more fundamental flaws. In short, decisions governing how land is developed in each jurisdiction are often not made within a regional understanding of the resources available. When the capacity of resources are understood—like traffic capacity of an intersection—this resource is rarely allocated in a proactive regional process. More frequently, development decisions for the land are made separately from a full understanding of infrastructure needs or consequences, and subsequent infrastructure investments struggle to keep up. Although enormous sums of money have been spent on the Route 1 corridor over the last 20 years, the need for road improvements seems to remain one step behind the increasing demand fueled by new development.

This painful cycle may be winding to a close however, because there is a general sense that traffic problems have become so challenging that new growth in the area is becoming less likely. Businesses are less interested in moving to this region, and may even relocate out of it, if they are not able to get their employees, customers and suppliers to and from their facilities.

Access, Curb cuts, and Right-of-Way

Officials noted the lack of an understandable access management system for Route 1 and surrounding roads. Curb cuts and site locations for new development compromise mobility and safety. New developments frequently gain direct access to the existing roads, despite existing traffic bottlenecks, rather than directly supporting secondary road options to accommodate the increased number of vehicle trips. Moreover, the effort to speed pass-through traffic conflicts with the addition of curb cuts with short merge lanes. Integrating cars starting from a dead stop to fast moving traffic—frequently changing lanes and accessing similarly abrupt exit driveways—is an ongoing threat to public safety.

Examples.

- Harrison Street and Route I. Placement of existing and new developments hinders future potential to widen roads and intersections. The need for a right turn lane at Harrison Street and Route I is complicated by the existing service station.
- Route 27. Older residential neighborhoods in South Brunswick and newer neighborhoods in Franklin are located along Route 27 due to its connection to Princeton and New Brunswick. But the vast expansion of development—residential and commercial—with their own entry and exit roads and additional lights has brought traffic nearly to a standstill at rush hour.
- NJDOT Access Code. Several officials felt that NJDOT is issuing access permits too easily on Route I and cited the excess of curb cuts along the South Brunswick stretch as an example of this problem.

Connectivity

The lack of parallel access roads to Route I and related major highways makes travel between neighborhoods and shopping and commercial districts more difficult and contributes heavily to traffic on the principle roadway. Route I also bisects important residential and commercial areas to the east and west, and travel to and across the Route I corridor is a principal concern.

Examples.

- East/west connection. The Route I corridor is connected to the bedroom communities, commercial enterprises and major roadways to the east and west. These areas include Montgomery, Hillsborough, East Windsor and similar municipalities, and traffic associated with the New Jersey Turnpike and the commercial destinations at Exit 8A. Yet almost every roadway that provides direct or indirect access to Route I from the east and west—including Route 571, Route 206, Harrison Street, Scudders Fall Road—experience long delays at rush hour. Strong views were expressed both for and against several proposals to improve east/west mobility, including Route 92 and the Hillsborough Bypass. However, most agree that addressing east/west mobility was as important as focusing on the Route I corridor.
- Canal Pointe Boulevard. Canal Pointe is a good example of a parallel access road to Route I, particularly for residential and retail traffic. However, Canal Pointe does not extend from Alexander Road to Quaker Bridge Road to remove larger segments of local traffic from Route I. This connection was not completed due to concerns about the expansion of traffic close to residential neighborhoods. One option is to connect Canal Pointe through to Quaker Bridge Road, but only for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), bicycles and pedestrians.

Bottlenecks

There are critical intersections or stretches along Route I where traffic mobility is particularly restricted, frequently to a degree that inhibits travel to nearby businesses, commercial centers and neighborhoods. In some locations, this is caused by a physical narrowing of the road or the number of lanes, and in others it is due to feeder roads converging.

Examples.

- Route I at Quaker Bridge Road. The intersection of Quaker Bridge Road and Route I stands just north of the critical juncture of Route 295/Route 95 and Route I. Route 295 brings employees, customers and others to the corridor from bedroom communities in Burlington County and other South Jersey locations. Route 95 brings people from Bucks County and other Pennsylvania locations. More development planned in proximity to this intersection will worsen the existing bottleneck, particularly for people trying to travel north. If traffic to this intersection gets much worse, the viability of existing or planned commercial locations to the north—particularly West Windsor, Plainsboro, and the Brunswicks—is significantly reduced.
- Route I in South Brunswick. The length of Route I through South Brunswick is two lanes in each direction, unlike wider sections both to the north and south. Traffic bottlenecks in South Brunswick inhibit further commercial or housing opportunities in this community.

❖ Resistance to Housing

Along with traffic, the other obstacle raised most frequently to center-based growth is the fiscal cost to municipalities associated with new development, particularly with respect to housing. Despite New Jersey having the highest property taxes in the nation, municipal and county officials understand that new housing that includes families with children does not pay for needed services. To support development that includes housing for families, municipal officials face three options: decrease spending on schools to save money; increase property tax rates to raise more money; or, seek more commercial ratables to raise money.

Most officials think the third option is the best of a difficult choice. The need in many municipalities for commercial ratables is usually the prime rationale to support new growth—despite the potential to make traffic worse. Thus, the first two issues raised in this paper are often in direct conflict—officials feel that new growth would add to existing traffic and infrastructure problems, but frequently support new commercial growth due to the fiscal need.

School costs and property taxes

For most elected officials, the need to avoid new housing (and the additional families and then new ratables or higher property taxes) is a matter of political survival. Many officials highlighted the disparity between the taxes collected on new homes in comparison to the per pupil cost of education. Conversations over additional housing in this context, no matter what the design or verbal support given, are academic. Often, officials seek to balance the fiscal equation by approving senior housing (which does not generate children and school costs) and high-end homes (to increase property tax revenue in an effort to cover school costs). Without an answer to the financial imbalance caused by housing, families, schools and property taxes, significant new neighborhood growth is unlikely.

Examples.

- Transit Villages. The Northeast Corridor train line parallels Route 1. Transit villages are under serious consideration at existing stations in Hamilton and West Windsor, and at potential new stations in North Brunswick and South Brunswick. Several stations are also planned if the West Trenton Line is reactivated—including the GM site in Ewing. For all the potential transit villages, school costs and associated property tax increases associated with housing within the village are generating either outright opposition, or significant caution, from residents and their elected officials.
- South Brunswick. South Brunswick has experienced extensive growth in both housing and commercial developments over the last several decades. Additional commercial growth is planned that will add to what is already the second highest ratable base in Middlesex County. Officials in South Brunswick, where a new school has been built for each of the last five years, are concerned about the prospect of new housing that would continue to increase the need for new schools and the property tax revenue to fund them.
- Monroe Township. Monroe Township has also experienced significant growth as part of the Turnpike Exit 8A warehouse/light manufacturing region. However, to control school costs and local taxes, the municipality has favored building age-restricted housing rather than work-force and family housing. Even with this focus, the Township uses 30 trailers to house school children, and is planning a new elementary school and high school, and recently expanded the library, community center and senior center.

Fear of Density and Traffic

Center-based growth to some people means too many people and too many cars. There is a fear of change, particularly when redevelopment is being used to rehabilitate or recreate an area in a way that will bring in more people and commerce. These negative public perceptions of neighborhood densities are cited often by officials as a stumbling block to sound, smart growth development.

Examples.

- North Brunswick. The Township has found it very difficult to convince people that new housing and new development are not inherently bad, given existing traffic conditions. Officials felt there is a general need to educate people about sustainability, reducing greenhouse CO2 production, and economic sustainability

- and the connection of these issues to center-based development. There is resistance to any development that will add more cars (and traffic) to already-congested roadways.
- Plainsboro. Plainsboro is building an ambitious town center that in many ways embodies the center-based development pattern the state seeks to expand in other places. In building its town center, local officials found themselves in a struggle to convince people of the benefits of density and good design. They found the public relations process to be lengthy and a lot of work, requiring consultants to help sell the project to residents and coordinate the PR process and public meetings.
- Princeton Township. The Princeton Shopping Center is a good example of a site that could be redeveloped with greater density and more housing, including affordable housing. But the site is privately owned and the developer does not want to change the site because it would mean having to fight with nearby residents who would likely oppose any change. Officials note that it is extremely difficult to do anything in places where people already live, because people fear change and density.

Housing for Whom?

The typical “market rate” for housing in the Route 1 region is expensive, due to high demand, high incomes and high costs associated with the New York and Philadelphia metropolitan regions. As a result, housing for the less wealthy and the middle-income workforce is not likely to be built. The reality is that “market-rate” housing in this region is not affordable to a large percentage of the potential middle and lower-income population. This challenge is complicated by uncertainty surrounding the Council on Affordable Housing third round rules governing affordable housing obligations.

Example.

- North Brunswick Transit Village. Significant new housing is being considered for a planned new transit station and associated village in North Brunswick. Although plans are still under consideration, the projected price of the units start in the \$600,000 range for the 2 bedroom apartments, and escalate from there. These prices seem to be appropriate market rate units for the region, but will be beyond the range of much of the workforce.
- Plainsboro. The Township has thousands of apartment units and condos which could serve as adequate workforce housing; however, because of the region’s housing market, even the smallest of those apartments is \$1,000 a month. Again, this housing is not affordable to much of the workforce and lower income residents and families.
- Monroe and Cranbury. The relative lack of workforce housing for employees at commercial facilities in the area requires them to commute into Monroe and Cranbury from other municipalities with larger stocks of affordable housing – particularly the Brunswicks.

❖ Lack of Regional Coordination

Virtually every official interviewed raised the strength and weakness of local decision-making in the Route 1 corridor. On one hand, local decision-making places officials closest to their constituents, and enables residents to have a say in decisions about their neighborhoods. On the other hand, there is a general sense that decision-making is happening in a piecemeal fashion throughout the Route 1 region—and while residents have some control over their own neighborhoods, most have almost no say over decisions in nearby municipalities that still have significant impact on their own.

Home Rule – a “blessing and a curse”

Home rule, or the municipal authority to control the land use, school, police and other decisions in local jurisdictions, is alive and well on the Route 1 corridor. Officials in nearly every interview expressed that there is little coordination between towns, even when they share a road. They cited the fact that local governments have little obligation, responsibility or incentive to coordinate their efforts. There is little to no real regional planning, especially given the preoccupation each town faces to secure additional ratables. These “misincentives” built into the property tax system counter the benefits that planning could bring.

Local Politics

Politics was also cited by officials as an obstacle to center-based growth in the region. In particular, the lack of continuity of leadership and pressure to be reelected within short term limits makes it difficult to “do the right thing.” The timeframe for creating mixed-use, transit-friendly communities, particularly in an area like the Route 1 corridor, is a long one and municipal leaders are making decisions based on short-term goals. The political pressure felt by elected officials is a disincentive to take risks on building a new vision for their communities and encourages a more myopic view of the world.

Weak Counties

Many municipal officials agreed with the county perspective that counties are natural institutions to consider and manage regional impacts of local decisions. However, by statute, county officials highlighted that their oversight of local decisions is limited to subdivisions and site plans on county roads with greater than 1 acre of disturbance. Counties are authorized to look at traffic and drainage impacts on county roads and can require impact statements and make recommendations to towns, but officials do not believe they are in the position to approve/deny an application. In addition to lacking the authority to intervene in local decision-making, counties also lack the manpower or resources to manage complicated, multi-municipal development.

❖ Need for State Intervention

Municipal and county officials report that state agencies often disagree among themselves, or within their own departments sometimes, about the suitable course on any particular issue. One hand of the state may suggest a course that is in conflict with a second hand of the state. Moreover, the state is not nearly engaged enough to help drive decisions at the local level that would support statewide priorities.

Officials like the idea of the state becoming more directly involved in the corridor, provided the state can coordinate its purpose and message. If the state can bring to the table transportation, housing or other incentives, then it should also help clarify and enforce obligations from all sides. If the state agrees to specific road improvement projects, for example, this commitment should be in exchange for a commitment from the relevant counties and municipalities to make consistent planning or zoning changes. The reverse is also true: if a municipality agrees to change zoning to allow center-based growth consistent with state goals, then the state needs to commit to supportive infrastructure and program commitments. There is general agreement that meaningful state incentives for center based growth are likely to be the linchpin to successful outcomes. Of course, these incentives need to be designed to answer the challenges already raised – particularly traffic and school costs.

Urban Policy and Targeted Investment

Officials agree that urban revitalization is essential to future economic growth: to provide access to jobs for urban and other low-income residents; to take advantage of existing transit and other infrastructure investments in urban areas; to deliver better services to its citizens; and, to respond to widespread race and income disparities. Yet urban officials interviewed felt that state policy toward urban municipalities does not seem to match the rhetoric with concerted, comprehensive programs to support the revitalization of urban areas – even in some cases where the state owns much of the land that could be revitalized. Yet even successful urban redevelopment triggers traffic and development challenges, as larger numbers of people seek to live, work and play in areas often underserved by the road network.

Examples.

- Eminent domain. New Brunswick’s mayor expressed concern about the movement to reduce the ability of municipalities to exercise eminent domain, which is a critical tool to support urban redevelopment in New Jersey. Without the power of eminent domain, the mayor stated that very little of what has been done in New Brunswick would have been possible. Although the power is rarely used, its availability is an important negotiating tool in acquisition discussions with the multiple landowners that are typically involved in urban redevelopment projects. The mayor pointed out that New Brunswick has only used eminent domain on rental units.

- Trenton Parking Lots. Trenton's mayor pointed out that the state owns or rents most of the large parking lots that surround state office buildings; lots that cover or cut-off much of Trenton's most valuable land near the Delaware waterfront. This land has the most potential to lure new center-based growth with a mixture of housing types, new retail and commercial opportunities—in places near state jobs and public transportation. Yet Trenton officials bitterly complain that the state has been reluctant to move forward on any comprehensive plan to enable this land to be brought back into productive use for the state capital. The state has a unique opportunity in this case to play a direct role in driving urban revitalization.
- Route 29, Trenton. Also in Trenton, officials are aware that Route 29 was designed to get people in and out of the city as fast as possible—minimizing their contact to the city in the meantime, while also cutting off much of Trenton's population from the Delaware waterfront. Although the state now seems to support transforming Route 29 in Trenton to a pedestrian-friendly boulevard, positive steps on this issue have been slow.
- Trenton and New Brunswick Train Stations. In Trenton, officials are encouraged that the transit station in Trenton is being revitalized. There is a concern, though, that there has not been comprehensive planning over the residential or commercial developments that could be considered and approved as a direct complement to the station. In New Brunswick, officials feel that while the existing train station building is attractive and historic, it needs to be significantly upgraded. It only serves one side of the tracks and is too small to accommodate current and future use.
- Brownfields. Older communities often face the need to redevelop contaminated sites. In Hamilton, officials cited abandoned gas stations as an issue. Most are prime real estate – corner lots, located at entrances to neighborhoods and on major thoroughfares. The Township is looking to reuse these sites as parks, small-scale retail, etc. The sense is that to make the redevelopment viable, the property owners need to be freed from liability. Property owners have learned that sometimes it is cheaper to abandon the sites and walk away from them.

Smart Growth as a Priority

Officials working on “smart growth” projects and plans in their communities do not believe that the state does enough to help them succeed. Although NJ TRANSIT offers support, officials felt that every state agency, and even the Governor’s office, should focus on building a comprehensive support plan for potential transit villages and transit-oriented development. Currently, planning, financial and public support from state agencies seems minimal in comparison to the significant fiscal and traffic challenges presented by the projects and their importance to the future prosperity of the state.

Examples.

- Transit Village Program. Officials point out that the Transit Village program may offer the best opportunity to address the often conflicting goals confronting land use in New Jersey. Transit villages can support job growth, housing opportunities, mobility choices, pedestrian options, energy efficiency and community building – in a manner that does not spread out over the landscape. But officials do not sense that state agencies are coordinated in a way that gives transit villages enough priority to significantly aid in implementation.
- Trenton Parking. The decades-long inability to redevelop wide swaths of surface parking in Trenton undercuts the notion that the revitalization of existing urban centers is a state priority.
- Cranbury Redevelopment. Cranbury has planned for many years to preserve a large parcel of open land, previously used for commercial purposes, as open space. The land has been empty for many years, and is now the host to thriving, forested habitat. However, due to a brownfield clean-up undertaken on the parcel, the state initiated an independent process to direct new growth to the parcel – without the municipality being part of the planning process. The town is deeply frustrated that the state could move forward so far without input from the municipality.
- Washington Town Center. Although not in the study area, officials in the area are keenly aware of what has transpired with the nearby Washington Town Center. Washington Township is building a mixed-up center consistent with smart growth principles. However, NJDOT has not been willing to change the

speed or designation of a roadway that bisects the new center and will undercut the sense of community and public safety. Years of delay and cost have been incurred as this policy conflict drags on.

❖ Need for Compromise and Action

Every official had participated or is participating in one or more forums about the future of Route 1, and all are aware of numerous studies and plans for improving the corridor that have been authored over the last several decades. Some believe that Route 1 is the most heavily studied road/corridor in the country. Yet most are also deeply frustrated that few if any of the recommendations have been implemented, and there is deep skepticism that the state will engage in a meaningful way to change current trends in the Route 1 corridor.

At the same time, many officials also acknowledge two countervailing points. First, significant funds have been spent on the Route 1 corridor over the last several decades—including road widening, intersection redesign and expansion and construction of overpasses. The frustration that not enough has been done in comparison to these projects underscores how quickly development and traffic needs outstrip even significant investments. Second, much of the reason for the difficulty of moving forward on many projects stems from the lack of agreement about the proper course of action.

This lack of agreement is a foreseeable consequence of local land use planning. Most officials mention planning and development that makes sense within their borders. Many municipalities also describe planning decisions by their neighbors that have adverse impacts on them. Moreover, when decisions made by multiple jurisdictions are combined in their impact, the regional outcome is often unworkable. Despite the years of regional studies and meetings, the fragmentation of the development choices highlights a lack of effective regional decision-making. To compound the problem, local decisions often make future regional mobility choices nearly impossible.

Everyone agreed that there is a compelling need for action on general traffic and development problems. Given home rule and deeply held differences on the appropriate next steps, there is a parallel need for compromise to move forward.

Examples.

- Exit 8A. The region and traffic corridors surrounding Exit 8A have been heavily studied for many years, including a recent task force and study. However, few of the recommendations have been implemented – even some that are relatively inexpensive. Several officials cited the example of using a color-coded signage system to help direct trucks coming off the exit to the appropriate warehouse as a case in point. This relatively inexpensive improvement would reduce the traffic and safety problems associated with trucks that have to make a wrong turn and need to turn back on roads not designed for such large vehicles.
- Route 92. Although many strong views are expressed both in favor and against Route 92, all agree that the road in some configuration or another has been planned for decades. Several officials felt strongly that commitments had been made previously, and that development decisions in their jurisdictions had assumed that the road would be built. Plainsboro, for example, has zoned for 6.5 million square feet of additional Class A office space in the Forrestal Complex, and some existing commercial space is vacant. The difficulty of gaining access to these parcels from Route 1 or other roadways is seen as the primary inhibition to job growth in this area. Due to congestion on Route 1 to the south around Quaker Bridge Road, Washington Road and Harrison Street, commercial and residential destinations in the proximity of the proposed Route 92 are harder to get to from points south. Lack of a suitable east west route is also seen as pushing trucks onto local roads. However, officials from the municipality where Route 92 would be built are adamantly opposed based on concerns over community character and environmental harm. Several officials who support Route 92 do so on the basis that it would be extended to connect west to Route 206 (essentially bypassing the Princetons). This extended route is either not possible or very unlikely due to residential development that has been approved and built directly in the proposed route.
- Hillsborough Bypass. This proposed road (bypassing Route 206) could help connect the Route 1 region with destinations to the west. Some officials support the road as a way to improve mobility from the

west to employment destinations on Route 1, and to reduce traffic on Route 206. At least one town plans center-based development along a “calmed” portion of Route 206—with pass-through traffic utilizing the bypass. Other officials adamantly oppose the bypass due to its potential to dump traffic on their local roads. There is also concern that the bypass itself could induce additional development, adding to the traffic on all the roads in the region.

- Lawrence/West Windsor at Quaker Bridge Road. The importance of the Route 1 and Quaker Bridge Road intersection is undisputed. Quaker Bridge Road is just north of the juncture of Route 1 and 95/295, which is the entry point for many of the employees and customers coming to the corridor. Quaker Bridge Road is the dividing line between Lawrence and West Windsor, and each town is facing the prospect of major new developments. Lawrence is considering a vast expansion of the Quaker Bridge Mall, with the potential for 65 percent increased retail space and the creation of several thousand new jobs. Across the street, West Windsor is also considering a new mixed use “life style center” on the vacant American Cyanamid site. Plans for each site will add choices and jobs to the region. Yet many officials also worry that if these expansions are not coordinated with each other and with the regional road network, new traffic flowing through this intersection will come to a stand still – threatening the economic viability of sites all along the corridor.
- BRT Right-of-Ways. A key solution to reduce traffic and increase mobility is a proposal to create a Bus-Rapid-Transit (BRT) loop along Route 1, with spurs tied into residences and urban areas to the north and south—including Burlington County, Trenton and Pennsylvania to the south, and New Brunswick to the north. Building the entire BRT route is likely to take many years, extending as long as a decade or more. Many officials are concerned that site plan decisions made in the meantime would conflict with, and therefore preclude, necessary right of ways and other access needs.

Recommendations

New Jersey Future in this section presents recommendations that received substantial support from local officials in the interviews. In many cases, officials volunteered these solutions in response to general open-ended questions. In some instances, officials offered their perspective on ideas that were presented for discussion. Both the general questions and policy ideas that were floated for consideration are identified in the Interview Questionnaire, which was developed by the Case Team for the Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy project (see Appendix B). All the recommendations offered have relevance to the Route 1 region, and some also have broad statewide applicability. We have therefore organized them into two categories: statewide policy recommendations, which have relevance to Route 1 and beyond, and Route 1 recommendations, which are specific to the corridor. We have further divided the Route 1 section into ideas that apply to the corridor as a region, and into specific “hot spot” policy recommendations that are local in nature.

In developing these recommendations we followed the same methodology employed in the issue development: solutions that support center-based growth, including housing, mobility choices and job creation; solutions that were supported in the interviews; and, solutions that the Governor’s office or the state would be best suited to design and implement.

Readers should note that the recommendations are designed to be read as stand alone concepts. For this reason and the interconnected nature of many of the ideas, there is purposeful overlap and periodic repetition among the recommendations.

❖ Statewide Policy Recommendations

Although the interviews were designed to elicit recommendations relevant to the Route 1 corridor, many of the ideas raised are relevant to policy directions for the entire state.

Encourage Center-Based Growth with Subsidies and Incentives

- School costs. Officials emphasized that center-based growth is unlikely to be planned and built unless a response to the fiscal disincentive to family and workforce housing created by the property tax structure is implemented. This sentiment was highlighted by officials in virtually every interview.
- Workforce housing. Officials warned that there is little likelihood of workforce housing being built in any of these Route 1 towns without major state incentives. Officials also note that municipalities are not able to change the market, which means that some creativity is needed with low-interest mortgages and other incentives. Without such incentives, housing that is built in this region will continue to be too expensive for middle-income people. Officials felt that there already are incentives for low-income housing, although more are needed. However, middle-income housing is virtually impossible given the current market conditions.
- Impact fees. Officials expressed support for a clear authority to require impact fees for new development projects. Impact fees would impose additional fees on developers to help cover the cost of new services required by the population and traffic increases. Plainsboro has already used them extensively with success.
- Planning grants. Officials in many interviews cited the high cost and technical expertise required to plan successfully for center-based development and redevelopment projects. It would be very helpful to provide funding for municipalities to enable them to hire consultants, thus helping them embark on visioning programs to educate the public.
- Transit Oriented Development and Transit Villages. Officials agreed that transit villages represent perhaps the best opportunity for center-based growth that includes significant new workforce housing within the Route 1 corridor. Several existing and new transit villages are under active consideration. All of these projects, however, are facing existing or potential opposition due to the fiscal and traffic impacts associated with the projects. In each case, however, significant new residential development is being considered near existing or new jobs. Given the importance of these sites to the achievement of the

state's economic and housing goals, officials felt that state support for communities considering TOD developments, including transit villages, should be considerably expanded.

- **Brownfields**. Officials highlighted that the costs associated with remediating brownfield sites can be an impediment to redevelopment, particularly in urban areas. Hamilton Township suggested funds to help identify and quantify the type and extent of contamination in the ground. Clarifying the costs associated with brownfield sites in advance can help spur negotiations with potential redevelopers.

Create an Ombudsman for Local Government

Redevelopment projects by their nature involve issues that touch on multiple agencies and multiple offices within agencies. Officials suggested it would be very helpful to towns all over the state to offer a single point of entry for municipal technical assistance and funding, separate from the existing policy ombudsman. Municipal officials are often uncertain about where to start and do not have the time or experience for the necessary legwork. Several officials supported the establishment of an ombudsman in state government that would be responsible for coordinating development among all government agencies and between municipalities. Officials were keenly aware that many pieces need to be aligned in order for something to happen (and to happen well), and that even after the initial contact, keeping all the affected parties talking to each other is critical.

Use State Authority to Sponsor Regional Planning

Officials felt that planning help from the state on local issues that have clear region-wide and even state-wide impact is needed.

Examples.

- **Regional compacts**. Officials suggested that the state should take a lead to outline a land use compact for each town in the Route 1 corridor. The compact would present a common approach to the design and development for the corridor, particularly on those issues where consistent municipal actions across borders is necessary to support regional smart growth projects such as the BRT. The compact would outline specific steps each town must take such as setbacks and set-asides. The compact should also define the state's role and list the incentives the state will provide to towns for taking part in the compact. Officials recognized that such a compact might require legislative changes. Officials suggested that the state should provide assistance to towns for how they should handle their master plan revisions and major land development reviews in accordance with the compact. This compact could be the precursor to a regional endorsement petition under the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.
- **Quakerbridge Road and BRT**. Nearly everyone agreed that resolving potential transportation problems at the intersection of Quakerbridge Road and Route 1 is critical to the region – an issue which is directly tied to the viability of the BRT route at this location. Triggered by issues raised in the interviews, the Governor's office working with NJDOT initiated a targeted negotiation on this intersection and the BRT with relevant municipal, county, and state agencies, and developers. Officials felt that this approach to state-initiated regional planning and action could be expanded to other issues identified in the interviews: including Mercer Crossing, Exit 8A, East-West Connector.
- **Princeton Medical Center**. Officials in Princeton Township and Borough expressed that state assistance would have been helpful when the towns were considering whether to allow the hospital to expand at its existing location, or move to a new location. Officials felt that the state could have helped determine if the additional 500,000 square feet for hospital expansion was necessary in a regional context, and how the expansion would affect the local neighborhood and nearby communities.
- **Millstone Bypass**. Similar to Route 92, the Millstone Bypass was a road planned for several decades before coming up for a final decision. Municipalities associated with the road had conflicting views – although in this case the town where it would be built favored the road as designed, and several surrounding towns did not. The outcome of this conflict, however, offers some hope for future decision-making. A unique stakeholder process initiated by NJDOT that lasted for more than a year developed a consensus solution that achieves the original traffic goals, but is less harmful to the environment and other related issues.

Enhance Role of Counties

County officials felt in particular that if smart growth strategies are being pursued on the Route 1 corridor, then regional/county entities should be identified and empowered to negotiate with municipalities around the needed land use decisions.

- County and many municipal officials suggested that the state needs to have the political courage to allow for more regional control over development decisions. The state could consider designating a special regional commission for the Route 1 corridor, similar to the Pinelands Commission, which would have the power to oversee the region's land use to ensure development, traffic and housing decisions that make sense in the broader context of the region.
- County officials felt that the County Enabling Act needs "more teeth," particularly to intercede when there are developments with regional impact. Officials suggested that this change could limit county involvement to projects of a specific size.
- Officials suggested that the state should consider forming a Transportation Development District for the corridor. They noted that there would need to be clear leadership to guide the plan.
- Officials suggested that county government could be a significant player in convening municipalities and combining services. For example, firefighting, animal control, and other services could be county-level services – which could save considerable amounts of duplicative effort, money and bureaucracy.

Increase Public Outreach to Support Smart Center-Based Growth

Officials overwhelmingly requested more help from the state to stand beside them to help "sell" the concept of center-based development to constituents, particularly the aspects that will require more housing and will generate more traffic. This proactive support will help to make smart growth development less daunting and will convey the importance of this type of development to the future of the state. This outside voice will also help persuade the public that developments like transit villages are important to the quality and prosperity of the community, region and state, and not just in the interest of developers or other commercial interests.

Specific suggestions included:

- Assist with media outreach. Officials recommended that the state should reach out to the media, including editorial board visits, to convince the public that specific smart growth plans are worthwhile. Municipal officials do not feel they can advocate for this kind of controversial direction alone.
- Regional visioning. Official suggested that the state should take the lead in embarking upon regional visioning processes that could lead to regional compacts to govern critical aspects of growth—road access agreements, long term planning for public transportation, and regional provision of housing.

❖ Route 1 *Regional Hot Spots*

We present in this section policy recommendations that apply to the Region One corridor in particular. We focus here on issues that span multiple municipal boundaries, and address in the next section recommendations that pertain to specific local hot spots.

East/west connection

Officials suggested that NJDOT, with the support of the Governor's office, should initiate a parallel process to review mobility, housing, affordability and commercial potential in the east/west corridor associated with Route 1. Many of the employees, customers and suppliers who are active along Route 1 come from locations to the east and west. Improvements or changes on Route 1 must be connected to complementary efforts to the east and west.

Route 206. The Route 206 corridor is ripe to be the subject of a jobs, housing and mobility scan. This corridor, which crosses Route 1 in several critical places, runs at least from Trenton to Somerville, and includes major bedroom and commercial locations. This corridor could also be the subject of a significant new investment in transit-oriented development along a revamped West Trenton line.

Route I to the Turnpike. Although there is vigorous disagreement about the appropriate next steps, there is a recognized need to address improved mobility from the Turnpike to Route I and from Route I to Route 206 to the west.

- Route 92. Although there have been many pronouncements about the status of this road, most local officials are still uncertain about its status. A clear statement would allow for decisions to be made about its future, or to focus on other alternatives. One option is to build one or more of the segments of the road that have independent value to the entire route.
- Route 522. Several officials highlighted that Route 522 is a four lane road (two lanes in each direction) currently connecting Route 27 through Route I into South Brunswick. However, Route 522 ends in South Brunswick close to a potential connection to the turnpike. South Brunswick officials suggested that an alternative route would extend Route 522 to Route 130, and improve 130 to Exit 8A, with an enhanced spur from Exit 8A to Route 130. In addition, Route I could be widened in South Brunswick from Route 522 to Plainsboro, which would help make the east/west connection to destinations to this “northern” section of Route I – which are inhibited by growth and congestion at Quaker Bridge Road, Alexander Road, Washington Road and Harrison Street, as well as through South Brunswick itself. The elements:
 - Widen Route I in South Brunswick from Route 522 to Plainsboro. This does not achieve the length of widening supported in South Brunswick, but is a significant improvement. This option also does not provide as direct access to Plainsboro as would Route 92, but it does allow for improved access from 522.
 - Work with Green Acres to facilitate the disposition of three acres of preserved land that is in the path of the Route 522 extension, and consider “trading” this parcel for clear title to 20 acres in Pigeon Swamp (there is a dispute between South Brunswick and Green Acres about who owns the Pigeon Swamp parcels), or for some other suitable preservation project. Extend Route 522 to Route 130.
 - Widen Route 130 to the connection to Exit 8A.
 - Build the first spur component of Route 92 from the Turnpike to Route 130.

Exit 8A

The area around this exit has become both a warehouse and light manufacturing district—with light manufacturing frequently becoming part of the warehouse operation. Truck traffic both to and from these facilities coming into and through the Route I corridor is important to the commercial viability as well as public safety and quality of life of regional residents. Although not the subject of this report, a similar report prepared on Exit 8A and associated issues by the Municipal Land Use Center needs to be reviewed for their critical importance both to the economy and the viability of the Route I corridor. Officials interviewed for this report outlined that needs include much better signage, better access from Route I to Route 33, and a truck facility that can allow trucks to park for short periods without clogging up local roads with idling trucks.

Bus Rapid Transit

Officials agree that the BRT represents one of the few opportunities to decrease vehicle miles traveled in the region, while also connecting neighborhoods with workforce housing to job locations. Many officials stated that the Governor’s office should follow the recommendation made by the Central New Jersey Transportation Forum to designate a single official responsible for coordinating multi-agency support for this critical project. (Since the interviews, the Governor’s office and NJDOT has initiated a targeted negotiation with the relevant municipal, county, and state agencies, and developers for a key part of the BRT at Quakerbridge Road.)

- BRT systems are likely to become the state’s best alternative for new investment in transit, given the cost of installing new rail lines. NJDOT has asked the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority to get more involved in the BRT through becoming co-chair of the Central Jersey Transportation Forum (CJTF). NJTPA is also involved in BRT planning in Newark and New Brunswick.
- What about New Brunswick – Piscataway – East Brunswick? New Brunswick would like to see a BRT system that runs from Piscataway to New Brunswick to East Brunswick.

- Several officials cited a study done in the late 1990s with Rutgers, the City of New Brunswick, the county, and Urbitran. The study showed that the minimum ridership on the route (Piscataway/Busch Campus/UMDNJ campus to downtown New Brunswick to the retail area along Route 18 in East Brunswick) would be 50,000 per day. These numbers represent excellent ridership estimates. A preliminary engineering study shows that the route can be done with a dedicated path (for either BRT or light rail). The New Brunswick mayor believes this BRT is critical to future development in the city and is needed to meet the current and future transportation needs of Rutgers University.

Route 27

Officials from municipalities in proximity to Route 27 stated that development and mobility along the route is becoming a bottleneck to prosperity and quality of life that fuels the challenges facing Route 1. A coordinated review of current and future plans for housing and commercial developments along Route 27 could yield a compact to govern the design and location of future growth among several municipalities.

Somerset County identified Route 27 as a potential TOD bus corridor. In the study, all vacant and underutilized land was identified along the corridor, and it was proposed that the density from those undeveloped parcels be transferred to certain higher-density nodes along the corridor where the bus would stop frequently. A Bus Transit Overlay Zone would be introduced, and then all land use and design standards along the corridor would be modified to help facilitate better utilization of bus transit along the corridor. Somerset officials wondered whether such a pioneering project could be undertaken in New Jersey, as it has been done in other states (such as Montgomery County, PA).

Mercer Crossings

Local officials from the area around the Farmer's Market at the juncture of Ewing, Lawrence and Trenton highlighted that the area has been the subject of design charrettes with the Urban Land Institute and the Project for Public Spaces. They suggest that road improvements and other infrastructure upgrades could foster this area as an incubator for small, home-grown businesses – in contrast to the national chains and big boxes that dominate much of the rest of Route 1. Workforce housing is in plentiful supply nearby, and improvements would add the quality of life improvements that could make this area prosper.

❖ Route 1 Local Hot Spots

Hamilton Transit Village

Hamilton had approved a redevelopment plan that included significant residential and housing development associated with the Hamilton transit village and the adjacent American Standard site. However, significant neighborhood opposition has arisen, mostly driven by concerns over local traffic, affordable housing requirements and increased school costs. Membership on the Hamilton Council has changed over this issue in particular. (Since the interview was conducted, the redevelopment plan for the transit village has been rescinded.) The mayor and some town officials are still interested in the village, and feel that the state has not provided enough support in describing the project and its costs and benefits to the public. NJ TRANSIT has been actively involved in planning for this site, and has offered to meet with the new council to determine whether a redesigned village might gain broader support. Hamilton officials stated that a clear analysis and understanding of the fiscal and economic impacts of transit villages in New Jersey is necessary to respond to community concerns.

The mayor has suggested approving and building the village in stages and evaluating the outcomes at each stage before embarking on the next.

- School costs subsidy. A program to subsidize or at least offset additional school costs associated with transit villages might help respond to local concerns.
- Traffic. NJDOT should determine if any targeted road improvements might alleviate concerns over traffic on local roads.
- Point person. The Governor's office should designate a person or process to help provide analysis and outreach to Hamilton residents to help understand the impacts of the village, including the positive features.

- Convene. The state might consider initiating meetings with the major interests groups to determine if a consensus can be reached. (Since this interview was conducted, a process has been initiated in part by Assemblyman Bill Baroni and supported by the mayor, council and NJ TRANSIT, to discuss plans for the transit village.)

North Brunswick Transit Village

North Brunswick has engaged in a comprehensive outreach process, spearheaded by the potential developer, to consider the development of a new transit village at the old Johnson & Johnson facility adjacent to Route 1. The outreach process for this site has been extensive and prolonged, and has included a specific fiscal impact analysis by Professor Listoken of the Bloustein School at Rutgers. The mayor notes that serious concerns are still being raised by residents over induced traffic to the site, property tax worries, and whether homes would be affordable to the workforce. If some of these issues, particularly with respect to traffic, are not resolved, the mayor is concerned that the public might reject the village – no matter what the design.

North Brunswick's mayor stated that investments by the state, particularly NJDOT, could be specifically targeted to alleviate, and even to improve, the traffic challenges that constrain the development of this transit village.

- Finnegan's Lane. The extension of Finnegan's Lane to Route 130 would help respond to concerns by residents that traffic associated with the transit village will clog neighborhood roads. This alternative road, also addressing the east west pressure across Route 1, may constitute a vital connection to the transit village. The mayor and county officials noted that this extension will require discussions with NJDEP due to the presence of wetlands, although the land is owned by Middlesex County.
- Adams Lane/Cozzens Lane and Route 1. The mayor emphasized that this intersection, which is already at a service level of F (failing), is another critical lynchpin for the North Brunswick transit village. An extension of Finnegan's Lane will help, although improvements to this intersection will be necessary to alleviate resident concerns about traffic to local neighborhoods.
- School costs subsidy. The mayor pointed out that a program to help subsidize increased net school costs will help overcome local concerns, as well as clarify the support of the Governor's office about the importance of transit villages to the prosperity of the state.

West Windsor / Princeton Junction Transit Village

West Windsor is actively considering the redevelopment of the Princeton Junction train station into a mixed-used transit village. As in North Brunswick, residents are concerned about immediate traffic and schooling constraints. West Windsor's mayor states that direct public support from the Governor's office connected to meaningful property tax support would respond to citizen concerns. Targeted transportation improvements and investments connected to the transit village, some addressing long standing needs, will also go a long way to respond to the needs of the residents:

- Clarkesville Road Bridge. The mayor stated that the expansion and upgrades to this bridge are necessary to respond to concerns about additional traffic generated by a transit village. The bridge needs also to be widened to allow for bicycle and pedestrian use.
- Pedestrian and Open Space. The mayor stated that clarity on how pedestrian access and safety, along with improved open space amenities, can be associated with the transit village will be an important issue for residents.
- Vaughn Drive. The mayor stated that West Windsor would like state support for the Vaughn Drive extension to Route 571.
- Parking. Several officials in the region voiced concerns about parking and the need to increase capacity in the transit village.

South Brunswick Transit Village

The 400-acre Metroplex site has been discussed as a potential transit village. Although the mayor and town committee are not currently in agreement with this location for a transit village, the mayor believes that this site would become viable if several corresponding decisions were made.

- MOM Line. Opposition for the proposed MOM line through South Brunswick is strong, and there is concern that supporting the transit village would make this MOM route more likely. If the alternative Matawan route for the MOM is selected, support for the transit village would increase.
- Targeted road improvements from the Metroplex site to Route I would be necessary to relieve traffic congestion. Traffic from the site would exacerbate existing congestion on the narrow section of Route I through South Brunswick.

General Motors Site, Ewing

County officials identified the old General Motors site on the border of Ewing and Trenton as a possible location to demonstrate a commitment to brownfields clean-up and revitalization of urban New Jersey – as well as one of the first steps necessary for the initiation of the West Trenton transit line. Officials noted that this line, using existing track, could substantially increase the opportunity for transit village development connected to Route I and extending to the North and West—ultimately to New York.

- Site remediation. Officials suggested that NJDEP should evaluate the current conditions on the site and the status of clean-up efforts, and clarify the legal obligations of General Motors to conduct the clean-up in an expeditious manner.
- West Trenton Line. Officials suggested that the Governor's office should seek an update from NJ TRANSIT about the suitability and potential schedule for service on a revamped West Trenton line.

New Brunswick Train Station

The mayor of New Brunswick suggests that improvements to the New Brunswick train station should be linked to ongoing development projects on Somerset & Easton Avenues. The city is working in partnership with Rutgers University, which wants to relocate its bookstore and its Rutgers University Press headquarters at the site. The plan is for the site to include a restaurant and 200 condominium units. In addition, the Ferren Mall/CORE Vision plan focuses on the area across the street from the train station on Albany Street. The mayor notes that this site can accommodate 500,000+ square feet of office, several hundred thousand square feet of retail, plus residential uses and parking. The mayor is engaged in discussions with potential owners and developers and is hopeful he can announce a project within next few months.

Quaker Bridge Road and Route I

Many officials noted that the intersection of Quaker Bridge Road and Route I is the linchpin location for employee and customer mobility to the rest of the Route I region. Since the interviews, the Governor's office and NJDOT initiated a targeted negotiation to plan for new development and the BRT, undertaken with the developers, municipalities, Mercer County, NJ TRANSIT, NJDEP and OSG. The focus is to ensure that future planned developments at Quaker Bridge Mall (Lawrence) and the Wyeth Site (West Windsor) do not generate congestion that causes the intersection to fail regularly, cutting off destinations to the North on Route I from employees and customers who come from Pennsylvania and South Jersey. Officials noted the importance of preserving attractive and practical right-of-ways, stops and walkways for a BRT system, and that this effort can only be undertaken on a regional basis since the BRT will cross multiple municipal boundaries. This work is an important early success for this project and needs continued attention to maintain positive momentum.

Trenton as the “Face of New Jersey”

Give special consideration to the state’s capital city. The mayor of Trenton states that the Governor and the Legislature should recognize Trenton as the “face of New Jersey” and create a special strategy for the city’s success. The mayor suggested that the state currently makes decisions about its facilities without considering the impacts on Trenton. The mayor proposed that the state appoint someone to serve as the liaison to the city. Officials did not favor the creation of a new bureaucracy, however. Officials suggested that the Treasury could think strategically about its leases and try to reinforce some of the projects that Trenton is trying to get off of the ground. (Since this interview was conducted, the state has established a task force on Trenton within the Treasury department, which includes city representatives.)

Work with the city on the state surface parking lot issue. The mayor and city officials suggested that shared parking arrangements be considered with city and private tenants that take advantage of day- versus night-time uses. Officials suggested issuing a request for proposals for reuse of parking lots, which would include meeting

state parking requirements through new parking decks and mixed use structures. Officials recommended that these new parking/development projects could be funded by private developers in exchange for access to valuable land. Officials suggested several sites for consideration: the Health and Agricultural Department building, state parking lots on Route 29, and the Trenton Psychiatric Hospital.

Business Route I

Lawrence Township seeks to transform Business Route I from the circle to Texas Avenue into a walkable boulevard, including the provision of additional affordable apartments and connections to the 6,000 working families that live in the neighborhoods surrounding this area. Lawrence seeks jurisdiction over this stretch to include a roundabout, sidewalks, improved median, expanded pedestrian crossings and improved access to the tow path. Officials noted that NJDOT can move forward with this project by designating this portion to Lawrence, and by being flexible with design standards for the boulevard. Officials recognize that NJDOT could negotiate a compact with Lawrence outlining mutual agreements on Business Route I and Quaker Bridge Mall.

Princeton Hospital/Sarnoff/Penn's Neck

West Windsor, Princeton and Plainsboro officials recognized that significant expansions are proposed for the Sarnoff site and across the Millstone River at the FMC Site. This development, which may include the relocation and expansion of the 850,000 square foot Princeton Medical Center, will require parallel improvements to the Millstone River bridge over Route I, improvements for accessibility to and from the Princetons, and through West Windsor on Route 571 to the Turnpike.

University Square

West Windsor pointed out this 300,000 square foot Class A commercial site that is mostly unoccupied on Alexander Road across from the Hyatt Regency. Officials suggested that access to the Dinky train line, a branch off of the Princeton Junction station in West Windsor that services Princeton Borough, from the site would improve connections to both the Princeton Borough Station and the Princeton Junction Station – which would improve the marketability of this space. Officials suggest that NJ TRANSIT and Princeton should be approached to determine how to provide bicycle and/or pedestrian access to University Square along the Dinky right-of-way. Officials also noted a parallel plan to align the BRT along the Dinky, which might allow the construction of a pedestrian walkway on the other side of the BRT right-of-way, separated from close proximity to the Dinky.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Enhancements

- Cranbury has considered options for bike lanes on its 2-lane farm roads. Costs, access, and safety concerns limit feasibility. Biking along the farm roads in their present form is what attracts recreational bikers to the township in the first place.
- Lawrence would like to see a lane constructed over Route I for bicycles and pedestrians. Housing is located on either side of the highway, and people employed in Route I businesses would walk if they could. The path could eventually connect to the towpath, and to Avalon Run, Liberty Green, and the other dense housing developments on the far side of Quakerbridge Mall. Officials suggested that the state could help with financing such a project, which would be expensive, because it has regional benefits.
- West Windsor highlighted building 350 condos on Clarksville Road, near the train station. There is currently no sidewalk access to the train station, even though these units are physically close to the station. Although West Windsor would like to provide pedestrian access to the train station, it is not possible without fixing the Clarksville Road Bridge.
- Officials pointed out that there is high-density housing right next to the Quaker Bridge Mall, but no pedestrian or bicycle access to the mall.
- Somerset County suggested that green seams must tie together all transportation corridors, and bicycle and pedestrian linkages should be a major component of any project.

Additional Road Improvements

- Cranbury wants (and NJDOT has been studying) a new arterial road that would allow local truck traffic to access NJ Turnpike Exit 8A without entering Route 130, but NJDEP has expressed concern because the new road would cross an important stream corridor.
- Lawrence emphasized that the Franklin Corner Road intersection desperately needs to be fixed. The existing jughandle is inadequate and creates massive traffic backups at that light.

- Jamesburg officials suggested a road spur around Jamesburg to alleviate traffic. This approach worked well in Hightstown with Route 133, and a similar type of road project might help Jamesburg with its traffic congestion.

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Appendix A

Invitation Letter

Dear:

Governor Corzine recently presented an economic growth strategy for the State of New Jersey, the foundation of which is the establishment of real working partnerships—both within state government, and with the business and community leaders we serve—to develop and implement policies to help our economy grow.

To this end, it is our pleasure to invite you to an announcement of the Route One Planning Through Partnerships Project, a joint initiative from the Governor's Office of Economic Growth and the Department of Transportation, to realize regional planning objectives in partnership with the communities along the Route One corridor. Hosted by the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, a supporter of and partner in this initiative, the meeting will be held:

Tuesday, October 3, 2006
6:30 p.m.
Plainsboro Municipal Building

We look forward to describing how we intend to build on the excellent work of the Route One Growth Strategy initiative through a true partnership with the Route One corridor municipalities, the area's county governments, and the regional planning associations. It is our belief that a positive and open dialogue between state and local government is necessary to establish, and realize, a mutually beneficial vision for the Route One corridor

We very much look forward to working with you in this capacity, and we look forward to seeing you on October 3rd.

Sincerely,

Gary Rose
Chief
Office of Economic Growth

Kris Kolluri
Commissioner
Department of Transportation

Appendix B

Interview Questionnaire

This questionnaire was used by NJ Future staff to guide the interviews with the 15 municipalities, three counties and two Metropolitan Planning Organizations in the Route 1 study area.

Interview meeting protocols

1. Invitations will be issued by phone, with email/fax follow up.
2. Invitations will be extended to the mayor plus two more people of his/her choosing.
3. Meetings will be held in the municipal offices.
4. The confirmation email/fax will include an outline of the questionnaire.
5. If the mayor declines the invitation, we will contact OEG to decide how to proceed.
6. Question script will provide general approach to questions. Interview will be more informal, starting with general point of each “group,” with the interviewer making sure that the supporting issues are covered in the process.

Question Script

Group 1. Existing plans.

Purpose: Find out what is going on.

1. What are the current activities and plans in your municipality for economic growth, new housing, and associated projects? What are your thoughts about housing in particular?
2. Can you describe the activities or plans in your neighboring municipalities for economic growth, new housing and associated projects?
3. What joint discussions about growth and housing have you undertaken with neighboring communities?

Group 2. Obstacles for Center-Based Growth.

Purpose: Discover the obstacles to achieving mixed-use center-based development patterns that the State has favored for at least 20 years.

1. How do your municipal zoning ordinances allow for mixed use nodes or centers, or not? What have you been able to implement in your town? What have you been able to achieve? Can we get a copy of the relevant ordinances?
2. If not, what are the obstacles to mixed use, center-based growth?
 - a. Local obstacles: rules, practices, plans?
 - b. County obstacles: rules, practices, plans?
 - c. State obstacles: rules practices, plans?
 - d. Plans/projects by neighboring municipalities?
 - e. Other economic, tax or transportation limitations?

Group 3. State Incentives.

Purpose: Discover what a municipality would need from the state to agree to center-based development.

1. What could the state offer to help overcome the obstacles to center-based neighborhood job and housing growth? Is the state providing any of this help now, or would this be new?
 - a. Financial incentives
 - b. Empowerment for impact fees
 - c. Planning support
 - d. Legal Shield
 - e. Regulatory priority
 - f. Certainty of timing for permits, infrastructure
2. Would help in convening a group of municipalities with similar issues be productive?
3. Would help designing a community outreach program on these issues, with personal support and participation from a state-supported consultant team, be productive? How so?
 - a. State team in the forefront
 - b. Mayor in the forefront

Group 4: Particular Issues.

1. What is your view on considering rezoning in your municipality that would increase growth and density in centers, and protect the surrounding area from growth? Would you be interested in considering some form of TDR to achieve this goal?
2. What is your view of adopting a form-based code that would highlight the design and quality of center based development, rather than just the quantities?
3. What is your view of the potential that the state would agree to help defend your municipality if you engaged in zoning and development planning consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan – a mixed use, center-based approach?
4. Would you consider tax-base sharing if you or another community accepted “extra” housing or growth? This also may mean shifting existing growth planned between several towns to locations that make sense from a transportation, housing or accessibility point of view – with sharing of tax revenue between the towns in an equitable manner.
5. Would you support the concept of a “tiered” environmental review, which involves a more rigorous look at environmental issues at the planning stage, but then allows all projects consistent with that plan to “pass” on additional review?

Group 5: Location Specific Questions. (i.e. Quaker Bridge Mall)

Appendix C

ROUTE I INTERVIEWS SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

MUNICIPALITIES:

CRANBURY, Middlesex County

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- The 400-acre former **Unexcelled Chemical property** (the largest remaining tract of developable land in the township) presents a number of challenges. It is not in a sewer service area, has flooding issues, supports about 50 percent wetland, and is in SDRP Planning Area 4B (rural/environmentally sensitive). A brownfield redeveloper has taken ownership of the property and entered an administrative consent order with NJDEP to begin remediation.
- There are still developable parcels east of I30 that could accommodate several million additional square feet of warehouse development, but at this time infrastructure (especially road intersections) is inadequate to handle it.
- **Housing:** COAH units are the only housing developments on the drawing board at this point.

Communications & Issues with Neighboring Communities

- Monroe Township has approved the construction of 1,000 new homes near the Cranbury border, in an area that requires their residents to traverse Cranbury's warehouse district and then drive through Cranbury's village center when heading west toward Route I.
- Cranbury already has several examples of shared services with its neighbors.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **Transportation issues**
 - Lack of east-west routes: The lack of east-west through routes force traffic through Cranbury's warehousing district and then right through the center of town via small local roads.
 - Cranbury wants (and NJDOT has been studying) a new arterial road that would allow local truck traffic to access Exit 8A without entering Route I30, but DEP has expressed concern because the new road would cross an important stream corridor.
 - Lack of non-automobile transportation options. Cranbury has considered options for bike lanes on its two-lane farm roads. Costs, access, and safety concerns limit feasibility.
- **Housing:** COAH requirements are a big pressure. The township doesn't feel it has enough land to accommodate potential future COAH requirements.
- **Lack of County government role:** County government provides important grant money but appears to have only a reactive role in planning, other than helping with transportation and affordable housing issues.
- **Unfunded mandates:** COAH is an example of a well-intentioned but unfunded mandate. COAH didn't think about how its rules were going to affect municipalities of different types or stages of development.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Regional Planning Authority:** State government needs some type of regional planning ombudsmen, each with an assigned region of responsibility. These ombudsmen would be responsible for coordinating development among all government agencies and among all municipalities in their regions.
- **Improved agency outreach to municipalities:** Municipalities are strapped for time and resources. State agencies need to have clearer and more frequent interactions with towns so they understand state policies.
- **Improved planning along the Route I30 corridor.**

EWING TOWNSHIP, Mercer County

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Princeton South at Ewing**
 - 750,000 SF of office space under construction by Opus Corporation at I-95 and Route 31, a 104-acre site (also known as the Atchley site). Site is easily accessible to employees driving in from Pennsylvania.
- **Trenton Mercer Airport:** Township is concerned about expansion plans for the airport as it would preclude creating a regional transportation hub for buses and trains on the site.
- **West Trenton Train Station and Transit Village**
 - Station is the last stop on SEPTA R-3 rail line (to Philadelphia) and has the potential to connect to a possible future NJ TRANSIT rail line to Bridgewater. This line to the north is not likely to make money, but would help the region's economy in other ways.
 - To the north of the station, the vacant 80-acre General Motors site could be the location of a future Transit Village. The GM site has heavy groundwater contamination and the NJDEP's estimate for cleanup is \$20 million.
 - Also nearby on Parkway Avenue is the 30-acre Navy site, which is also contaminated. Possible plans for the site include big box stores.
- **General Motors site:** GM is not in a rush to cleanup the contamination on the 80-acre site. There have been 175 expressions of interest in the site from redevelopers. Ewing has narrowed the list to seven, six of which are plans for a Transit Village, the other a mall.
- **Navy site:** The 30-acre site was used for jet propulsion testing. If the site is to be developed as big box retail, road access and capacity issues on Parkway Avenue will need to be studied.
- **Trenton Farmers Market**
 - The Farmers' Market in Lawrence is a success; however, Spruce Street (613) and Princeton Avenue (county roads) have trouble handling the traffic.
 - Wal-Mart is likely to open in Lawrence in this area, but Ewing will receive most of the traffic.
 - The possible Calhoun Street extension to service this area would be in Ewing, as would most new residential units.
 - Mercer County does not have the manpower or resources to manage this multi-municipal redevelopment project.
- **Hopewell Township:** Merrill Lynch is not interested in having the train station at the rear of its campus in Hopewell as originally planned.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **Property taxes / school kids:** Grade schools are already at full capacity. Town not likely to agree to more residential development around the Transit Village as a result.
- **Limited county authority:** In particular, the county needs some control over development in the area near the airport.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Outreach to GM:** It would be helpful for the Governor to reach out to GM to push forward and provide incentives for them to cleanup the contaminated site adjacent to the train station.
- **Impact fees:** parts of Ewing are already in the county's Transportation Development District. TDD is preferable to general impact fees, as it requires all developers to participate and prevents towns from selectively picking and choosing who is charged an impact fee (takes away the perception of "pay to play").
- **Work with PA:** Work together to determine how the bridge tolls funds are used – should not be limited to bridge work, but also allow for investments in transit, including the West Trenton line.
- **Train station:** The state should consider developing a train station at the back end of the Navy site on NJ TRANSIT land. This would bring the transit closer to the airport.

FRANKLIN, Somerset County

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Route 27 Home Depot development:** The controversial proposal for a Home Depot and 600 dwelling units on Route 27 between Bennets and Veronica has been approved. Will significantly worsen traffic in an already bad location.
- **Transportation issues**
 - **Route 27:** Severely congested. Some fear that roadway improvements will lead to more growth.

Communications & Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **New Brunswick:** New Brunswick is building a new high school on Route 27 just outside of Somerset; there are some concerns about traffic and gang activity this school might create in surrounding communities.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **No experience with center-based development**
 - With the exception of open space preservation, most planning is driven by development proposals.
 - The Board of Education's plans are disconnected with municipal planning. A new high school was recently built far from currently developed areas.
- **Opposition to growth:** Fear that infrastructure investments will encourage more development, traffic, and schoolchildren.
- **Existence of pay-to-play compromises local development review process.**

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP, Mercer County

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Hamilton Train Station:** Newly-elected town council is rescinding the site's redevelopment plan, putting the project back at square one. Public is worried about school children, "urbanization," and COAH obligations.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Lack of regional Route 1 planning:** Towns have to be required – not merely asked – to work together.
- **Housing Market:** Building dense "workforce" housing does not necessarily mean it will be affordable. Housing for middle-income families is very difficult to find.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Data & research**, provided by the state, in support of smart growth and transit-friendly developments are badly needed for towns who are trying to do these kinds of developments.
- **Vocal state support** – from the agencies as well as the Governor's office – for these kinds of projects would be a huge help.

JAMESBURG, Middlesex County

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- Jamesburg is **99 percent built out** (built or approved development).
- **High cost of educating school children**
- **Traffic from neighboring communities**
- **Flooding:** Jamesburg has a large amount of flooding due to increased impervious cover caused by development in neighboring communities.
- **Lack of inter-municipal coordination**

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **A road spur around Jamesburg to alleviate traffic.** This approach worked in Hightstown with Route 133.
- **Reduce the number of state mandates.** Each additional state mandate (schools, libraries, DEP requirements, etc.) has a dramatic effect on places with small budgets. The state should get away from a one-size-fits-all approach and consider different requirements for different circumstances.

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP, Mercer County

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Business Route I/Brunswick Pike Redevelopment:** The township wants to accept jurisdiction of the roadway stretch from DOT and turn the corridor into a Main Street boulevard with sidewalks, a median, etc., in order to connect and stabilize the middle-income communities on either side of the roadway.
- **Quaker Bridge Mall redevelopment:** Private property owners' questions & concerns about the BRT:
 - **Timing.** The BRT has been in the planning phase for a very long time; the mall has specific questions about how they're expected to anticipate the BRT when they don't know if or when it will happen.
 - **Maintenance & liability** issues. Who has responsibility for the BRT areas on private property?
 - **Incentives.** Will private property owners receive any incentive to accommodate the BRT? Each parking space represents \$20,000 per year for the developer. To remove a number of parking spaces to accommodate the BRT could be a huge financial loss. What do they get in exchange for giving up all of that space? How much use/traffic is expected from the BRT? Will it be enough to make up for the loss of each parking spot?
 - In the long term, what will the **completed project** look like?

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Canal Pointe Boulevard Extension:** Will help divert local traffic off of Route I. Extend to Nassau Park/Province Line Road and beyond, behind the Mercer Mall and on to Route 295.
- Would like to see a **lane constructed over Route I** for bicycles and pedestrians. There is housing and shopping on either side of the highway; people would walk if they could. The path could eventually connect to the towpath, to Avalon Run, Liberty Green, and the other dense housing developments on the far side of Quaker Bridge Mall.
- The **Franklin Corner Road intersection** needs to be fixed; the existing jughandle creates massive traffic backups.

MONROE TOWNSHIP, Middlesex County

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Senior Housing:** Almost all development in the township's pipeline is senior housing, which does not generate school children. Township has no intention of planning for any more non-senior housing developments and little retail or commercial development is planned.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Turnpike Exit 8A:** Traffic continues to worsen because of booming warehouse development and inadequate transportation infrastructure improvements. South Brunswick, Cranbury, Monroe, Middlesex County, DOT, and the Turnpike Authority must work together. Necessary improvements include:
 - **Truck stop:** Truckers need to go somewhere, but none of the municipalities in the area wants a truck stop within their borders.
 - **Signage improvements:** Truckers frequently get lost on local roads after they get off of the Turnpike. A color-coded signage system telling truckers how to get around would be extremely useful, but the Turnpike Authority isn't interested.

NEW BRUNSWICK, Middlesex County

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Ferren Mall/CORE Vision**, across the street from the train station, on Albany Street. Site can accommodate 500,000+ square feet of office space, several hundred thousand square feet of retail space, plus residential uses and parking. City has been in discussions with potential owners and developers and is hopeful that a project plan will be announced in the next few months.
- **Corner of Easton & Somerset Streets**
 - Near train station. Partnership with Rutgers University, which wants to relocate its bookstore and its Rutgers University Press headquarters to the site. Will also include a restaurant and 200 condominium units.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **Threats to eminent domain:** Reducing the ability of municipalities to exercise eminent domain will be a huge obstacle to redevelopment in New Jersey. Without eminent domain, very little of what has been done in New Brunswick would have been possible. The power is very rarely used, but it's a negotiating tool. New Brunswick has only used eminent domain on rental units.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Single point of entry for municipal assistance:** Would be very helpful for the state to offer a single point of entry for municipal assistance and funding information from all agencies. Would enable towns to go to one office, outline their needs and plans, and the state should come up with one single list detailing what kinds of money and assistance are available and from where. It's so difficult for towns to do all this legwork on their own.
- **Consolidate services at the county level:** County government could be a significant player in convening municipalities and combining services. Firefighting, animal control, and other services could be county-level services. It would save considerable amounts of duplicative effort, money and bureaucracy.
- **Piscataway-New Brunswick-East Brunswick BRT:** The city would like to see a BRT system running from Piscataway to New Brunswick to East Brunswick, based on a study done in the late 1990s that showed that the minimum ridership on the route (Piscataway/Busch Campus/UMDNJ campus to downtown New Brunswick to the retail area along Route 18 in East Brunswick) would be 50,000 per day, which are excellent ridership estimates. Would relieve considerable traffic on Route 18 and the area. Preliminary engineering study shows that the route can be done with a dedicated path (for either BRT or light rail).
- **Train station upgrades:** Current building needs significant upgrades; it only serves one side of the tracks, and it's too small to accommodate current and future uses.

NORTH BRUNSWICK TOWNSHIP, Middlesex County

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Possible new train station & transit village** at Johnson & Johnson site on Route 1 North.

Communications & Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Turnpike Exit 8A.** Tremendous warehousing growth; traffic is inundating surrounding communities. To avoid traffic at 8A, truckers get off at Exit 9 and drive on Route 18 to Route 1 or Route 130.
- **Franklin Township.** Significant residential and commercial growth in Franklin continues to make Route 27 worse.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **Resistance to additional housing**, particularly if it adds school children. No space or money for any more school growth.
- **Resistance to any development that will add more traffic** to already-congested roadways.
- **East-west transportation is virtually non-existent.** To go east-west, the only possibilities are local and county roads, which are all inadequate. Adams Lane is one of the only options in North Brunswick

and it's inadequate and unsafe for any truck traffic. Recent improvements by DOT have done very little to help.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **School funding assistance.**
- **Public outreach assistance.** Communities need outside voices – not developers – to convince them that smart growth developments are necessary. Credible representatives from state government need to vocally support specific projects on a regular basis.
- **Creative solutions to control housing costs.** Developers only want to build high-end housing, and even if workforce housing is built, it will still be out of range for most middle-income people. State incentives are needed to provide middle-income housing.
- **Finnegan's Lane Extension to Route 130:** This extension is a top priority to improve the east-west connections in town. The extension will greatly increase the viability of putting a new train station at the Johnson & Johnson site because it would prevent drivers accessing the train station from passing through neighborhoods. However, the extension would run through wetlands. The land is owned by Middlesex County.
- **Intersection of Adams Lane & Cousins Lane at Route 1:** Intersection is currently at Level of Service F. Improvements to this intersection would make the transit village more appealing to residents.

PLAINSBORO TOWNSHIP, Middlesex County

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Medical Center of Princeton:** Looking to relocate at the FMC site. Wants to build an 850,000 square foot hospital plus 120,000 square feet of medical offices and the possibility of an additional 120,000 square feet in the future. Also wants to build 110,000 square feet for the Merwick rehabilitation center and a 400-unit continuing care retirement community.
- **Princeton Forrestal Center:** Zoned or approved for an additional 6.5 million square feet of high-end office space that has not been built yet. 167,000 square feet of Class A office space has already been built, but remains unoccupied. Inadequate transportation infrastructure is constricting the site's ability to evolve and grow.

Communications & Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Turnpike Exit 8A:** Millions of square feet of warehouse development do not generate significant numbers of jobs for the region and force thousands of trucks onto local streets.
- **Quaker Bridge, Sarnoff & Wyeth developments:** Very worried about the traffic problems (especially on Route 1) that will be created after these developments are complete.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **Funding assistance:** Municipalities cannot build workforce housing without funding assistance (for schools, infrastructure, community services, etc.) from the state.
- **Housing market:** The region's housing market is tough to overcome; the state should consider a COAH program for moderate-income housing and workforce housing. Asking towns to build apartments will not solve the problem.
- **Lack of east-west transportation:** Severe hindrance to the region's economic development. Route 1 and Exit 8A must be connected. Route 92 could go a long way to solve this problem.

PRINCETON BOROUGH, Mercer County

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Route 92:** An important east-west route, if it provides a connection between Route 206 and Route 27.
- **Hillsborough Bypass:** Only works if it links to Route 92. Current alignment creates a huge traffic problem in Montgomery and Princeton and does not offer any way for the traffic to get to Route 1 without coming through downtown Princeton.

- **Route I:** Harrison Street intersection improvements (specifically, a right-turn lane from Harrison Street onto Route I South) are badly needed.
- **West Windsor train station:** Increased parking capacity is of the utmost importance.
- **Canal Pointe Boulevard:** Should be extended to the Nassau Park shopping center.
- **Plan Endorsement:** Link state benefits (expedited permitting, governor's office support, legal shield, tax base sharing, etc.) to Plan Endorsement.

PRINCETON TOWNSHIP, Mercer County

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Possible and/or planned workforce housing coming online** in the Bunn Drive area; in the Princeton Community Village; and in the conversion of the Princeton Hospital building to housing and retail.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **High property taxes** are driving people away from the entire region. Low- and moderate-income families simply cannot afford to live in the area anymore, regardless of what kind of housing is built.
- **School bills** are a huge municipal burden.
- **State agency disorganization**, uncoordinated efforts between agencies, and lengthy delays.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Workforce housing incentives:** Major state incentives, such as low-interest mortgages, are necessary to keep middle-income housing in the region. State should focus not only on low-income housing incentives, but middle-income housing assistance as well.
- **School funding:** Paying for school children is the best way to get towns to agree to more density and more housing.
- **Visioning assistance:** Towns need funding to do visioning programs to educate the public about the benefits of smart growth.
- **MLUL changes:** The MLUL should allow flexibility to do form-based zoning, neighborhood conservation districts, and historic districts.
- **Planning assistance:** Necessary for large-scale projects that affect the region, such as hospital relocations. Princeton could have used state assistance when trying to determine whether to allow the hospital to expand.
- **Transportation:**
 - **Harrison Street intersection** with Route I needs to be improved to provide better access to the new hospital in Plainsboro.
 - **Better access from Routes 27 and 206 to Route I:** Princeton is burdened with the through-traffic of all the surrounding communities; drivers going from Route 27 or Route 206 to Route I have no options.

SOUTH BRUNSWICK, Middlesex County

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Metroplex site / train station:** The talk of a potential train station on the Metroplex site dates back 15 years. Access to Route I will be critical to building a new train station. Town received \$75,000 from DCA to study the feasibility of a transit village and any resulting traffic impacts.
- **Exit 8A:** The township is the second-highest ratable chase in the county, in large part due to the warehouse district on Exit 8A.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **Schools:** Township is constantly building new schools to accommodate growth, which costs the municipality millions and millions of dollars. The school board has asked that the township not approve any more home construction because the school system and the town's taxes are stretched to the limit.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Route 1:** Roadway is only two lanes for the 6.7 miles it runs through South Brunswick, creating a massive bottleneck. Township would like to see it widened, but has been told by DOT that a widening will “never happen” because it’s too expensive.
- **Route 522 Extension:** Extending Route 522 to the Turnpike could provide a cheaper, easier alternative to Route 92. The process is being held up by Green Acres because of three acres of land that are in the road extension’s right-of-way (at the intersection of Route 522 and Route 130). South Brunswick has offered to swap those three acres with the state for 30 acres of land owned by the Township in Pigeon Swamp. However, DEP does not believe that those 30 acres are the township’s to swap, and there is a dispute about who exactly owns the land.

CITY OF TRENTON, Mercer County

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- Trenton has several redevelopment projects at various stages of implementation, including:
 - Trenton Train Station renovation/expansion
 - Broad Street Bank Building
 - Trenton Town Center
 - Foundry (on Route 129)
 - Justice Complex parking area redevelopment
 - Department of Corrections Administrative Buildings
 - Trenton Farmer’s Market (Mercer Crossings), Trenton, Ewing and Lawrence

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **Competition with surrounding communities.**
 - Trenton wants growth and workforce housing, but has trouble competing with its suburban neighbors.
 - Schools are a big part of this equation.
 - Many of Trenton’s employees commute to the city from elsewhere.
- **State Control.** The state controls a large amount of Trenton’s prime developable land, but is reluctant to think creatively about ways to turn this asset into an advantage for the city and uses some of Trenton’s most valuable land for state parking lots.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Don’t ignore the capital city’s needs.** State government should create a special strategy for the city’s success; decisions about state facilities should not be made without considering the impact on Trenton. A state government liaison to the city would be helpful. The Treasury could also think strategically about its leases and try to reinforce and assist some of the projects that Trenton is trying to get off the ground.
- **Direct state agencies to utilize the Trenton Marriott for conferences**
- **Provide incentives for office development in Trenton.** In particular, structured parking costs are a deterrent to new office and commercial development.
- **Work with the city on the state surface parking lot issue**
 - **Consider shared parking arrangements.**
 - **Replace surface parking with structured parking and redevelop surface lots.** Sites for consideration include the Health and Agricultural Department building, state parking lots on Route 29, and the Trenton Psychiatric Hospital.
- **Regional Contribution Agreements.** The state needs a housing strategy. If the state is considering eliminating RCAs, it must provide another source of funding for affordable housing in cities.
- **County Assistance:**

- Use the County Improvement Authority as an economic engine. The Authority tends to work in the city's existing "hot spots" rather than serving as driver for change.
- County could help with more workforce development and also steer business incentives to areas that the city is trying to redevelop.

WEST WINDSOR, Mercer County

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Wyeth Property redevelopment:** Township is trying to encourage the developer, General Growth, to build a mixed-use housing and shopping mall development on the site.
- **Train Station Redevelopment:** Township considering the redevelopment of 350 acres around the Princeton Junction train station.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **School funding/tax system issues**
- **Lack of required regional implementation.** The Central Jersey Transportation Forum provided opportunities for all of the municipalities in the region to come together, but it was all talk and no implementation.

Communications & Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Quaker Bridge Mall redevelopment:** Significant concerns about the traffic and land consumption the project will generate. The project's planning should not occur at the municipal level. Concerned that the project will block access across Quaker Bridge Road.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Extension of Canal Point Boulevard:** Extend to Nassau Park, but only for BRT, bicycles, and pedestrians. No auto access.
- **Clarksville Road bridge:** 352 condos coming on Clarksville Road, near the train station. Township wants to provide pedestrian access to the train station, but it is not possible without fixing the Clarksville Road Bridge.
- **University Square bicycle/pedestrian access:** 300,000 square feet of unoccupied Class A office space across from the Hyatt Regency. A possible new Dinky stop would provide easy access, and a bicycle/pedestrian pathway along the Dinky right-of-way would make this site very accessible, but funding is needed to provide this access.
- **Governor's assistance:** Governor-attended town hall meetings to stress the importance of smart growth, particularly in towns where the mayor wants to do the right thing but can't get support from the electorate.
- **Project-specific state support:** State support for specific development projects (in public and in the media) would be very helpful.
- **State-sponsored regional collaboration sessions:** The state could convene and moderate meetings of municipalities that are having issues, such as Lawrence Township and West Windsor.

COUNTIES:

MERCER COUNTY

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Quaker Bridge Mall expansion, Lawrence:** Worried about the development's impact on the intersection of Clarksville Road and Quaker Bridge Road and that the roads may experience failing levels of service.

- **Wyeth site, West Windsor:** General Growth has proposed a mixed-use “lifestyle center” for the property north of the QB Mall. Wyeth owns land on both sides of Clarksville Road, which creates more possibility for a fly-over across Route 1 to connect the development to Nassau Park.
- **Trenton Farmers Market / Mercer Crossings:** County has been working with Lawrence, Ewing, and Trenton on planning for the area around the Farmer’s Market.
- **Parkway Avenue, Ewing:** Possibility for a transit village on the General Motors site, near the airport and the SEPTA station. GM has been slow in cleaning up the site to ready it for development. DVRPC and McCormick Taylor have conducted a feasibility study.
- **Atchley site, Ewing:** 1 million SF of office space currently under construction by Opus development at the intersection of I-95 and Route 31.

Communications & Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **West Windsor/Lawrence**
 - The developments in these two communities, if not managed properly, have the potential to completely disrupt the regional transportation network, and, consequently, the economy.
 - The NJDOT improvements planned for the near-term will not be useful in three years.
 - Concerns that Simon and General Growth are embarking on a race to the finish line without enough consideration of the available infrastructure. Towns are not coordinating their plans.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **Property taxes:** Towns are unwilling to zone for residential uses if they will bring in school children.
- **Limited county authority over municipal decisions:** The county's oversight of local decisions is limited to subdivisions and site plans on county roads with greater than one acre of disturbance.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Incentives** for towns to build housing for families.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **South Brunswick**
 - Development along Route 1 is making it increasingly difficult to acquire right-of-ways for road improvements.
 - The intersections at Route 1 and Sand Hill Road as well as Route 522 are problematic.
- **Exit 8A:** Warehouse development causing increased truck traffic on county roads and Route 1.
- **Finnegans Lane, North Brunswick:** Seeking a grade separation at Finnegans Lane and Route 1. Worried about the new Hess gas station/mini-mart opening up at the intersection.
- **North Brunswick Transit Village:** Mayor is having difficulty with the transit village criteria because the community is resistant to more growth.
- **Bus Rapid Transit:** Route 1 BRT should extend to New Brunswick to tie in with a separate New Brunswick-Piscataway BRT system under consideration.
- **County Route 522:** If Route 522 is to serve as the east-west arterial instead of Route 92, serious consideration must be given to a grade separation between Route 1 and Route 522.
- **Route 92:** County supports Route 92; however, if constructed, the BRT will have to offset even more of the additional commuters that will be brought into the region.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **Housing costs / availability:** People are moving to Pennsylvania for lower housing cost and are increasing traffic back into NJ for work. Developable land in NJ is scarce, which drives up the cost of land.
- **Property taxes and municipal zoning**
 - Towns do not want any housing that will bring children.

- Municipalities are not zoning based on capacity, and the infrastructure is struggling to support the new development.
- There is little state or county control over local land use decisions.
- **Lack of regional control over regional issues:** If smart growth strategies are to be pursued on the Route 1 corridor, then it is critical that regional/county entities be identified and empowered to negotiate with municipalities around the needed land use decisions.
- **Traffic:** The county needs more east-west roads. Route 1 needs to be widened through South Brunswick.
- **Lack of coordination:** There are a multitude of studies underway at various state, regional and local levels but there is no coordination between them.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Transportation**
 - DOT should have a **Route 1 highway plan** to ensure that any necessary right-of-ways (for road improvements or BRT) are preserved.
 - The state needs to be stricter about giving out **access permits**.
 - DOT should make improvements at intersections first, and consider **computerized signalization** along Route 1.
 - Develop a **statewide truck route system**. This will help avoid confusion and traffic caused by individual municipal truck prohibitions.
- **Public education**
 - Need to debunk the idea that workforce and affordable housing is bad and that density is unattractive.
 - Educate the public on existing successful transit villages – perhaps sponsor a trip to visit one.
- **Regional planning**
 - Needs to be more regional control over development. Could consider designating a “Route 1 Region,” allowing the state some power over land use.
 - County Enabling Act needs more teeth, particularly to intercede when there are developments with regional impact. Could limit county involvement to projects of a specific size.
 - Consider forming a Transportation Development District for the corridor.
- **Housing subsidies:** The only way to create workforce housing.
- **Technical assistance:** Many of the recommended smart growth tools are complicated for municipalities to use and implement. It would be helpful for the state to provide more technical assistance to municipalities on various topics, including Transfer of Development Rights.
- **New Brunswick:** Increase state support for housing, schools, and economic development in New Brunswick.
- **North Brunswick Transit Village:** State needs to help sell the concept to the public. Finnegan’s Lane improvements are necessary.
- **Exit 8A:** Better signs to lead trucks in the right direction. Develop a truck depot for early arrivals to the warehouses.

SOMERSET COUNTY

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Hillsborough Transit Ready Development Node:** At the intersection of the Route 206 Bypass and Amwell Road where Amwell intersects with the West Trenton train line. The county is working on a visioning process and developing a vision plan to give Hillsborough an outline of a transit-ready overlay zone and provide them with the master plan elements to accompany the overlay zone. Project viability is dependent on the reinstatement of the West Trenton rail line as a passenger line. County is working to get all the towns along the train corridor to sign a transit-ready land use compact and agree to provide transit supportive land uses along the line.
- **Montgomery Township/Belle Meade Transit Ready Node:** Where the West Trenton line intersects with Route 206. The county is working with the towns to put into place a transit-ready

development node. Montgomery is hesitant out of concern for creating development that would make the Route 206 bypass necessary.

- **Hillsborough Town Center.** Hillsborough has been trying for years to reclaim a stretch of Route 206 and transform it into a main street. A vision plan was created in the late 90s that won an APA award. The goal is to establish a focal point in town for employment, recreation, and government activity. Project cannot be done without the Hillsborough Bypass.
- **Hillsborough Route 206 Bypass.** Controversial proposal (opposed by Montgomery and Princeton Townships) is key to the Hillsborough Town Center project. Bypass would take through traffic off of the corridor; the existing stretch of 206 would be de-designated and given over to Hillsborough to design as a main street.

Communications & Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Long-term collaborative planning partnerships.** Each month for the past ten years, Somerville, Raritan, and Bridgewater (along with Somerset County) meet to discuss issues and identify planning priorities.
- **Franklin Township's rapid growth.** Thousands of dwelling units and millions of square feet of industrial space approved in recent years; growth is creating gridlock along Route 27. Lack of adequate access between Route 27 and Route 1 make the problem worse.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **Inadequate east-west connections and too much focus on Route 1.** Current planning and studies at the state level focus too heavily on the linear north-south corridor; critical east-west connections and the expansion of alternative travel modes have taken a back seat.
- **Inadequate commitment to regional transit expansion.** Regional transit expansion – beyond transit villages – must be a priority, and these expansions must extend beyond Route 1 and the BRT proposal. Creative transit solutions are continually springing up at the local and county level; state support is imperative.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Route 27 TOD study.** Somerset County identified Route 27 as a potential TOD bus corridor; identified all vacant and underutilized land along the corridor and proposed that density from undeveloped parcels be transferred to higher-density nodes where the bus would stop frequently. A Bus Transit Overlay Zone was proposed to allow modification of all land use and design standards along the corridor to better utilize bus transit. With state support, this could be a pioneering project in New Jersey; has been done in other states (such as Montgomery County, PA). Route 27 is the county line so Somerset County would need the cooperation of Middlesex County, South Brunswick, and North Brunswick to implement the concept.
- **Assistance with inter-municipal and inter-county land use compacts.** The state can take a lead to outline land use compacts that towns in a region sign onto. Compact would speak to basic land use principles that complement regional smart growth projects, such as the BRT. The state should provide assistance to towns for how to handle master plan revisions, major land development reviews, etc., in accordance with the compact. Compacts would outline specific steps each town must take such as setbacks, set-asides, etc. Compacts should also include a section about what the state's role will be, and what incentives the state will provide towns for taking part in the compact. Such compacts might require legislative changes.
- **Corridor reinvestment.** The state must realize that regional transportation improvements mean more than transit villages. Entire corridors need to be revitalized and reinvested in. Similar to what Somerset County is doing on the Route 22 corridor.
- **Assistance with regional visioning processes.** The state should take the lead in embarking upon regional visioning processes. Three-dimensional physical models are extremely important, because they produce much greater public consensus and allow the public to physically see various scenarios.
- **Don't forget about bicycles and pedestrians.** Green seams must tie together all transportation corridors, and bicycle and pedestrian linkages should be a major component of any project.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS (MPOs):

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (DVRPC)

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Transportation issues**
 - **East-west movement within the corridor**
 - **Route 571:** The Central Jersey Transportation Forum (CJTF) convened the municipalities along Route 571; a package of recommendations was endorsed in March 2006.
 - **Route 518:** The CJTF is getting ready to sit down with the municipalities along Route 518 to talk about their circulation elements and land use plans.
 - **Bus Rapid Transit**
 - Municipalities would like the Governor's office to designate a single point of contact for coordinating all the stakeholders in BRT planning.
 - A common municipal concern is that development is getting ahead of the planning process, imperiling potential BRT rights-of-way. The private sector (for example, Sarnoff) and public sector (for example, the Princeton) are already starting to work together on BRT rights-of-way.
 - It might be useful for the Governor and/or NJ TRANSIT to come up with a memorandum of understanding to ensure preservation of the rights-of-way.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **Straddling Two MPOs.** The Route 1 corridor region sometimes suffers from straddling two MPOs.
- **Limited experience with center-based development:** There are very few developers who are experienced with mixed-use projects. Financial institutions are nervous about funding complex, mixed-use projects because of the unknowns. They tend to partition their markets the same way developers do. This means that even developers who would like to do mixed-use sometimes can't get funding for it.
- **Housing:** Municipal leaders generally contend that they can't approve housing projects without getting voted out of office. Anti-housing bias is a big obstacle.
- **General opposition to growth:** Many municipalities' zoning does not allow mixed use, and there is a generalized resistance to density.
- **Lack of regional perspective:** Counties are not as involved as they should be in guiding development.

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- A legal shield from the state would be helpful.
- Impact fees would be useful.
- Tax base sharing would also be useful.

NORTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AUTHORITY (NJTTPA)

Key Projects, Plans, and Sites of Interest

- **Regional Transportation Plan:** Update underway for 2009. Plan will link economic development and the region's transportation networks.
- **Freight Movement:** Truck traffic is expected to double in the next 25 years; need to figure out a way to keep trucking as an engine of economic prosperity without letting it hurt quality of life. Studying the expansion of the Exit 8A warehouse complex.
- **Bus Rapid Transit:** Studying possibility of BRT systems in the Newark and New Brunswick areas.

Obstacles to Center-Based Growth

- **Limited local capacity:** Towns are unable to deal with development pressures; they often lack the planning capacity to deal with big issues. Municipal-county relationships not set up so that counties can provide the needed support.
- **Ratables chase/property taxes:** Municipalities do not want to zone for housing.
- **Fear of affordable housing.**

Project Wish List and Desired State Incentives & Assistance

- **Create incentives to build housing.**
- **Invest in transit.** Improve financing and subsidies for transit. Offer free rides on new service.
- **“Sell” Transit Village concept.** Help towns make the fiscal argument in favor of transit villages. Use visioning process to lay out the issues. Good design is essential.

Appendix D

Individual Interview Summaries

The following summaries reflect the interviews conducted by NJ Future staff. Interviews were sent back to each municipality for comment, additions or changes. NJ Future presents information discussed in the interviews without direct attribution.

NJ Future received written approval for all but three of summaries in this section. The asterisk (*) below indicates which towns did not sign-off. Please note that we made every effort to obtain comments and corrections from each interviewee to ensure that the summary presented here accurately reflects what was discussed during the interview.

Municipalities:

- Cranbury*
- Franklin*
- Hamilton*
- Jamesburg
- Lawrence
- Monroe
- New Brunswick
- North Brunswick
- Plainsboro
- Princeton Borough
- Princeton Township
- South Brunswick
- Trenton
- West Windsor

* Sign-off pending

Note: Ewing Township is also in the study area. NJ Future conducted an interview with officials in November 2006; however, since that time the Township administration has changed and the officials we met with are no longer with the Township. As a result, we have removed references to the Ewing interview from this report.

Counties:

- Mercer County
- Middlesex County
- Somerset County

MPOs:

- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Cranbury Interview
Thursday, January 4, 2006
2 p.m.

Note: New Jersey Future did not receive written municipal approval regarding this summary; however, we have made every effort to do so and to make sure the summary that follows accurately reflects what was discussed at the interview.

In Attendance

- David Stout
Mayor, Cranbury Township
dstout@cranbury-nj.com
- George Hawkins, New Jersey Future
- Tim Evans, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- **Master plan**
 - Development in Cranbury has followed a master plan that was conceived in the early 1990s and that laid out in detail what the township wanted to achieve.
 - There is high demand for living in Cranbury, thanks to the success of the master plan.
 - The master plan called for clustering of residential developments, with density bonuses. This has helped preserve expansive open space and farmland.
 - Cranbury wants to try to remain sustainable, i.e. not exceed its carrying capacity. The township had been fairly self-sustaining until it was forced to outsource its water supply on account of radium being discovered in its local sources. The township also hopes to explore alternative energy sources and other green building tools for use on public buildings.
 - The master plan was reexamined in 1999 and 2006, and an Environmental Resource Inventory was assembled in 2006.
- **Transportation issues**
 - **Route 130** bisects the township, separating it into two functional halves:
 - East of Route 130 was primarily agricultural and is where industrial and warehousing development (Cranbury's "ratables engine") was called for, near exit 8A of the NJ Turnpike.
 - West of Route 130 is where almost all of the residential development is, focused on the village of Cranbury. The plan called for (and produced) an agricultural and open space greenbelt around the residential section of the township. Revenues from the new industrial/warehouse development helped to preserve open space and farmland in the greenbelt.
 - **Lack of east-west routes:** Because the area lacks east-west through routes, traffic heading west toward Route 1 from residential developments in neighboring Monroe Township has to travel through Cranbury's warehousing district and then right through the Cranbury town center. And because there are multiple local options for heading to Route 1 (but no major road), traffic moving east-west ends up going on all of Cranbury's local roads.
 - **New arterial road:** Cranbury wants (and NJDOT has been studying) a new arterial road that would allow local truck traffic to access NJ Turnpike Exit 8A without entering Route 130, but DEP has expressed concern because the new road would have a major crossing of an important stream corridor.
 - **Lack of non-auto transport:** Cranbury lacks any non-automobile transportation options other than walking in the village center.
 - **Bike lanes:** Cranbury has considered options for bike lanes on its 2-lane farm roads. Costs, access, and safety concerns limit feasibility. Biking along the farm roads in their present form is what attracts recreational bikers to the township in the first place.
- **Housing**
 - **No land available for new COAH housing:** COAH requirements are a big pressure. The township doesn't feel it has enough land to accommodate potential future COAH requirements.
 - Township does not want to isolate COAH homes and their residents to the east of Route 130, but most of the undeveloped land west of Route 130 (and hence near the existing residential village) has already been permanently preserved as open space or farmland (through retirement of development rights).

- Cranbury has avoided builder's remedy lawsuits by implementing RCAs and by actively planning for the share of its affordable housing obligations to be satisfied internally, so that it has remained in COAH compliance all along.
- Cranbury Housing Associates, an entity formed in the 1960s, constructs and manages Cranbury's affordable housing.
- The "growth share" element of the new COAH rules has forced Cranbury to reexamine some elements of its master plan.
- A portion of Cranbury's 3rd round of affordable housing includes very low-income people.
- **Warehousing**
 - Cranbury is doing its first property revaluation since 1986 because warehouses began suing the township, claiming unfairly high taxes relative to residential properties. This provides one example of hidden development costs.
- **Existing plans and projects**
 - The **400-acre former Unexcelled Chemical property** presents a number of challenges. It is not in a sewer service area, has flooding issues, supports about 50 percent wetland, and is in SDRP Planning Area 4B (rural/environmentally sensitive), so as a matter of policy it is not really appropriate for sewer development. Around 2000, Middlesex County looked into purchasing the property as open space, but it discovered contamination and backed off, prompting DEP to look for the original owner to demand cleanup. Now a brownfield redeveloper has taken ownership of the property (this is by far the largest remaining tract of open space – as distinct from farmland – in the township) and entered an administrative consent order with NJDEP to begin remediation.
 - There are still **developable parcels east of Route 130** that could accommodate several million additional square feet of warehouse development, but at this time infrastructure (especially road intersections) is inadequate to handle it.
 - **COAH units are the only housing developments** on the drawing board at this point.

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Monroe Township has approved construction of 1,000 new homes** near the Cranbury border, in an area that requires their residents to traverse Cranbury's warehouse district and then drive through Cranbury's village center when heading west toward Route 1.
- There is not much traffic pressure on Cranbury's roads coming from **Plainsboro**, since most Plainsboro residents/commuters tend to be heading west toward Princeton and Route 1 rather than east toward Route 130 and the Turnpike.
- Cranbury already has several examples of **shared services**.
 - It sends its high school students to Princeton Regional H.S.
 - It gets 9-1-1 and dispatch service from Hightstown.
 - Plainsboro Township provides Municipal Court services.
 - Sewerage conveyance goes to MCUA (Middlesex County Utilities Authority) via South Brunswick Township infrastructure.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Difficulty with coordination**
 - **As with most things, communication (early and often) is the key.**
 - It is hard to put all the pieces on the table at the same time. It is too easy to get focused on one aspect of development, to the exclusion of others, and then somebody's feet get stepped on later or an important player doesn't get involved early enough.
 - Home rule is both a blessing and a curse. Individually, municipalities can't afford (in budget terms) much regional planning, so less thought is given to how their actions are going to affect their neighbors, highlighting **a need for some sort of regional perspective**.
 - Time is the most precious commodity. Once a development proposal is submitted, a clock starts ticking, and often **much time is wasted trying to find the right person in state government to answer questions** and offer guidance to municipal boards and commissions.
 - County government provides important grant money but appears to have only a reactive role in planning, other than helping with transportation and affordable housing issues.
- **Unfunded mandates.** Cranbury benefits from non-governmental organizations (e.g., ANJEC, Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association) to help with the town's compliance with regulatory and planning requirements.
 - COAH is an example of a well-intentioned but unfunded mandate. COAH didn't think about how its rules were going to affect municipalities of different types or stages of development.

- **Property rights.** There are both good and bad places to build, from a planning standpoint, but landowners have the right to build. How do you tell landowners in “bad” places that they can’t build when the law says they can?

State Incentives & Assistance

- **Regional planning ombudsmen:** State government needs regional planning ombudsmen, each with an assigned region of responsibility. These ombudsmen would be responsible for coordinating development among all government agencies and among all municipalities in their regions (otherwise municipalities don’t communicate with each other if left to their own devices). So many pieces need to align in order for something to happen (and to happen well) that it’s critical to keep all the affected parties talking to each other.
- **More planning assistance for towns:** Municipalities are already strapped for resources and can’t afford to rely any more heavily on consultants to advocate on their behalf with the state. More interaction with DEP and the economic development agencies would help as far as communicating policies and planning of development.
- **Coordination of planning along Route 130:** The Route 130 corridor is a disaster waiting to happen, resembling in some unattractive ways the Route 1 of 20 years ago but worse. Unlike along Route 1, the communities along Route 130 have residential areas abutting the highway. A proliferation of retail and office development along Route 130 would thus not only impede the movement of through traffic but would also impact internal circulation, which is not as much of an issue on Route 1.
- **BRT:** The proposed BRT system might help increase the carrying capacity of the Route 1 corridor. In New Jersey in general, people don’t think about carrying capacity, and most regulations don’t take it into consideration.

Other comments:

Mayor Stout asked if the Route 1 project, and more generally the search for places that could accept future development, could be thought of as “doing eminent domain without doing eminent domain” by providing a set of state government incentives that might convince landowners in promising redevelopment areas to sell out.

Development reaches a point of diminishing returns, where one-time fees for new developments no longer cover the ongoing costs of servicing existing developments. There seems to be about a 5-year lag period between when new development goes in and when it really starts costing the municipality money. Initially, local officials can’t foresee or measure the full costs of servicing new development.

Franklin Interview

Tuesday, November 28, 2006

1:00 p.m.

Note: New Jersey Future did not receive written municipal approval regarding this summary; however, we have made every effort to do so and to make sure the summary that follows accurately reflects what was discussed at the interview.

In Attendance

- Brian D. Levine, Mayor, Franklin
MayorBrian@aol.com
w: 732-873-2500, Ext. 396
h: 732.514-0470
- George Hawkins, New Jersey Future
- Chris Sturm, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans & Projects

- **Size and growth**
 - Franklin Township is the fifth fastest growing municipality in New Jersey. Its population is expected to grow from 50,900 in 2000 to near 60,000 in 2010.
- **Political organization**
 - There are eight council people, five of whom represent wards and three who are elected-at-large, and an elected mayor.
 - Mayor Levine's four-year term extends through 2007.
 - Franklin is more like Middlesex County in political composition (Democratic) than Somerset, which is predominantly Republican. The mayor is a Republican. All council members are Democrats.
- **Developed areas**
 - Somerset, located immediately outside of New Brunswick, is an older, fully developed area whose residents typically have a lower socioeconomic status.
 - Most of the schools are located here
 - There is redevelopment occurring along Route 27, which has become controversial due to the use of eminent domain.
 - Near Route 287 there are many hotels and other commercial development.
 - Near the border with Hillsborough, there are three new adult communities and two more expected, which is shifting the demographics of the population.
 - There are new "McMansions" near Princeton and many new condos along Route 27. This growth was based on zoning, but not thoughtfully planned.
 - Half of the village of Kingston is in the township and is concerned about through traffic.
- **Affordable housing**
 - Under **COAH**'s third-round rules, some 700 affordable units must be provided (ultimately leading to a total of 3,500 – 4,000 new units), which will be difficult to accommodate given existing traffic conditions. The township is rezoning land to fit in the units.
 - The township received a **controversial proposal for a Home Depot and 600 dwelling units on Route 27 between Bennets and Veronica**. Traffic in this location is very bad. The township will shortly enter COAH mediation over the proposal. Neighbors sued the town over environmental issues after the planning board approved it. (Note that the planning board initially rejected the application, but new members appointed after the election led a reversal. Contributions by the developer to council members may have influenced this outcome.)
- **Open space preservation**
 - About 31% of the township is permanently preserved, using funds from Franklin's open space tax, as well as county and state funds.
 - The township sought to downzone a portion of this area from 3-acre lots to 6-acre lots, but lost in court because they lacked adequate justification.
- **Transportation issues**
 - **Route 27** is congested. DOT has talked to the township about small improvements on Route 27 in Somerset. The mayor is ambivalent, fearing that improvements could lead to more growth.

- There is a lot of **traffic between Route 287 and Route 1**. There is no natural path for this traffic to take, but the mayor feels that any improvements to accommodate it could encourage more traffic and disrupt Kingston, other residential districts, and the agricultural area.
- There are currently two **shuttles**: a weekly shuttle to get seniors to and from the grocery store, and the DASH shuttle between the hotels near 287 and the New Brunswick train station, which runs a few times a day with modest ridership. The mayor wonders if a shuttle could help transport teenagers in the Somerset area to the hotels to work, a service which the hotels might be willing to provide.
- The mayor opposes **Route 92** since it would be located so close to Kingston.

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **New Brunswick**
 - New Brunswick is building a new high school on Route 27 opposite the Somerset area. This has raised concerns about traffic and a potential escalation of gang activity in Somerset.
- **Convening with other municipalities**
 - The mayor talks occasionally to other mayors and residents of neighboring municipalities about high profile issues such as the proposed Home Depot. He speaks to South Brunswick and North Brunswick the most and occasionally has conversations with fellow elected officials in Somerset County.
 - Time is the biggest obstacle to more communication with neighboring municipalities. The mayor's low salary requires him to also hold a full-time job.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **No experience with center-based development**
 - With the exception of strategic open space preservation, most planning in Franklin seems to be driven by development proposals. Center-based growth has not been a goal.
 - The township is "sorely lacking" a regional perspective in its planning. The State Plan vision of protecting open areas is attractive, but the township doesn't want to make developed areas more crowded.
 - The Board of Education is not linked with the town's development decisions. A new high school was recently built far from existing developed areas.
- **General opposition to growth**
 - There is a fear that any infrastructure investments will encourage more development, which is not desired, mostly due to traffic implications and the cost of educating school kids.
 - Opposition to growth exists but it is not overwhelming or organized.

State Incentives & Assistance

- **Impact fees** would help the township, although there is concern that developers underestimate the impacts.
- **A legal shield** from the state would be helpful, but only if it protected a municipal plan based on local desires (as opposed to a state-mandated plan such as under COAH).
- **Speeding up state permit decisions** is not viewed as an important incentive from the mayor's perspective, in part because staff deals with this issue and the town has learned to live with slow decisions from DOT.
- **Workforce housing** would be supported if:
 - The township was able to organize an open process regarding its design.
 - There was no fear of pay to play influence.
 - Eminent domain was not required. (The mayor would like to avoid the need to relocate poor residents because they have few choices.)
- **Tax based sharing** seems like a good idea, especially if it were linked to a new local income or local sales tax. (Franklin enjoys significant revenue from its hotel tax.)

Hamilton Township Interview

November 20, 2006

1:00 p.m.

Note: New Jersey Future did not receive written municipal approval regarding this summary; however, we have made every effort to do so and to make sure the summary that follows accurately reflects what was discussed at the interview.

Attendees:

- Glen Gilmore, Mayor, Hamilton Township
GGilmore@HamiltonNJ.com
- Lloyd Jacobs, Director of Engineering, Planning & Inspections, Hamilton Township
LJacobs@HamiltonNJ.com
- Hal English, Director, Department of Technology & Economic Development, Hamilton Township
HEnglish@HamiltonNJ.com
- Rebecca Hersh, NJ Future
- George Hawkins, NJ Future
- Scotia MacRae, NJ Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- **Hamilton Transit Village**
 - The American Standard site was a highly contaminated site, leaching lead and barium into the nearby neighborhood. The town's vision was to convert the site into Class A office space.
 - **Political problems**
 - Political opposition to the project has been very tough to overcome. Newly elected town council will rescind the site's redevelopment plan. Town council will probably block the project within weeks. The council will override a mayoral veto.
 - Puts project back at square one, thus going back on years of planning with NJ TRANSIT, consultants, etc.
 - If the project dies, the train station development might just be a large surface parking lot.
 - Public is worried that the development will bring school children, urbanization, COAH obligations.
 - Hamilton's experience might discourage other mayors around the state from doing a transit village.
 - **Lack of state support**
 - NJ TRANSIT does not have the funding to help with the necessary outreach to the public. No other state agencies have publicly come to the project's defense.
 - Town needs help paying for public outreach and education on projects like these, but it has no budget for that sort of thing. It would have been an enormous help in the November election to be able to really inform the public about the project's benefit to the community – reduced tax bills, increased economic vitality, etc.
 - The state must provide data and research backing up the case for transit-oriented developments. If the Listokin report had been made widely available *before* the election, it would have been a huge help and might have prevented the current dismantling of the transit village plan.
 - The state needs to do studies of existing transit villages to provide data to communities like Hamilton. Do they work? What works, what doesn't? Do they overcrowd the schools? How much traffic do they really create? This data needs to be completed so towns can pass it on to the public and prevent NIMBY campaigns.
- **Abandoned Gas Stations**
 - Looking to redevelop 13 abandoned stations around town. Most are prime real estate – corner lots, located at entrances to neighborhoods and on major thoroughfares. Township is looking to reuse these sites as parks, small-scale retail, etc.
 - Two have already reopened; one is a Starbucks. The town is having a hard time redeveloping the rest.
 - Many are probably contaminating the neighborhoods they are adjacent to. Town wants to at least cap them, or even clean them up, and turn them into parks.
 - To make the redevelopment viable, the property owners need to be freed from liability. There are so many liability issues around cleaning up these sites. Property owners have learned that sometimes it's cheaper to just keep the sites abandoned and walk away from them.

- Could use help from the Governor. Town needs money to identify what's in the ground and what's in the buildings that might make cleanup expensive.
- **Other new developments**
 - Suburban Plaza
 - Whitehorse Plaza
 - Levin Properties proposed a shopping center on Nottingham Way. Town has been fighting with Levin Properties because Levin wants to put the shopping center's entrance on Clockner Road instead of Nottingham Way. Nottingham Way is a state highway; the proposed entrance on Clockner is right next to a school. The fight is going to the NJ Supreme Court.
 - New shopping center (high-end retail) on Route 130 is approved.
 - Redevelopment of a number of older suburban shopping malls, a productive way to encourage development while also preserving remaining open space.

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Washington Town Center**
 - The traffic generated from this development is congesting local roads, especially Route 33. If the Washington Town Center is fully built-out, will the Route 33 bypass work? Will the bypass ever get built?
- **Quakerbridge Mall**
 - Concerns about the Quakerbridge Mall redevelopment and the traffic it will create. Current infrastructure can't handle it.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Local Politics**
 - Local leaders need the big-picture view from state and federal officials. Local political cycles often offer no continuity, making it extremely difficult to do the right thing.
- **Lack of Route 1 Planning**
 - No real regional planning. Just a group of towns worried about bringing in ratables.
 - Quakerbridge Mall is going to go in without an upgrade to the road interchange. Will create a traffic nightmare.
- **Communications**
 - Traffic and housing are dirty words. Two of the main ingredients to smart growth have become negative in the public's mind. People think of smart growth as "urbanizing" the suburbs.
- **Housing Market**
 - Even though Hamilton has its share of "workforce" housing, housing that is affordable to middle-income families is extremely difficult to find because of the market conditions in the area. Other than small apartments, all of the houses are priced above \$600,000.

State Incentives & Assistance

- **Marketing & Communications Assistance**
 - **Governor should speak out to make smart growth less scary.** The Governor should regularly convey to the public and tell them that housing, traffic, development, and smart growth aren't dirty words. The state must help towns deal with local politics and media campaigns that claim that smart growth developments will be detrimental to the town.
 - **Coordinate agency support of specific projects.** The governor's office should talk to each of the state agencies and have them vocally support specific important projects, such as the Hamilton transit village.
 - **Provide data to back up the smart growth case.** State needs to provide towns with data to back up smart growth development plans and to supply research and evidence showing that projects (such as transit villages) are beneficial to municipalities. Otherwise it's very difficult to convince the public that such plans are necessary and beneficial to the community.

- **Assist with media outreach.** The state should be reaching out to the media, doing editorial board visits, etc., to convince the public that specific smart growth plans (such as the Hamilton Transit Village) are worthwhile. Municipalities can't fight these battles alone.
- **Legal Shield.** A great idea for projects that meet smart growth criteria.
- **MLUL Reform.** Hamilton's new council passed an ordinance saying that any resident can appeal a zoning board decision for \$50. Is it possible for the state to do something to prevent such ordinances? These appeals hold up the planning process.
- **Impact Fees.** A great idea.
- **Priority Permitting.** Could be very helpful. In Hamilton's case, there is concern that the new council will stop all new development and prevent any new ratables from coming to town – thus making taxes increase dramatically. The mayor would like to see what development he can get done in the next year (before his re-election) to slow down tax increases. Priority permitting could be helpful in this process.
- **Regional Transportation Planning**
 - Regional traffic patterns should be studied more carefully at the state level so solutions can be aggressively pursued. Currently there is too much focus on specific local traffic problems.
 - When reviewing the traffic impacts of new developments, the state must look beyond access permits and focus on the bigger regional picture.
 - The state needs to make a much greater investment in mass transit infrastructure throughout New Jersey.
 - State aid is necessary to help make small improvements on state roads, such as Route 33. Small improvements, such as left-turn arrows and synchronized traffic signals, can add to the efficiency of our roads. Towns cannot afford many of these measures but the state should enable communities to do so.
- **State agency support**
 - All state agencies, not just DOT and NJ TRANSIT, should be vocally supportive of transit, transit villages, and smart growth projects. These issues should be of concern to all state agencies.

Borough of Jamesburg Interview

Tuesday, January 9, 2007

10:00 a.m.

In Attendance

- Mayor Tony LaMantia
mayor@jamesburgborough.org
732-521-2222 ext. 111
- Teri Jover, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- **Municipal Information**
 - Jamesburg is a small community of 6,025 residents, is less than one square mile large, and is completely surrounded by its neighbor, Monroe Township.
 - The town is 99 percent built-out (built or approved development), with maybe two lots available for new development.
- **Senior housing**
 - There is currently one housing development for senior citizens underway.
 - There is another project in the pipeline that would convert an existing apartment complex into age-restricted housing.
- **Banks**
 - Although relatively small in scale, there are two new banks that plan on locating in town.
- **Redevelopment**
 - The community does not have plans to pursue redevelopment per se; in particular, it is concerned about preserving the historic nature of the community and keeping the aesthetics. It does not want to encourage tearing down existing structures.
 - There is an effort to persuade businesses to locate in the center of town and to rehabilitate and reuse existing structures. Town is discouraging apartments (with the exception of efficiency units) above retail locations and is encouraging office uses for those locations.
- **Shared services**
 - Jamesburg currently shares a variety of services with its neighbors. In some cases they provide the services for a fee, in others they combine forces to make purchases at reduced rates.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **High cost of educating school children**
 - Jamesburg is already struggling to meet its educational mandates – more residential development would put a strain on an already difficult situation.
 - Town already has a mixed-use center. They are in the process of fine-tuning it by encouraging office space above retail, in part to reduce the burden on the tax payers.
- **Traffic**
 - There is much development in neighboring communities and Jamesburg is the recipient of much of the traffic, particularly from residential developments to the east of Route 130 that commute westward.
- **Flooding**
 - Similar to the traffic, Jamesburg has a large amount of flooding due to increased impervious cover caused by development in neighboring communities.
- **Lack of inter-municipal coordination**
 - Neighboring communities approve development without having to consider (much) the negative impacts it might have on Jamesburg.
 - There is no “big picture” view of the development occurring in the region.
 - Jamesburg is “stuck in the middle” of development without much control over what happens around it.
- **Lack of clout**
 - Because of its small size, Jamesburg feels as if it lacks the political clout to get the state support received by some of the larger communities in the region.

State Incentives & Assistance

- Consider a road spur around Jamesburg to alleviate traffic. This approach worked well in Hightstown with Route 133, and a similar type of road project might help Jamesburg with its traffic congestion.

- More outreach from the state to individual communities, particularly to towns that are impacted by development in neighboring communities. Not all development is good for all towns, and perhaps the state can play a bigger role in reducing the negative impacts on communities like Jamesburg.
- Provide equal funding for schools. The current school funding formula does not benefit smaller communities like Jamesburg and should be reconfigured to be more equitable. In particular, increasing the funding for Abbott districts reduces available funding for Jamesburg.
- Reduce the number of state mandates. Small communities like Jamesburg have already “tightened their belts” significantly. Each additional state mandate – be it for schools, libraries or DEP requirements – has a dramatic effect on municipalities with small budgets. The state should get away from a one-size-fits-all approach and consider different requirements for different circumstances.

Lawrence Township Interview

Monday, November 6, 2006

1:00 p.m.

In attendance:

- Michael Powers, Mayor
mpowers@pharmanet.com
- Pam Mount, Councilwoman
phmount@comcast.net
- Greg Puliti, Councilman
- Richard Krawczun, Municipal Manager
RKrawczun@lawrencetwp.com
- Kathleen Norcia, Municipal Clerk
- Philip Caton, planning consultant
pcaton@cchnj.com
- George Hawkins, New Jersey Future
- Rebecca Hersh, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans & Projects

- **Business Route I/Brunswick Pike Redevelopment**
 - Building 64 affordable senior apartments and some retail on site of former Trenton Motel
 - Want to turn the Brunswick Pike corridor into a boulevard with sidewalks, a median, etc.
 - Important project that will help stabilize the communities (filled with workforce housing) on either side of the roadway.
 - There are 6,000 residents living on either side of the road.
 - Lawrence has been working with DOT's planning department for the past four years on this project. DOT planning has signed off, and the project is awaiting design and engineering.
 - DOT is holding up the roadway's redevelopment; since the gubernatorial election, things have stalled.
 - Town wants to take out one light, put in a roundabout, and put in sidewalks. No need to change road's width.
 - Township would accept jurisdiction of the roadway from Whitehead Road south to the Brunswick Circle.
 - Want to include mass transit and towpath connection in this project as well. But the roadway needs to be fixed to make anything possible.
 - This part of Route I is the "bedroom" for the rest of the corridor. A main street is needed here. It can be hooked up with the BRT and the train stations in Hamilton and Trenton. Very intense development.
- **Quakerbridge Mall**
 - Developer is increasing the size of the mall – an 85% density increase; .30 FAR to .50 FAR; 1.3 million square feet to approximately 1.65 million square feet.
 - Bringing in high-end retail
 - Lawrence thinks of this as a redevelopment project, as the mall is in economic decline and has not been improved in 30 years.
 - Redevelopment would include decked parking.
 - Economic development for the region, preventing shoppers from seeking out high-end retail in Cherry Hill, Short Hills, etc.
 - Simon does not own all of the land on the property. Sears is its own entity, as are some other stores. Separate leases, negotiated at separate times. Very complicated.
 - The mall will generate many more jobs for the area and sales tax revenue.
 - According to the township's studies, the traffic that the mall expansion would add to Route I is a very small percentage of what is already coming to the Route I corridor when it achieves full buildout.
 - Quakerbridge Mall has agreed, in theory, to put the BRT on their land. But the decisions by the state must be done in a timely manner (see BRT section, below).
- **Hospital Relocation – Capital Health**
 - Capital Health wants to move from Trenton to Lawrence, but Lawrence is not interested because of a lack of space for the proposed type of use and concerns about the development's affect on the community's character.

- If the hospital is moved to Princeton Pike, it makes no sense to have a hotel and restaurant connected to it. It should be connected to a medical research or R&D facility.
 - *Update: As of March 2007, CHS is considering Scotch Road in Hopewell Township as the relocation destination.*
- **Mercer Crossings**
 - Three-town redevelopment effort (Lawrence, Hopewell, and Ewing) around the Farmer's Market.
 - Interested in road improvements and public infrastructure for the site.
 - Did a charette with ULI; also worked with Project for Public Spaces to think about what to do with the entire block.
 - Site could be improved and offer an incubator for smaller, individually owned businesses. The Route I corridor should not just be big-box stores and chains.
- **Affordable Housing/Workforce Housing**
 - Town is both a sender and receiver of RCAs.
 - Town has built 300 units more than required by COAH.
 - The only town on the Route I corridor that provides housing actually on the corridor. Considerable workforce housing in Lawrence. All other towns have to import or export all of their people to jobs – Lawrence is the one town on the corridor that has a jobs/housing balance.
 - The jobs that come to the Route I corridor should first take into account what kind of people live here. We shouldn't import people; we should hire people who are already living here.
- **BRT**
 - Interested in exploring bringing BRT to the new Quakerbridge Mall.
 - Lawrence's master plan says that the mall developer should pursue it.
 - Quakerbridge Mall has agreed, in theory, to put the BRT on their land. But the decisions by the state must be made in a timely manner.
 - **Private property owners' questions & concerns about the BRT:**
 - **Timing.** The BRT has been in the planning phase for a very long time, and the mall has specific questions about how they're expected to anticipate the BRT when they don't know when, or even if, it will happen.
 - Who has **responsibility** for the BRT areas on private property? Are there liability issues? Maintenance issues?
 - Will private property owners receive any **incentive** to accommodate the BRT?
 - What is the long-term completed **project** going to look like?
 - Each parking space represents \$20,000 per year for the developer. To remove a number of parking spaces to accommodate the BRT, it could be a huge **financial** loss. What do they get in exchange for giving up all of that space?
 - How much use/traffic is expected from the BRT? Will it be enough to make up for the loss of each parking spot?
 - Park & Rides:
 - If the only BRT park-and-ride in Lawrence is at Quakerbridge Mall, it won't benefit the residents of Lawrence. If Lawrence is to access the BRT service, there has to be a park-and-ride somewhere else as well. A giant regional park-and-ride facility has no benefit to Lawrence Township – it must be a smaller more local one for the residents.
 - The large regional park-and-ride facilities should be built far out, close to the Pennsylvania border. Then, the BRT can ride up the shoulders of I-95.
 - Routing Issues:
 - Buses can run one big loop from Pennsylvania to Quakerbridge, Carnegie Center, Mercer Mall, and back out on I-95.
 - Separate spurs to each of the train stations.
 - Do a pilot project first instead of implementing the entire thing. To make the entire BRT up to New Brunswick, it will take too long. Start small.
 - Should focus on taking people to and from the train stations.
- **Other Transportation Issues**
 - Need a business road parallel to Route I if DOT wants to turn Route I into an expressway.
 - Some of this could be achieved by **extending Canal Pointe Boulevard** so people would not have to drive on Route I. The extension would go to Nassau Park/Province Line Road and beyond – all the way behind the Mercer Mall and on to Route 295. It would allow much easier access to all the businesses on that side of Route I, without forcing people to drive on Route I.
 - Would like to see a **lane constructed over Route I** for bicycles and pedestrians. There is housing on either side of the highway; people would walk if they could. The path could eventually connect to the

towpath, to Avalon Run, Liberty Green, and the other dense housing developments on the far side of Quakerbridge Mall. The state could help with financing such a project, which would be expensive, because it has regional benefits.

- The **Franklin Corner Road intersection** desperately needs to be fixed. The existing jughandle does not function well and creates massive traffic backups at that light.

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **West Windsor**
 - Wyeth Property
 - The site has been sitting vacant for years. The state should encourage the redevelopment of the American Cyanamid site, which could be a research facility for Rutgers University or house the Department of Agriculture. Could also be biotech incubator to create economic development opportunity?
 - Make sure housing is built next to the site so people can walk to whatever gets built there.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Fears of traffic & change**
 - New residential development should be placed next to existing commercial uses. Can't do it the other way around. When commercial development goes near already existing residential uses, the existing residents won't tolerate it.
- **Space for New Development**
 - Township has built 300 affordable units more than required by COAH. Very little space for any more housing. Town is built-out.
- **Property Taxes**
 - Nobody can afford to live in New Jersey because of the property taxes; that is why so many commute from Pennsylvania. These patterns turn Route I, and Lawrenceville, into a parking lot from all the traffic. Lawrence is the throughway for all of this intense traffic.

State Incentives & Assistance

- **Sustainable Development/Green Buildings.** These "hot topics" can be big economic drivers for the region. Lawrence is working on these issues intensively and has created its own nonprofit, Sustainable Lawrence. The trend towards sustainable development could be a lynchpin to attract many types of businesses (solar energy businesses, green construction companies, etc.) to the Route I corridor. There can be a major economic benefit to integrating green philosophies into local government actions. However, this needs to be nurtured and incentivized by state government.
 - Lawrence is trying to make the mall expansion green wherever possible, but the mall will likely refuse because there are no financial incentives to do so. Sustainability is more expensive up-front. State support to encourage businesses to undertake sustainable practices could help immensely. Quakerbridge Mall could be a great pilot project for how to retrofit existing brownfields to be greener and more economically viable. The Governor's office should sit down with Simon, the developers.
- **Increase density** by moving some of the Route I car dealers and smaller businesses. Government must provide incentives to do so.
- Would like to see a **lane constructed over Route I** for bicycles and pedestrians. There is housing on either side of the highway; people would walk if they could. The path could eventually connect to the towpath, to Avalon Run, Liberty Green, and the other dense housing developments on the far side of Quakerbridge Mall. The state could help with financing such a project, which would be expensive, because it has regional benefits.
- **Business Route I Main Street project:** All DOT has to do is say yes. The wait is endless.
- Need initiatives to **strengthen existing workforce housing neighborhoods.**
- **Identify locations that could be developed** along the Route I corridor, and provide guidance to those municipalities for how those sites should be developed in a smart growth way.
- To promote economic development, **make an inventory** of all of the positive attributes along the Route I corridor, such as history, environment, canal, universities, transportation, etc.

Monroe Township Interview
Wednesday, November 8, 2006
9:30 a.m.

In attendance:

- Ed Cohen, Program Supervisor/Transportation
ecohen@monroetwp.com
- Wayne Hamilton, Business Administrator
whamilton@monroetwp.com
- Ernest Feist, PE, PP, CME, Municipal Engineer
EFeist@FeistEngineeringInc.com
- George Hawkins, New Jersey Future
- Rebecca Hersh, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- **Land Use & Population**
 - 43 square miles
 - Lowest tax rate in Middlesex County
 - Second-lowest population density in Middlesex County
 - Population approximately 37,000, of which seniors make up more than half.
 - Over 10,000 existing senior housing units in Township
 - Approximately 6,500 non-senior housing units in Township
 - Township has a mix of retirement units and single-family homes. Approximately half of the housing is senior housing.
 - Monroe Township had the first planned retirement community on the East Coast, near exit 8A.
- **Planned Development**
 - Approximately 600 new homes each year for the last few years
 - Most current development in the pipeline is senior housing
 - Approximately 2,500 additional units of senior housing that have been approved and are in some stage of construction.
 - Approximately 1,500 approved single-family units in the pipeline. Once that housing is done, the town has no intention of planning for any more non-senior housing developments.
 - Two non-senior housing communities, near Route 33, are under construction. Provides some housing for employers outside of Monroe because there are very few jobs in Monroe.
 - Very little retail or commercial planned. Town wants to maintain its suburban/rural character.
 - Town not interested in building a dense “urban” type of community anywhere in the municipality.
 - Town is currently upzoning to keep its low-density suburban character. Went from one-acre zoning to three-acre zoning to six-acre zoning.
- **Housing**
 - Level of services for senior housing is much lower since it does not generate school children. Township prefers senior housing.
 - No planned workforce housing; not desired by township.
 - Large affordable housing obligation, over 700 required units. Much of it will be built as low-income senior housing. Over 250 units are being given away through RCAs. Trying to stay away from building any non-senior low-income housing, because that kind of development is too hard on the town’s property taxes and services.
- **Open Space Preservation**
 - Housing development is offset by a very aggressive open space preservation plan.
 - Want to avoid mistakes of neighboring towns that have lost their open space.
 - At full build out, Monroe will only be 50% developed. The rest will be preserved and/or developed.
 - Municipality is in a race with developers to acquire farms for open space and/or preservation.
 - Farmers back out of state farmland preservation programs because the numbers don’t make fiscal sense for them.
 - 3,000 acres preserved so far; currently targeting another 1,000 for this year.
 - Monroe has a local environmental protection manager, unlike most other towns. Primary responsibility is to coordinate the municipality’s open space preservation efforts and interface with DEP.

- **Turnpike Exit 8A**
 - An immediate, critical problem.
 - Land-use planning for Exit 8A is chaotic. The CJTF meetings are unproductive and nothing comes of them.
 - About 40 warehouses have been added to the area since 2003; the truck traffic is increasing exponentially. It's the most congested area in the entire state.
 - The capacity of Port Newark is being tripled. These trucks are all dumped onto the Turnpike.
 - If Exit 8A isn't improved, the bottleneck will continue to get worse because of all the new warehouse development.
 - The state runs the risk that these warehouses will be abandoned in ten years, because of the worsening traffic problems at the exit. Exit 8A will lose its ability to compete with the new international distribution points unless something is done to make it easier to get in and out of the warehouse area.
 - Need a truck stop in the area as well as improvements to signage and roadways.
 - South Brunswick, Cranbury, Monroe, Middlesex County, DOT, and the Turnpike Authority must work together to make these solutions possible.
 - **Needed Truck Stop**
 - The truckers have nowhere to go. There is no truck stop. There should be a truck stop in the middle of the warehouse complex right off of the turnpike, but no municipality wants a truck stop within their borders. Monroe feels that the truck stop should be located in South Brunswick, but South Brunswick isn't interested (most of the warehouses are in Cranbury and South Brunswick).
 - **Needed Signage Improvements**
 - Truckers get off the turnpike because they get lost or are looking for a place to go because they are early for their scheduled delivery time.
 - Monroe wanted color-coded signage telling truckers how to get around but the Turnpike Authority refused. DOT says it will try to convince the Turnpike Authority to do it, but has no enforcement power.
- **Route 33**
 - Current zoning allows for warehousing.
 - Looking to do some development along the highway – commercial and warehousing only. No residential
 - Need a way to get from Route 33 to Route 1.
- **Route 92**
 - Township supports the roadway; signed on to a recent press release of ten mayors supporting the roadway.
- **Senior Transportation Shuttles**
 - Includes pickups at senior developments.
 - Due to passenger pick-up time, it takes two hours to get to downtown Princeton because there's no good east-west access and the traffic is so bad.
- **Other Transportation Issues**
 - Monroe residents have a very hard time getting to Route 1.
 - Could have a BRT stop at the Turnpike Park & Ride, and run it down the Turnpike to East Brunswick. Link with a BRT being proposed from Piscataway to East Brunswick.
 - MOM train line
 - The route runs through Monroe; the town is adamantly opposed to it. It has 12 road crossings where school buses go every day.
 - It will affect the town's character. Route goes right through the Battle of Monmouth site.
 - The train line only benefits Monmouth and Ocean Counties. Why does the route have to come west and then go north?
- **Schools**
 - Monroe has been averaging an increase of 300 new children enrolled every year.
 - Space is so tight that they're in trailers – the town now has 30 trailers that are used as classrooms.
 - Just approved a new elementary school; plans to build a new high school as well.
 - The state underfunds public education.
- **Development Growing Pains**
 - Extremely difficult for municipalities to afford infrastructure and service improvements related to development and population growth. Town is spending \$20 million in local money to double the size of its library, community center, and senior center.
 - Town has an enormous EMS operation; it only has 10 trucks to respond to 7,000 EMS calls per year. Municipally owned and operated.

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Home Rule Problems**
 - Impossible and very laborious to get anything done at Exit 8A because of the five entities (Turnpike Authority, Monroe, DOT, Middlesex County, and South Brunswick) who all have a stake in it.
 - There is no coordination between towns – even when they share a road. For example, Monroe argues with Cranbury and Millstone because the municipal border is a road. Nobody can decide who is responsible for paying for plowing the road.
 - Governments have no obligation, responsibility or incentive to coordinate.
- **Middlesex County**
 - County staff is great, but completely ineffective because county government has no power.
 - County should be empowered to coordinate planning, such as for traffic and drainage, between communities.
 - Monroe has six county roads that are major thoroughfares, which become more and more heavily trafficked because some of them are parallel to the Turnpike and Route I.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Lack of Interest**
 - Monroe Township has no interest in building dense communities of multi-family housing.
- **Home Rule**
 - No interest, incentive, or obligation for towns to coordinate planning efforts or think beyond their own municipal borders.
- **Development Pressures**
 - Very difficult for land owners, including farmers, to resist selling their land to developers because they can get so much more money from them than from the state, county and township.

State Incentives & Assistance

- **Financial Incentives**
 - Towns must have financial incentives and/or direct mandates from state government in order to coordinate land use planning.
- **Impact Fees:** Would be extremely useful.
- **State Payment for Public Services**
 - Towns need help paying for public services that result from development, such as schools, libraries, public works, service delivery, infrastructure improvement, etc.
 - The state should give towns payments each year to cover the costs of school children.
- **RSIS:** Repeal the Residential Site Improvement Standards
- **Political Reform**
 - Give mayors and council people six-year terms. With four-year terms politicians only have two years before they worry about elections again. Politicians will take more risks and have better long-term visions with longer terms.
- **Legal Shield:**
 - Not a guarantee of anything; could be overturned by the Supreme Court. Developers have deep pockets and can get whatever they want.

New Brunswick Interview

November 28, 2006

9:00 a.m.

Attendees:

- Jim Cahill, Mayor, City of New Brunswick
- Rebecca Hersh, NJ Future
- George Hawkins, NJ Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- **Heldrich Center**
 - Under construction, downtown.
 - 250 room luxury hotel, 50,000 square foot conference center, approximately 10,000 square feet of retail on the ground floor, and 48 condominium units. The retail will include a men's haberdashery, a wine bar, and a florist.
- **Fulton Square**
 - Near the North Brunswick border.
 - Townhouse development, about 209 units. 57 units are affordable and mixed within the development.
- **One Spring Street**
 - 121 condominium units, recently completed. Already sold out.
 - 35,000 square feet of office space; 5,000 square feet of ground-floor retail.
- **Jersey Avenue**
 - 52,400 square feet of retail, warehouse & light industrial uses.
- **Route 1 Raritan Heights**
 - The area by the Loews movie theater, just north of downtown New Brunswick, has been declared an area in need of redevelopment.
 - A redevelopment plan has been approved for apartments, condominiums, and retail.
 - New Brunswick would like to see a new road underneath the Route 1 bridge.
- **Corner of Easton & Somerset Streets**
 - Near train station. Partnership with Rutgers University, which wants to relocate its bookstore and its Rutgers University Press headquarters at the site. Will also include up to 200 condominium units.
- **Jersey/Handy Shopping Center**
 - Redevelopment of empty lot. New Walgreens drug store has already been built. Further site redevelopment will include a 65,000 square foot supermarket, 200 condominiums, a bank, and 16,000 square feet of retail space. Construction of the bank and retail space will happen soon. Land acquisition is still underway for the condos and the food store, so construction will probably not begin for another year.
 - Approvals are complete for the site's redevelopment plan, and Phase 2 planning board approvals have been granted.
- **French Street/Route 27 Mixed Use**
 - Under construction is a 100,000 square foot medical office building with small amount of retail on the ground floor. Also includes 54 condo units and ground floor retail.
- **Children's Specialized Hospital**
 - A rehabilitation hospital on Somerset Street, a critical part of the children's health care campus at RWJUH/UMDNJ with the Child Health Institute and Children's Hospital.
- **New affordable senior housing**, being built in the old Lord Stirling School building.
- **Middlesex County Vo-Tech School Conversion**
 - Being transformed into upscale age-restricted housing.
- **131 Jersey Avenue**
 - Tax-foreclosed abandoned industrial redevelopment site (with contamination) to be converted into 100,000 square feet of medical office space.
- **MT. Zion AME/Leewood Townhomes**
 - 36 new townhomes, 24 of which are affordable, in the Remsen Ave. neighborhood.
- **Planned projects (formal processes not yet begun):**
 - **Cultural Center.** The city is exploring development opportunities to enhance its cultural center. Profits from the development would be dedicated specifically for the city's arts and theaters.

- **Ferren Mall/CORE Vision.** Across the street from the train station, on Albany Street. Site can accommodate 500,000+ square feet of office, several hundred thousand square feet of retail, plus residential uses and parking.
- **Georges Road Gateway Project.** Complete review of entire neighborhood for comprehensive neighborhood revitalization project.
- **Transportation Projects & Issues:**
 - **Route 18 widening.** DOT project, funded by the federal government. Includes better pedestrian access, walkways, and bridges.
 - **Bicycle paths.** City recently approved its first official bicycle path on an existing roadway and is working with DOT on the final design. The path will connect the College Avenue campus to the Cook/Douglas campus. Hoping to have many more bicycle/pedestrian paths like this around the city in the future.
 - **BRT**
 - The city would like to see a BRT system that runs from Piscataway to New Brunswick to East Brunswick.
 - A study was done in the late 1990s with Rutgers, the City of New Brunswick, the county, and Urbitran. The study showed that the minimum ridership on the route (Piscataway/Busch Campus/UMDNJ campus to downtown New Brunswick to the retail area along Route 18 in East Brunswick) would be 50,000 per day. Excellent ridership estimates.
 - Preliminary engineering study shows that the route can be done with a dedicated path (for either BRT or light rail).
 - Critical to future development in city and meet transportation needs of Rutgers University.
 - **Transit village designation.** So far the main advantage it's given the city is better access to NJ TRANSIT and the state agencies.
 - **Route 27 Improvements.** Need to improve along most of the length within New Brunswick to eliminate very bad traffic conditions.
 - **Rutgers academic, housing and transportation needs.**

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Highland Park**
 - The city is hopeful that the Route 27 bicycle/pedestrian connection between Highland Park and New Brunswick will be significantly improved as a result of the Route 18 project.
- **Edison**
 - Ford Motor plant redevelopment. If the township builds a large mall on the site, it will dramatically worsen an already severe Route 1 traffic problem there. There are other very large malls in close proximity to the site – does it make sense to have yet another? Additionally, will such a mall harm New Brunswick's ability to attract commercial development?

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Eminent Domain**
 - If the state significantly reduces ability of municipalities to exercise eminent domain, it will be a huge obstacle to redevelopment in New Jersey. Without the power of eminent domain, very little of what has been done in New Brunswick would have been possible. The power is very rarely used, but it's a negotiating tool.
- **Train Station**
 - The current building, while attractive and historic, needs to be significantly upgraded. It only serves one side of the tracks and is too small to accommodate current and future uses.
 - It might be time to look at building a new train station adjacent to or in close proximity with the existing one and to turn the existing building into a museum/visitor's center site.

State Incentives & Assistance

- **Single Point of Entry for Municipal Assistance**
 - It would be very helpful to towns all over the state to offer a single point of entry for municipal assistance and funding. A town should be able to go to one state office and say, "This is what we want to do." The state would then work with the municipality on how it could accomplish the project.
- **Consolidate Services at the County Level**
 - County government could be a significant player in convening municipalities and combining services. Firefighting, animal control, and other services could be at a county level. It would save considerable amounts of duplicative effort, money and bureaucracy.

North Brunswick Interview

December 1, 2006

10:00 a.m.

Attendees:

- Francis Womack, Mayor, Township of North Brunswick
mayorwomack@northbrunswickonline.com
- Thomas A. Vigna, Director of Community Development, Township of North Brunswick
tvigna@northbrunswickonline.com
- Robert Lombard, Business Administrator, Township of North Brunswick
rlobard@northbrunswickonline.com
- Rebecca Hersh, NJ Future
- George Hawkins, NJ Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- **Transportation**
 - Town is defined by three corridors: Route 130, Route 27, and Route 1.
 - North-south transportation is adequate.
 - **East-west transportation is virtually non-existent.** To go east-west the only possibilities are local and county roads, which are all inadequate. Adams Lane is one of the only options and is inadequate and unsafe for any truck traffic. Recent improvements by DOT have done very little to help.
 - **Finnegan's Lane Extension to Route 130** is a top priority to improve the east-west connections in the township and in the region. The extension will greatly increase the viability of putting a new train station at the J&J site.
 - **Route 130 Bus Route**
 - Buses run on Route 27 and Route 1, but there are no buses on Route 130. A route 130 bus route would be very helpful.
- **Johnson & Johnson property/potential new train station**
 - **Okonite Alternative:** If the J&J site doesn't work out for a new train station and transit village, there's also the possibility that the Okonite site could be used. It is currently 500,000 square feet of below-market warehousing space.
 - **Community concerns:**
 - Will thousands of new units overload the school system?
 - Will the project bring local roads, and Route 1, to a crawl? The neighborhoods near the proposed village are very worried about traffic going through neighborhood streets.
 - **Finnegan's Lane Extension to Route 130**
 - If the extension is built, the transit village becomes much more palatable to the community. With the extension, drivers coming from the east (the Turnpike and 130) won't have to crowd local roads to get to the train station. If drivers can come up Route 130, jump onto the Finnegan's lane extension and go directly to the transit village, the traffic problems in the township would be dramatically improved.
 - The extension would run through wetlands which creates a permitting issue. Also, a portion of the land is owned by Middlesex County.
 - **Intersection of Adams Land & Cozzens Lane at Route 1**
 - Intersection is currently at Level of Service F during peak periods.
 - Improvements to this intersection would make the transit village more appealing to residents.

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Turnpike Exit 8A**
 - The tremendous growth happening there is impacting so many communities nearby, including North Brunswick. The state can't forget about the surrounding communities that are adversely impacted by this massive growth.
 - Whenever there is some sort of slowdown at Exit 8A, the trucks all get off at Exit 9 and drive on Route 18 to Route 1 or Route 130. It creates traffic nightmares and huge backups. The development at Exit 8A has really changed the traffic pattern in the entire region for the worse.

- **Franklin Township**
 - Significant residential and commercial growth in Franklin continues to make Route 27 worse and worse.
- **Communications with Neighboring Communities**
 - Only on an as-needed, ad hoc basis. Nothing formal.
 - Not actively involved in the Central Jersey Transportation Forum.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Resistance to additional residences**, especially to any that would add school children.
 - Township has four elementary schools that are currently being expanded to the maximum. Beyond that, there is no room for growth, unless more school buildings are built.
- **Resistance to any development that will add more traffic** to already-congested roadways.
- **Public education obstacles**. Very difficult to convince people that new housing and new development are not inherently bad. Need to figure out a way to educate people about sustainability, the reduction of CO2 production, and economic sustainability.

State Incentives & Assistance

- **TDR program expansion**. Residents might agree to very dense transit-village types of development if it ensured that development elsewhere in town would be halted. If the new homes in the dense development didn't represent anything more than full buildout in the rest of the town, the public would be much more agreeable to density. A potential problem with utilizing TDRs is balancing the density requested on the J&J site with the limited amount of additional developable land in the township.
- **Impact fees**. The ability to assess developers for recreational and school improvements would be extremely helpful. The types of improvements for which impact fees can be assessed must be broadened in order to encourage smart growth.
- **Public outreach assistance**.
 - Communities need outside voices – not developers – to convince them that developments such as transit villages are important. Credible representatives from state government need to vocally support specific projects on a regular basis. The state needs to come to municipal meetings and speak out.
 - State support of projects could help dissuade the public that smart growth is only about developers making money.
- **Affordable housing requirements**. With the new growth share requirements, every eight market units will generate one affordable housing unit. With the proposed 3,000 units in the North Brunswick transit village, many affordable units (and school children) will be generated. The state might want to think about exempting dense TOD developments from affordable housing requirements.
- **Creative solutions to controlling housing costs**. The small condos planned for the North Brunswick transit development are going to cost \$600,000 – too expensive to be workforce housing. The township wants more affordable units but the developer only wants to build high-end. The state might be able to work with the developer to convince them to include other types of housing in the development.

Plainsboro Township Interview
Thursday, November 9, 2006
1:00 p.m.

In attendance:

- Peter Cantu, Mayor
pcantu@plainsboronj.com
phullfish@plainsboronj.com
- Robert O. Sheehan, Township Administrator
rsheehan@plainsboronj.com
- George Hawkins, New Jersey Future
- Rebecca Hersh, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- Farming community of only 1,200 people until 1971, when multiple development approvals were put into place. Led to the creation of the PCD zone and the construction of 5,000 apartments at the Princeton Meadows complex.
- Population is now 21,000 people (in 12 square miles).
- **Open Space Initiatives:**
 - Goal since the 70s has been to preserve as much open space as possible, and cluster development. In the 1982 master plan, Plainsboro had “internal zone clustering,” which enacted six-acre zoning for the whole prime farm area in the community and offered landowners a density bonus if they agreed to preserve at least 75% of their prime farm area as open space and cluster development in the remaining 25%. The zoning was challenged in the courts twice and Plainsboro survived both challenges.
 - Today the community has preserved more than 50% of its land, which includes preserved public space, preserved private lands, land preserved through open space funds, farmland preservation, and recreational space.
 - Currently looking to preserve two additional parcels that are part of the township’s open space plan:
 - Township is trying to preserve 80 acres that are in its farmland preservation area. Have secured financial support from Middlesex County to do so. Township wants to acquire the property and has passed a resolution to do it either by condemnation or purchase.
 - A 2.5 acre piece of land adjacent to the golf course. Pursuing its purchase in the same manner.
- **Housing**
 - Town has largely built out its residential plan and feels it has a good balance of housing types, including apartments. Thousands of apartment units and condo units. Also has more than its share of affordable COAH units.
- **Village Center**
 - Site was previously zoned for single-family one-acre housing.
 - The Village Center, which is still under construction, was planned with new urbanist philosophy in mind and includes a library, ground-floor retail with housing above, bicycle paths, sidewalks, etc.
 - Sought to take advantage of three undeveloped parcels close to existing development that would support a town center.
 - After the plan was finished, it got a 72% approval rating from the public.
 - Lessons learned:
 - A constant political struggle to build a town center. Must convince people that these things benefit the community. Leadership, and continuity of leadership over a long period, are extremely important.
 - Make sure the development is dense enough to work, but not so dense that it alarms residents.
 - Highlight that projects like these are part of a balance, and point to a strong commitment to open space.
 - Controversy is to be expected. The public relations process is lengthy and a lot of work. Township hired consultants to help present the project to residents. The consultants assisted the planning process and facilitated the public meetings.
- **Medical Center of Princeton**
 - Sought out Plainsboro for relocation because they were unable to make needed expansions in their current location.
 - Looking to relocate to the FMC site.

- Wants to build an 850,000-square-foot hospital there, plus 120,000 square feet of medical offices, and the possibility of an additional 120,000 square feet at some point in the future. Also wants to build 110,000 square feet for the Merwick rehabilitation center and a 400-unit continuing care retirement community.
- They will protect the stream corridor near the site and provide substantial green acres space adjacent to the stream corridor.
- We ask four questions of the hospital's proposals: How does this plan integrate into our plan and vision for our town? What are the traffic impacts? What are the economic impacts (the hospital is nonprofit, and non-taxable), and what are the tradeoffs for taking on a nonprofit project such as this? Would it drive up our affordable housing needs and requirements?
- **Princeton Forrestal Center**
 - Zoned or approved for an additional 6.5 million square feet of high-end office space that has not been built yet.
 - 167,000 square feet of office space has already been built but remains unoccupied.
 - Inadequate transportation infrastructure is constricting the site's ability to grow and evolve.

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- Neighboring communities might be concerned about the hospital plans.
- **Communities to the north:**
 - Worried about the millions of square feet of warehouse space near the Turnpike Exit 8A, none of which generates significant high end jobs for the regions and all of which causes thousands of trucks a day to drive on local streets.
 - South Brunswick's development focus has been largely centered around warehousing and the Turnpike, not the area near the Route 1 corridor.
 - Part of the issue with Route 1 through South Brunswick is not simply that it's only two lanes, but that there are too many curb cuts and separate development along that stretch of the roadway.
- **Communities to the south:**
 - Concerned about plans for Quakerbridge Mall, the American Cyanamid site, the Princeton Junction transit village, and Sarnoff.
 - Very worried about the traffic problems (especially on Route 1) that will be created after two major developments – Sarnoff and Wyeth – are complete.
- **West Windsor-Plainsboro school district:**
 - Plainsboro paid a disproportionate amount to the regional school district for many years because its ratable base was disproportionately strong compared to the number of kids the town sent to the schools.
 - West Windsor was recently reevaluated and it turns out that its commercial properties had been underassessed by millions of dollars for years.
 - Eventually a system will be worked out with West Windsor where the school district is financed on a cost-per-pupil basis.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Workforce Housing**
 - The problem cannot be addressed in isolation without funding assistance to municipalities.
 - In this region, building "workforce" housing often is not affordable to middle-income people since the market is too strong. Plainsboro has thousands of apartment units and condos, which should be more than adequate workforce housing. But because of the region's housing market, even the smallest of those apartments is not affordable enough at \$1,000 a month.
 - There are state-funded affordable housing programs (COAH) but no state-funded workforce housing/moderate income housing programs.
 - Asking municipalities to build apartments and condos is simply not going to solve the problem. Funding is needed from the state.
 - Plainsboro feels it has built more than its fair share of workforce housing – considerably more than other communities along the Route 1 corridor. While the town is not opposed to building more apartments and condos, it needs things from the state in return, such as east-west transportation.
- **East-West Transportation/Route 92**
 - Lack of east-west transportation severely hurts economic development in the region. Route 1 and Exit 8A need to be connected. The proposed Route 92 alignment has the lowest impact.

- If the state fails to support it now, the opportunity will be forever lost. Project will die without support from the Governor's office.
- If the roadway is not built now, the state has to stop actions that would forever prevent the road from being built in the future.
- The Route 522 solution is not viable. Even the Route 92 EIS says that the 522 alternative is inadequate. Route 92, a four-lane limited access highway, would deliver far more traffic than Route 522. Route 522 has residential neighborhoods on both sides of it – so it cannot be widened. Its connection at the Turnpike and Route 130 is inadequate, and it delivers cars too far north onto Route 1, right in the middle of the South Brunswick Route 1 gridlock.

State Incentives & Assistance

- **Route 92.** In exchange for what the state wants from the Route 1 corridor communities (workforce housing, sound planning), the Governor's office must support the infrastructure needs of these communities, such as Route 92.
- **Impact fees.** Plainsboro has already used them extensively. While it might not be tremendously helpful to Plainsboro, it would be useful to many other communities.
- **Property tax reform.** If this doesn't happen, municipalities will continue to struggle, and sound planning will suffer.
- **Good planning and implementation.** Plainsboro has carefully thought out its plans. For anything the state asks, Plainsboro would ask the same four questions it asked of the Princeton Medical Center: How does this integrate into the town's plan and vision for the future? What are the traffic impacts? What are the economic impacts? Would it drive up the town's affordable housing needs and requirements?
- **Consultants & Studies.** Plainsboro expressed concern over the repetitive and overlapping studies that have represented the state's efforts along Route 1. For the sake of credibility and effectiveness, these efforts should be streamlined, and investment should follow evaluation.

Princeton Borough Interview
Thursday, November 2, 2006
2:00 p.m.

In Attendance

- Mildred Trotman, Mayor, Princeton Borough
mildredtrotman@aol.com
- Marvin Reed, Former Mayor, Princeton Borough
marvinReed@aol.com
- George Hawkins, New Jersey Future
- Rebecca Hersh, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- **Lack of Space**
 - A few infill projects are online (mostly single-family homes) but there aren't many lots left in town on which to build.
- **Affordable Housing**
 - Princeton Borough's affordable housing fee is \$56,000 per unit, meaning that if someone does an infill development, they would owe the borough \$56,000 for each unit built. That's why nothing is getting built except for very expensive houses.
 - Borough does have a number of teardowns and replacements but they don't count as far as COAH is concerned.
 - Princeton Borough has always built affordable units to maintain diversity, even at the expense of heat from the public. So the borough is frustrated by the fact that other towns aren't even trying to comply, when the borough is complying above and beyond the obligated numbers.
 - Almost all of the borough's affordable housing is inclusionary, built within the project. Borough requires that it be mixed into all new construction.
- **Anticipated New Residential Development:** Total housing coming online includes 760 multi-family units, among them 139 low- and moderate-income units, all within six blocks of Princeton Borough's downtown:
 - **Princeton Hospital conversion**
 - Approximately 280 units multi-family units, including approximately 28 low-income units and 28 moderate-income units.
 - Will also include some retail and office space.
 - Franklin Avenue hospital parking lot conversion
 - 28 multi-family units, including 6 low- and moderate-income units.
 - **Merwick Nursing Home Conversion**
 - 130 (estimated) multi-family units, including 26 (estimated) low- and moderate-income units.
 - **Stanworth University Apartments**
 - Potential for expansion: approximately 145 multi-family units, including 29 (estimated) low- and moderate-income units.
 - **Borough Redevelopment Project**
 - 77 multifamily units, including 6 moderate income units and 6 low-income units.
 - **Palmer Square/Hulfish North**
 - 100 townhouses and multi-family apartment units, including conversion of 10 existing units to low- and moderate-income housing.
- **Princeton University Development Projects**
 - Expansion of Princeton University Science Campus along Washington Road (Science Library, Chemistry Building, Psychology Building, Neuroscience Institute)
 - Expansion of University Performing Arts Campus along Alexander Road and University Place: McCarter Theater, Berlind Theater, new concert and dance theaters, new contemporary art museum, rehearsal/classroom space, new restaurants and retail shops, new residential space. Will need improved parking at the Dinky station and for the new Arts Campus to accommodate this growth.
- **Traffic & Transportation**
 - **Central Jersey Transportation Forum East-West Analysis – 2020**
 - Predicts that congestion in the area will get dramatically worse by 2020
 - In 2020, 58% of total travel in the CJTF area will be on congested sections compared to only 19% in 1997.

- **Route 92**
 - Princeton Borough and Township support Route 92 if it links the Turnpike to Route 206.
 - East-west access needs to be addressed.
 - Connection between Route 27 and Route 206 is very important.
- **Penns Neck Bypass**
 - Borough agreed to Alternative D2, the officially accepted plan by DOT and FHWA.
 - Pressure from West Windsor to separate the elements of the project, and to do the Vaughn Drive portion first so they can proceed with their transit village.
 - Borough supports the entire package, but not to separate the elements or lower the priority of the Washington Road underpass.
 - The Vaughn Drive portion will open up considerable areas to development; borough feels that this portion should not be done without making the Route 1 improvements at the same time.
- **Hillsborough Route 206 Bypass**
 - The Princetons only support it if it connects to Route 92.
 - Don't like current design because if it comes out in Montgomery, there is no way to get to Route 1 without coming straight through Princeton Borough.
 - Would also worsen truck traffic through Princeton, especially at night.
 - All it does is circumvents the Hillsborough traffic and puts it into Princeton instead.
 - Montgomery is also opposed to the bypass as planned.
- **Route 1**
 - Harrison Street Intersection Improvement
 - Need a temporary right-turn lane on Harrison Street onto Route 1 South, near the Sunoco station. The lack of a lane creates huge backups along Harrison Street all the way into Princeton. The space is there; the gas station has a grassy area that could easily be used for the lane.
 - West Windsor supports the turn lane but doesn't feel it's its responsibility to do it, even though the intersection is in West Windsor.
 - Mercer County could also do it with its own repair crew.
 - The impediment is that the municipalities who want it done the most are not the municipalities where the intersection is located.
- **Route 206 Bicycle & Pedestrian Compatibility Study, July 2000**
 - Nice study, but we haven't heard anything from them in six years.
 - There have been so many studies like this in the Route 1 corridor. These studies get farmed out to consultants but the findings are never put into anybody's portfolio at DOT.
- **BRT**
 - Keep one-track rail cars on the Dinky line, connecting to the Northeast Corridor station at Princeton Junction.
 - Install single-lane dedicated roadway alongside Dinky tracks; extend BRT routes up to Nassau Street/Palmer Square and beyond.
 - Improved frequency, on-time reliability, and connection to BRT for existing 605 and 606 NJ TRANSIT buses; extension of new feeder routes on the Great Road to redevelopment of North Princeton Redevelopment Center in Montgomery Township.
 - Connect Palmer Square by BRT to:
 - The new PHCS hospital being built in Plainsboro.
 - Toll Brothers housing in West Windsor.
 - The new town centers being built in Plainsboro, Cranbury, Rossmore, and Jamesburg.
 - Market Fair
 - Nassau Park
 - Mercer Mall
 - Quakerbridge Mall
 - Hightstown, Twin Rivers, and beyond.

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Princeton Junction Transit Village**
 - What will the parking capacity be at the transit village? If it reduces the number of permits, it will create massive problems. There is already a three-year waiting list to get a parking permit at the Princeton Junction train station.
 - Must have increased parking capacity at the transit village
- **North Princeton Development Center in Montgomery Township**
 - Concerned about the traffic impacts along The Great Road and Elm Road
- **TransLoad Facility in Belle Meade (Hillsborough)**
 - Concerned about truck traffic
- **Canal Pointe Boulevard**
 - Should be extended all the way to Nassau Park shopping center
- **Quakerbridge Mall**
 - There's high-density housing right next to the mall, but no pedestrian or bicycle access to it.

State Incentives & Assistance

- **Legal shield:** would be valuable. Support brief by State Attorney General helped borough when its redevelopment project was attacked in the courts, but then upheld by State Supreme Court.
- **Expedited permitting:** could be tied to center designation
- **Funds for visioning projects:** the state could hire consultants to work with towns to provide visioning projects for residents so the implications of new development could be better understood and less feared.
- The governor could tell DOT **not to provide access permits unless they are linked to housing.**
- **Tax based sharing:** towns need incentives to share.

Princeton Township Interview

Monday, November 6, 2006

10:00 a.m.

In attendance:

- Phyllis Marchand, Mayor
phyllis_marchand@princeton-township.nj.us
- Wanda Gunning, Planning Board Chair
- Lee Solow, Planning Director
lsolow@princeton-township.nj.us
- George Hawkins, New Jersey Future
- Rebecca Hersh, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans & Projects

- **Bunn Drive area**
 - Undeveloped land
 - For over 40 years, this area has been zoned and planned for growth which has been occurring over time.
 - What remains: Approximately 100,000 square feet of additional space and 140 residential units.
 - There is a use variance pending for another 100 units, which the adjacent office development objects to. They want the office park area to remain exclusively an office park
 - Overlay on one side for senior housing.
 - Some people want the land in this area preserved.
 - Most of that area is in the regional center; the remainder is PA3. Township tried, during cross-acceptance, to get that land designation changed to PA2 (as it is zoned for office development), but OSG refused. There are some wetlands that need to be protected in this area.
 - Princeton Community Village
 - Township is looking to add 20 affordable units; Princeton University may provide funding for these units in order to meet its COAH requirements.
- **Princeton Hospital**
 - The piece of property in the township (the garage and the medical arts building) is approximately 3 acres in area with a 60,000-square-foot office building and a 700-space parking garage.
 - Mayor would like to see more retail at the site. Wants more retail along Witherspoon Street but residents oppose it.
 - The main building in the borough will be converted into 280 residential units and 20,000 square feet of residential space. 20% will be affordable housing.
 - The surface parking lot on Franklin Avenue in the borough is zoned for an additional 24 units with a 20% set aside for affordable housing.
 - The whole process was very open and the Medical Center worked with the towns from very early on. The initial problem was that nobody wanted the hospital to move.
 - Could have used state assistance early in the process, when the towns were debating whether the hospital should move or stay and expand. This decision affects the whole Route 1 corridor. With state assistance and guidance, the process could have been shorter and better informed. The Princetons needed the state to help determine if an additional 500,000 square feet for hospital expansion was necessary, and how the expansion would have affected the communities and the region.
 - Because the hospital is moving, it's very important that transportation improvements be made so that people from the Princetons can get to the new hospital. Regional transportation planning improvements are much needed, including improvements to the Harrison Street intersection with Route 1.
 - Access to the new hospital for those who do not have access to a car remains a concern.
- **Princeton University**
 - Biggest employer in Mercer County and probably biggest developer in Mercer County.
 - Washington Road corridor
 - New chemistry building, 200,000 square feet.
 - Neuroscience building, 200,000 square feet.
 - Affordable housing:
 - All this university development generates affordable housing requirements. The state treats a classroom the same as an office building. The university has requested a waiver from the COAH rules and was put off "pending further study." Classroom and laboratory space is treated the same as Class A office space, in COAH's eyes. (Amendments to COAH rules have been proposed.)

- Township would like data on how other New Jersey colleges and universities are affected by this policy. This is a statewide issue that the state could take leadership role in.
 - A major problem is that the Princeton are mostly out of land on which to build new affordable housing. Growth Share can be used on occasion, but the towns prefer not to use that program.
 - It costs the borough \$800,000 per affordable housing unit built.
- **University Place & Alexander Road/Arts Corridor**
 - 200,000 additional square feet or more. New art museum, new theater. Temporary artist housing. Mixed-use development. New university visitors' center. Princeton University art museum shop will relocate to the site.
 - Merchants may be concerned about the creation of a second downtown that might draw business away from the main downtown.
 - There are many traffic congestion issues in this area that need to be dealt with. Not sure the existing roadway system can handle it.
 - The Princeton have limited resources to look at traffic impacts and do a traffic study of the area, so the state might be helpful.
- **Valley Road school & playing fields**
 - Seven acre site
 - The school building is being studied by KSS architects.
 - Township thinks the building should have a community use. The town needs more space for community uses: the cable TV channel, the Corner House counseling center, etc.
- **Traffic calming and pedestrian connections**
 - The Route 206 visioning plan with the state was informative. Looked at calming Route 206 and improving pedestrian connections. The township would like to see the corridor study to continue and to have the state actually implement the findings.
 - Concern how other state highway projects and major land use changes along the Route 1 corridor and to the north of Princeton on Route 206 may affect Princeton roads.

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Traffic/Transportation**
 - **Through traffic from surrounding towns**
 - People living in Montgomery/Hillsborough who work on Route 1 come through downtown Princeton.
 - New development happening along Route 206 and Route 518 in Montgomery is going to make it even worse.
 - The two megamalls planned for Route 1 will make existing traffic so much worse.
 - Safety issues. New developments increase traffic, making the roadways much more dangerous. Many mall employees commute by bicycle, often in the dark. It's very dangerous for them with all the additional cars on the roads. Route 92 would be very helpful by allowing a lot of that traffic to bypass the Princeton. People want to walk and bicycle, if it is safe.
 - The Hillsborough Bypass may also bring additional traffic through town.
 - Truck traffic on Route 206 remains a concern. Regional truck traffic should be on interstate highways.
 - **BRT**
 - The BRT should come down Witherspoon Street to Valley Road and go to the Princeton Shopping Center
 - **Route 92**
 - Would relieve much of the through traffic in the Princeton.
 - The state should be worried now that Alternative 5 can't happen because of new developments in Montgomery.
 - **Schools**
 - Private schools build large campuses and are always looking to build in this area. Students often are driven to those private schools in single-occupancy vehicles, dramatically adding to the traffic burdens.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Property values.** People are concerned about their property values. Many people think anything other than residential development will reduce the value of their homes.

- **Fear of density.** Redevelopment often results in existing structures being torn down. For that to be financially viable, the density of the new development has to be much greater. People have a very hard time accepting density.
- **Property taxes.** It is so high that they're driving the entire middle class away from this region. When the township gets re-evaluated, the areas that will be hit the hardest are the middle-income neighborhoods in the John Witherspoon area, because the prices of homes have risen so dramatically. It will destroy the low- and moderate-income families who live there now. The township does not want to lose this segment of the community that makes the town special and diverse.
- **Schools.** Make up the biggest chunk of tax money. Princeton Regional School system just completed an \$80 million expansion just for renovations and upgrades.
- **State disorganization & delays.** The historic preservation offices are very badly organized, for example. Their maps are so bad that it's difficult to even tell if some buildings are in historic districts or not.
- **Resistance to change.** The Princeton Shopping Center is a good example of a site that could be redeveloped with greater density and more housing, including affordable housing. But the site is privately owned and the developer does not want to change the site because it would mean having to fight with nearby residents who oppose any change. It's extremely difficult to do anything in places where people already live, because people fear change and density.

State Incentives & Assistance

- **Working with state government**
 - The township went through a regional center designation which didn't yield them any funds. The township would have received its grants anyway – Green Acres, DOT money, etc. All it did was create massive amounts of paperwork.
 - The Plan Endorsement process is also a massive paper generator.
- **Workforce Housing**
 - The likelihood of workforce housing being built in any of these Route I towns is quite low without major state incentives.
 - Can't change the market; would have to get creative with low interest mortgages, etc. Otherwise the housing in this region will continue to be too expensive for middle-income people.
 - Low-income housing can be done, but middle-income housing is virtually impossible given the current market conditions.
 - No legislation currently exists to force towns to build median-income housing.
 - A lot of housing would be more affordable if it didn't insist on having a Princeton mailing address.
- **Taxes**
 - If the state wants more housing and more density with a residential component, paying for school children is of the utmost importance.
- **Impact fees** would be useful.
- **Visioning assistance**
 - Funding for municipalities to embark on visioning programs. Municipalities don't have the funding to do it on their own but it's a huge help in educating the public and selling projects to the public.
- **MLUL changes**
 - Form-based zoning. The MLUL doesn't allow the flexibility to do some form-based zoning.
 - Need ability to do neighborhood conservation districts.
 - Only currently allowed to have design guidelines with historic districts – but nothing else.
- **Legal shield** would be terrific.
- **Community outreach & education**
 - Assistance from the Governor on community education and outreach could be helpful.
- **Permitting**
 - Quicker permitting would be enormously useful.
- **Planning assistance**
 - Ongoing assistance with planning and implementation of public transportation plans would be very helpful.
 - Financing of some transportation solutions would be useful.
 - Planning help from state on big local issues that affect the whole region, like the hospital, is needed. The Princetons could have used state assistance when the towns were trying to determine whether to allow the hospital to expand, or have them leave town. The state could have helped determine if an additional 500,000 square feet for hospital expansion were necessary, and how the expansion would affect the communities.

South Brunswick Interview
Wednesday, November 1, 2006
1:00 p.m.

In Attendance

- Frank T. Gambatese, Mayor, South Brunswick
mayor@sbtnj.net
w: 732.329.4000 x251 or x301
h: 732.821.0639
- Ron Schmalz, Public Affairs Coordinator
rschmalz@sbtnj.net
732.329.4000 x 7275
- Matthew Watkins, Township Manager
mwatkins@sbtnj.net
732.329.4000 x7301
- Craig T. Marshall, PP/AICP, Planning Director
732.329.4000 x7240
- Bryan B. Bidlack, PP/AICP, Assistant Planner
732.329.4000 x7240
- George Hawkins, New Jersey Future
- Rebecca Hersh, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans & Projects

- 43,000 residents; 42 square miles; half of the township is built-out.
- Between 1987 and 1994, 7,000 homes were built in South Brunswick.
- Development impeded by large swaths of wetlands throughout the township.
- **Metroplex site/train station**
 - 400-acre site in the "Metroplex" section of town
 - Talk of a train station on the site goes back at least 15 years
 - The train station plan got tangled in a political war because the station was tied to office space construction on the site. Community came out in droves against the plan out of fears of automobile traffic.
 - To date, the township has approval for one office building on the site, and the rest of the tract remains empty.
 - Mayor supports a train station/transit village on the site.
 - Town council opposes the station/transit village because of the concern that a new development would result in more school children.
 - Access to Route 1 is critical to building a new train station.
 - Township did a questionnaire and asked residents about their feelings on a new train station. Out of 3,200 respondents, 72% said they would like to see a new train station in town.
 - Township received \$75,000 from DCA to study the feasibility of a transit village and any traffic impacts that would result from a transit village. The town council has asked that this study be revised to focus on traffic impacts of development along Route 1 instead, so the mayor is trying to rescore the funds to study Route 1 widening and improvements.
 - Some fear that a new train station would guarantee that the MOM train line would also come through town, something South Brunswick does not want.
- **MOM Train Line**
 - Alignment makes no sense; why run the train line so far west before turning north?
 - The old Matawan line is a much better route.
 - Current proposed alignment does not serve any South Brunswick residents, and the mayor feels that it will be extremely disruptive to South Brunswick.
- **School Funding**
 - For the past eight years, the township has had to build new schools to accommodate growth.
 - New high school built eight years ago; three years ago the town had to spend \$45 million on additions.
 - The school board has asked that the township not approve any more home construction.
 - Municipal budget is approximately \$70 million (including utilities); school budget is over \$120 million.

- **Route 1**
 - 6.7 miles of Route 1 run through South Brunswick; the portion in the township has twelve signal lights and is only two lanes (in each direction). Creates an enormous traffic bottleneck because the roadway has three lanes each way in both North Brunswick and Plainsboro.
 - The township wants the state to widen this portion of the roadway.
 - South Brunswick received a \$7 million earmark in last year's federal transportation bill, thanks to then-Senator Corzine and Senator Lautenberg, to study the widening of Route 1 in South Brunswick. The study is going nowhere. The township met with DOT two months ago to discuss the money; they were told that DOT would never widen the road. DOT said that intersection improvements were the only possibility.
- **Route 92**
 - South Brunswick is opposed to currently proposed alignment; it goes right through the township's farmland.
 - South Brunswick feels that Plainsboro wants Route 92 built because it will provide them with considerable ratables from the Forrestal Center.
 - Route 92 might make slightly more sense if it was extended to Route 206 (although the town objects to Route 92 in any form).
 - Route 1 issues:
 - The current Route 92 alignment deposits all of the road's traffic onto Route 1 in South Brunswick, which would dramatically worsen Route 1's existing traffic problems.
 - The Route 92 plan does not expand Route 1 to three lanes; DOT claims it's too expensive, at \$275 million.
 - Some Route 92 alternatives supported by the mayor:
 - Consider the creation of an Exit 8B off of the Turnpike and route the roadway differently.
 - Widen South River Road.
 - Extend Finnegan's Lane to Route 130. Middlesex County and North Brunswick also like this option, which is difficult, however, because wetlands and a railroad crossing need to be dealt with.
 - Route 522 extension (see below)
- **Route 522**
 - Expansion of Route 522 has been funded by South Brunswick and Middlesex County; the extension of the road to the Turnpike is currently underway.
 - State government (Green Acres) is holding up the process because of three acres of land that are in the road extension's right-of-way. The three acres are located at the intersection of Routes 522 and 130.
 - South Brunswick offered to give the state 30 acres owned by the township in Pigeon Swamp in exchange for those three acres, so the 522 extension can be built.
 - After a year, the state is still studying the Pigeon Swamp exchange offer. The state doesn't believe that South Brunswick owns those 30 acres even though the deed was provided to the state. DEP's attorney believes that the 30 acres are state-owned.
 - While DOT and NJ Turnpike want to build Route 92, DEP and Green Acres are holding up South Brunswick's extension of Route 522 – which the township feels would solve many of the east-west access problems that Route 92 is supposed to solve. Lack of inter-agency coordination is a big problem.
- **Intra-Municipal Transportation System (IMTS)**
 - To combat traffic problems, the township has developed a shuttle bus system that will be unveiled soon.
 - Received \$4 million in federal earmarks to develop the project.
 - South Brunswick has no downtown, so the buses will shuttle out to multiple small communities.
 - It will take people to the Princeton Junction and the Jersey Avenue train stations.
 - Could use state assistance with this project.
- **Corporate Investment & Relocation**
 - Bloomberg's data center has come to Ridge Road in Dayton, at the old IBM site. Over 300 employees are employed. Looking to enlarge existing building.
 - 300-employee Taro Pharmaceuticals recently moved to South Brunswick after almost moving to Pennsylvania. Mayor convinced them to locate in South Brunswick, by Route 32 near the Turnpike.
 - Large Indian pharmacy along Route 130, plans to bring in over 1,000 employees.
- **Workforce Housing**
 - Township council recently approved zoning changes along Route 522 which allows for three-story townhomes, 55 feet high. This housing will be in an Age-Restricted Residential Community (ARRC) zone for residents over the age of 55.
- **Exit 8A**
 - South Brunswick is the second-highest ratable base in Middlesex County, second only to Edison.
 - Exit 8A is the third-largest warehouse district in the country.

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Franklin Township**
 - Thousands of new homes have been/are being built along Route 27, worsening the traffic problems.
 - Franklin has received eight access permits to state roadways without having to provide alternatives. Yet South Brunswick is told by the state that they have to come up with alternative plans for widening Route 1.
 - With each new development built in Franklin a new traffic light is installed, creating more bottlenecks.
- **Convening with other municipalities**
 - Middlesex County Mayors Association is often the mechanism for convening mayors in the area.
 - Central Jersey Transportation Forum, Greater Mercer TMA, KMM, and Marty Bierbaum's Exit 8A study group are other forums in which area municipalities communicate with one another, but groups are all talk and no action.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Existing development patterns**
 - Most jobs in South Brunswick are along the Turnpike; only a few along Route 1. But most of the housing is along the Route 1 corridor. Township is constricted because many acres of wetlands lie in the center area of town, between the Turnpike and Route 1.
 - To get to a new train station, drivers would have to go through residential neighborhoods – a big negative.
- **Lack of existing center**
 - Difficulty to develop a town center where none exists; South Brunswick is so spread out.

State Incentives & Assistance

- Eliminate projects detrimental to South Brunswick
 - Route 92. Will add cars and destroy the character of South Brunswick.
 - MOM train line. The MOM line thru South Brunswick is expensive and the route makes no sense. The routing is to relieve Route 9 and get people from Lakehurst into NYC. South Brunswick doesn't understand why the train has to pass through their town.
- Need state movement on the Route 1 issue to address the severe congestion.
- Would like state assistance with IMTS.
- **East-west roadway** issue needs to be solved.
- Holdup of **Route 522 extension** needs to be resolved.
- **School funding:** Government subsidy of additional school children is extremely important.
- Consideration of **impact fees**:
 - Could be very useful.
 - One idea is to make developers build a new school for every X number of new homes built. It was done in Kendall Park – 1,700 homes were built and the developer built three new schools.
 - Interested in hearing more about idea of a Massachusetts-style plan where dense development is rewarded with school funds.
- Convening municipalities: South Brunswick does not see much benefit of the Governor's office convening municipalities. Politics is local. To make anything happen, the state must order things to happen.
- A new train station could not happen without Route 1 access and Route 1 improvements. If the state wants to build a train station in South Brunswick, the township would require that they first widen Route 1 and that nearby towns create park-and-ride lots to relieve traffic on residential streets.
- Legal shield: Would be useful
- Regulatory priority: Could be very useful. The township would like to see priority permitting linked to Plan Endorsement.
- TDR: Not relevant in South Brunswick, because all development is related to the issue of school children. The township simply cannot promote residential development in any form, without considerable assistance to the schools.
- Tax base sharing: With the obsession with home rule in New Jersey, it is hard to see tax base sharing becoming a reality, given that it is already so difficult to work with neighboring municipalities, even on minor issues.

City of Trenton Interview
Thursday, November 30, 2006
10:30 a.m.

In Attendance

- Mayor Douglas Palmer
- Dennis Gonzales, Assistant Business Administrator
- Alan Greenwald, Director of Housing and Economic Development
- Chris Carew and Monique (?), Office of Economic Growth
- George Hawkins, Teri Jover, Denise Barricklow, Marianne Jann, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- **Background**
 - Trenton is 7.7 square miles, state owns 2.7 sq. miles
 - Mayor Palmer has been in office for 17 years.
 - In 1950, Trenton's population was 120,000; now it is approximately 90,000.
 - Trenton is the only state capitol without a university.
- **Trenton Train Station renovation/expansion**
 - The Trenton station is the sixth busiest on the Northeast Corridor.
 - NJ TRANSIT expects the work to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2007.
- **Capital City Redevelopment Corporation**
 - Originally created by the state, within Treasury because of a perceived lack of faith in city leadership. Would require legislation to change its mandate.
 - The city never approved the CCRC Renaissance plan, which is a statutory overlay on the city's planning and zoning. Projects must show "substantial consistency on the detail level" with the CCRC plan. There is concern about the height restrictions (typically between 4 to 9 floors) in the plan.
 - The CCRC is under-funded and under-staffed and does not have the ability to support development.
- **Broad Street Bank Building**
 - A \$24.5 million project, by Bayville Holdings, to renovate the city's first skyscraper for use as 124 rental apartments and 15,000 sq. feet of retail space.
- **Trenton Town Center**
 - A \$175 million project to renovate the Bell Telephone Building that includes 276 condominium units, 152,000 sq. ft. of Class A office space, and 32,000 sq. ft. of retail space.
 - The developer, Full Spectrum of NY, is still working on the financing for this project.
- **Foundry**
 - The project along Route 129, by Performa, will transform an empty parking lot across from the Sovereign Bank Arena into 150,000 sq. ft. of entertainment space with 99 rental apartments – 80 percent market rate, 20 percent affordable.
- **Justice Complex parking area redevelopment**
 - Trenton owns the ten acres of parking behind the 800,000-square-foot Justice Complex. As part of the complex's development, the state paved the lot and signed a long-term lease with the city, allowing for cancellation with six months notice.
 - Westrum Design has proposed a market-rate rental housing development on the site, but the state has resisted finding parking alternatives and is now paying Trenton to pay the developer not to build on the site.
- **Department of Corrections Administrative Buildings**
 - There is a redevelopment plan in place for the site (there are 12 buildings with DOC uses in them), which is nearly 45.4 acres.
 - The city estimates nearly 250 single family homes could be developed on the property, which would help revitalize the neighborhood and bring much-needed property tax revenue.
 - The city suggests that the DOC relocate only its essential administration to downtown Trenton and use existing DOC property in less populated areas for non-essential facilities and housing for offenders.
- **Trenton Farmer's Market**
 - The project to redevelop the area around the market (parts of Trenton, Ewing, and Lawrence included) is a good one, but the city does not want to divert its resources from the city's core to the fringe.
 - Also concerned about the county directing too many resources to the area, since it is not a priority for Trenton at the moment.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- Capital Health Systems move to Lawrence
 - The state has granted CHS permission to move its hospital to Princess Road in Lawrence.
 - Beside the state, CHS is Trenton's biggest employer and the move to Lawrence will mean a loss of 1,500 jobs for the city.
- State Psychiatric Hospital
 - The state owns 170 acres in the Cadwalader Park neighborhood, 125 of the acres are in Trenton (the other portion is in Ewing).
 - The state converted the hospital to include Department of Corrections uses without soliciting the input of the mayor to see how this fits into the plans for the area.
- Can't compete with suburban neighbors
 - Trenton wants growth and workforce housing, but has trouble competing with its suburban neighbors. Schools are a big part of this equation.
 - Many of Trenton's employees—including the legislators—commute to the city from elsewhere.
- Trenton is an “occupied city” in that the state controls such a large amount of the city's prime developable land.
 - Some of Trenton's most valuable land is being used for state parking lots and the state is reluctant to think creatively about ways to turn this asset into an advantage for the city.

State Incentives & Assistance

- Give special consideration to the state's capital city. The Governor and the Legislature should recognize Trenton as the “face of New Jersey” and create a special strategy for the city's success.
 - Currently, the state makes decisions about its facilities without considering the impact on Trenton. The state should appoint someone to serve as the liaison to the city. Do not create new bureaucracy, however. *Note: Monique from OEG informed NJF that Governor Corzine recently established a task force on Trenton that will include city representatives.*
 - The Treasury could think strategically about its leases and try to reinforce and help some of the projects that Trenton is trying to get off the ground.
- Direct state agencies to utilize the Trenton Marriott for conferences. This will help stabilize the hotel and reinforce the city's investment.
- Provide incentives for office development in Trenton. In particular, structured parking costs are a deterrent to new office and commercial development.
- Work with the city on the state surface parking lot issue.
 - Consider shared parking arrangements with the city and private tenants that take advantage of day vs. night time uses.
 - Consider issuing a request for proposals for reuse of parking lots whereby the state parking requirements can be met through new parking decks and mixed-use structures. This could be funded by private developers in exchange for land. Sites for consideration:
 - Health and Agricultural Department building
 - State parking lots on Route 29
 - Trenton Psychiatric Hospital
- Reconsider Capital Health System's Certificate of Need for a new hospital in Lawrence. A new mixed-use development on the Department of Health and Agriculture site is an option to consider.
- Regional Contribution Agreements. The state needs a housing strategy. If state is considering eliminating RCAs it must provide another source of funding for affordable housing in cities.

County Incentives & Assistance

- Use the County Improvement Authority as an economic engine. The Authority tends to work in the city's existing “hot spots” rather than serving as driver for change.
- County could help with more workforce development and also steer business incentives to areas that the city is trying to redevelop.

West Windsor Interview
Thursday, October 26, 2006
9:00 a.m.

In Attendance

- Shing-Fu Hsueh, Ph.D., P.E., P.P.: West Windsor Mayor
sfhsueh@aol.com
mayor@westwindortwp.com
609-799-2400
- M. Patricia Ward: West Windsor Community Development Coordinator
pward@westwindortwp.com
609-799-9396
- George Hawkins: New Jersey Future
- Rebecca Hersh: New Jersey Future
- Chris Carew: Governor's Office of Economic Growth

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- **Train station redevelopment**
 - 350 acres of mixed-use redevelopment being planned around the train station
- **Sarnoff redevelopment & redesign**
 - Sarnoff received GDP approval for 290 acres in 2002. Some acreage subsequently sold to Princeton University; Sarnoff's land is now approximately more than 200 acres.
 - Plan is not mixed-use.
 - Some opponents of the Millstone Bypass fear that Sarnoff will build the Millstone Bypass on its own.
 - Sarnoff's redevelopment plan calls for the closure of Fairview Avenue into its property from Washington Road. This will preserve the historical, primarily residential area of Penns Neck. It will be important to have a functional connector road from Washington Road (just after the Highway State 64 bridge) through the Sarnoff Property to Route 1 near Harrison Road to provide for the BRT. BRT access is particularly important if a hospital is built in Plainsboro.
 - West Windsor convinced Sarnoff to stay in town and not move to Pennsylvania. Pled to their sense of history.
 - Sarnoff reduced the density in their plan from 30% FAR (floor area ratio) to 21%. West Windsor encouraged the reduction to gain support of the plan from nearby residents.
- **Wyeth property**
 - 653 acres.
 - Property taken over by General Growth from Chicago (a real estate company) in 2004; has stagnated since. General Growth is trying to develop a concept plan for the site.
 - General Growth wanted a mall, but West Windsor insisted on an FAR reduction from 30% to less than 21% and a commitment to help manage the traffic problems the mall would create.
 - West Windsor has encouraged General Growth to build a mixed-use development and to provide housing opportunities for the jobs that would be created by the development.
 - West Windsor requested that General Growth identify areas on the site that would be preserved as open space.
 - General Growth has agreed to provide BRT access in whatever plan it develops.
- **Lawrence Township/Quaker Bridge Mall**
 - Lawrence Township approved an 80% increase in the density of Quakerbridge Mall. The township seems to only care about ratables, not long-term planning or the regional impact of its development.
 - Worried about seeing another Nassau Park (as previously designed and developed) in terms of traffic and land consumption.
- **Extension of Canal Point Boulevard**
 - West Windsor would like to see Canal Point Boulevard extended to Nassau Park, but only for the BRT, bicycles, and pedestrians. No automobile access.
- **Clarksville Road housing**
 - 352 condos coming on Clarksville Road, near the train station. This was approved in 1985.

- There is currently no sidewalk access to the train station, even though it's very physically close to the station. Although West Windsor would like to provide pedestrian access to the train station, it is not possible without fixing the Clarksville Road Bridge.
- **Maneely Tract**
 - 48.5 acres close to the train station; in the negotiation phase
 - Walking distance to train station, although not part of the train station redevelopment area
 - West Windsor wants the development to be mixed-use
 - Some housing units going to Project Freedom (housing for disabled residents)
- **University Square**
 - 300,000 square feet of office buildings across from the Hyatt Regency
 - Class A office space
 - Still unoccupied
 - Development is on the Dinky line. Trying to add a Dinky stop to access it.
 - Unfortunately, the funds that West Windsor, NJ TRANSIT, and Princeton University would need to expend to provide a pathway along the Dinky right-of-way to offer bicycle/pedestrian access to and from downtown Princeton is an issue.

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Lawrence Township**
 - No negotiations with Lawrence Township; outreach efforts to Lawrence have not been successful.
 - *Update: NJDOT is now involved.*
- **Plainsboro Township**
 - West Windsor feels that Plainsboro is generally trying to follow the right path.
 - One issue – tax-base sharing. The two towns have a consolidated school district. West Windsor says that Plainsboro is reluctant to change to tax-base sharing. The school system's funding structure is currently based on assessed values. West Windsor has higher assessed values, so they pay more towards the school system. West Windsor would like to see the system changed to pay-as-you-go, per-pupil.
 - *Update: Per pupil is on the ballot for April 17, 2007. (Referendum to be voted on April 17, 2007.)*

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Relevant ordinances**
 - West Windsor is the first town in the state to include BRT requirements in its master plan.
- **Obstacles**
 - **Political** opposition; misinformed public; misinformed media
 - **Inter-jurisdictional issues** (Lawrence Township primarily)
 - **Property tax system** issues (ratables chase)
 - **Traffic** issues
 - **School funding/tax system** issues
 - No challenges with the **county**; the county is very helpful. For example, Mercer County helped West Windsor with the redesign of Route 571.
 - **State agencies**, particularly DOT, have been very helpful when solicited.
 - **Shortsightedness of local officials**. Very few have long-term visions. Perhaps the League of Municipalities can invite mayors to talk about the importance of long-term visions and long-term planning. Also the regional groups, such as DVRPC, CJTF, etc., need to talk about this vocally and often. Local officials could use a training program on this topic.
 - **Lack of required regional coordination**. CJTF provided opportunities for all of the municipalities in the region to come together, but it was all talk and no action. Even with any agreements that were reached, no implementation was required. This has been the case even with the BRT.

State Incentives & Assistance

- **Education**
 - State officials should continually educate municipalities and the media on the importance of affordable housing and mixed-use development.

- Redevelopment has a bad reputation in NJ because of eminent domain, pay-to-play, developers, etc. Municipalities are fighting this stereotype alone; state support and education would be very helpful. Governor's office should actively and vocally promote these issues.
- **Impact fees**
 - State level empowerment of impact fees would be very helpful.
- **Governor's assistance**
 - If the Governor makes issues like redevelopment and mixed-use development a top priority and instills that sense of priority in agency heads, it would be an enormous help to municipalities trying to work with state agencies.
 - Governor-attended town-hall meetings to stress the importance of these issues would be hugely helpful, especially in towns where the mayor wants to do the right thing but can't get support from the electorate.
- **State-financed demonstration projects**
 - For issues such as transit villages, mixed-use development, BRT, etc., having state-sponsored demonstration projects to point to would make it much easier to convince mayors of the benefits of these kinds of developments. Hesitation comes from the unknown. If there was clear support and guidance from the state for things like BRT, or if the state were to make the West Windsor train station a pilot project, it would carry great weight.
- **Legal shield**
 - Would probably be helpful to many towns. Not as helpful for West Windsor since they are beyond that point in most cases.
- **Regulatory priority**
 - Would be enormously helpful.
- **Project-specific state support**
 - West Windsor would like state support for very specific concerns, such as the Vaughn Drive extension to Route 571 and issues surrounding the Sarnoff property.
- **State-sponsored regional collaboration sessions**
 - If the state would convene and moderate meetings of municipalities that are having issues, such as Lawrence Township and West Windsor, it would be very useful.

Mercer County Interview
Monday, October 30, 2006
9:30 a.m.

In Attendance

- Donna Lewis, Planning Director
dlewis@mercercounty.org
(609) 989-6545
- Greg Sandusky, County Engineer
(609) 989-6629
- Aaron Watson, Director of Transportation and Infrastructure
awatson@mercercounty.org
(609) 989-6629
- George Hawkins, New Jersey Future
- Teri Jover, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- **Quaker Bridge Mall expansion, Lawrence**
 - Simon, the largest mall developer in the US, is interested in expanding the Quaker Bridge Mall significantly, to include high-end retail anchors, including Saks Fifth Ave and Nordstrom and parking structures (a proposed 65% increase in gross leasable area).
 - Developer seems resistant to preserving the right-of-way for the proposed Bus Rapid Transit line and also seems interested in limiting mobility between the QB Mall and the proposed development at the Wyeth site in West Windsor.
 - The county is concerned that Quaker Bridge and Clarksville Roads will experience failing levels of service.
 - County is very concerned that the proposed expansion will also have a negative impact on the intersection of Clarksville Road and Quaker Bridge Road, causing failure of the intersection.
 - Lawrence reluctant to demand too much from the developer for fear that they might withdraw their proposal.
- **Wyeth site, West Windsor**
 - General Growth, the second largest mall developer in the US, has proposed a mixed-use "lifestyle center" for the property, which is immediately north of the QB Mall along Route I.
 - Developer has agreed to reserve the right-of-way for the BRT line.
 - Site does not require an access permit from NJDOT.
 - Wyeth owns land on both sides of Clarksville Road, which creates more possibility for a fly-over of Quakerbridge Rd. for access from both sides. Wyeth has also indicated a potential willingness for a flyover of Route I to connect to Nassau Park.
- **Capital Health System relocation**
 - CHS is seeking state approval to move Mercer hospital out of Trenton to either Lawrence or Hopewell Townships.
 - In Lawrence, the sites under consideration are a) 134 acres on Princeton Pike owned by Bristol-Myers Squibb or b) 32 acres on Princess Road less than a mile away. The site in Hopewell is 165 acres on Scotch Road between I-95 and Merrill Lynch's corporate campus.
 - The county favors the Hopewell site over the Lawrence options.
- **Transit Villages**
 - **West Windsor, Route 51**
 - WWV has designated the 350 acres surrounding the Princeton Junction Train Station as in need of redevelopment and is interested in creating a transit village on the site.
 - County concerned about the impacts of the development on Route I traffic – concerned that people won't take transit to travel between suburbs.
 - **Hamilton Train Station**
 - **Ewing, Parkway Avenue**
 - There is the possibility for a transit village on the General Motors site, near the airport and the SEPTA station.
 - GM has been very slow in cleaning up the site to ready it for development.
 - DVRPC and McCormick Taylor have conducted a feasibility study.

- **Franklin Corner, Lawrence**
 - Lawrence Twp is interested in creating a boulevard along Business Route I from the Brunswick Circle to Texas Avenue.
- **Trenton Farmers Market**
 - County has been working with Lawrence, Ewing and Trenton on planning for the area around the Farmer's Market (market is in Lawrence).
 - There are currently plans for a Wal-Mart to locate in the area (also in Lawrence), and housing in the area in Ewing is possible.
 - Ewing is resistant to adding density in the area.
 - County would like to extend Calhoun Street to the shopping center to serve the vicinity and allow for increasing the density.
 - ULI conducted a study and issued an Advisory Services Panel Report that includes possible strategies for this area.
- **Princeton Medical Center relocation to Plainsboro, Middlesex Co.**
 - Concerned about traffic impact on roadways in Mercer County.
- **Exit 8A**
 - South Brunswick is the second-highest ratable base in Middlesex County, second only to Edison.
 - Exit 8A is the third-largest warehouse district in the country.
- **Atchley site, Ewing**
 - 1 million square feet of office space currently under construction by Opus development at the intersection of I-95 and Route 31.
- **County Master Plan**
 - The county master plan is not up-to-date, in large part because of the time lost to conducting the ongoing (seemingly) cross-acceptance process.
 - Will be more oriented to center-based growth and environmental considerations.
 - Transportation element – county interested in new Master Plan so that it accurately reflects needed rights of way for projects, including the BRT.
 - Open space element – county hopes to impact and better inform acquisition programs. Also considering a model where the county purchases the property and the municipality operates and maintains it.
 - County hopes to adopt a new Master Plan in early 2008. Three stakeholder meetings are planned from November – January.
- **County Access Code**
 - Mercer County is developing an access code for county roads, which is different than the state's program.
 - As part of the code creation, the county is asking communities to articulate their vision for these roadways, in advance of seeking access permits.
 - The goal is to have a code that identifies the broader vision for the roadway so that the county can use it to regulate developments that might impair that vision.
- **Bus Rapid Transit**
 - Alignment for the BRT is in draft form – not at the point of defining the right-of-way.
 - The route is not in the County Master Plan yet, which will give a little more “teeth” to requiring the dedication of land for the BRT. It is essential that the ROW is advanced if the future BRT is going to function.
- **Transportation Development District**
 - The TDD is a regional district that is set up to help fund transportation infrastructure costs.
 - The costs of infrastructure improvements are borne by the public sector and private developers under a predetermined cost-sharing formula, based upon traffic generation or other criteria associated with the development that occasions the need for additional investment in infrastructure.
 - Mercer County's TDD is roughly bounded by Pennington-Washington Crossing Road (Rt. 546) to the north, Federal City Road to the east, Upper Ferry Road to the south, and the western edge includes lots west of Scotch Road.

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **West Windsor/Lawrence**
 - The developments in these two communities, if not managed properly, could seriously damage the region's economic vitality.
 - The NJDOT improvements planned for the near-term will not be useful in three years if all of this moves forward without putting into place fixes.

- County is concerned that Simon (developer for QB Mall) and General Growth (developer for Wyeth site) are embarking on a race to the finish line without enough consideration of the available infrastructure, and towns are not coordinating their plans.
- West Windsor is nervous about Lawrence's plans for the QB Mall, especially since Simon is ahead because the site is already developed as a mall and is further along in the process.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Property taxes**
 - Towns are unwilling to zone for residential if it will bring in more school children.
- **Limited county authority over municipal decisions**
 - Technically, the county's oversight of local decisions is limited to subdivisions and site plans on county roads with greater than 1 acre of disturbance.
 - County is looking at traffic and drainage impacts and can require impact statements and make recommendations to towns, but is not usually in the position to approve/deny an application.

State Incentives & Assistance

- State intervention and acceleration in the **BRT** system would be timely and helpful.
- Provide **incentives** for towns to zone for families, otherwise not likely to happen.
- **Impact fees**: already authorized in the Transportation Development District legislation; however, it is complicated to establish a TDD and only applies to new development. TDDs have very specific boundaries. Therefore, the existing TDD is not relevant to the Route 1 discussion except as a model.
- **Legal shield**: only helpful to the more sophisticated towns.
- **TDR**: might be useful if communities are given assistance and are shown how to do it.
- **NJDEP**: This would require true buy-in from NJDEP in order to work – typically NJDEP only reacts to permits, without a proactive approach for making a project work. Cited the Washington Town Center as an example of this process where promises were made by NJDEP and NJDOT and not kept. The lack of cooperation between the two state agencies is at least part of the cause.
- **Demonstration project**: county recommends picking an area where the laws could be relaxed on a trial basis, to allow for a “regulatory flexibility zone” that has a broader perspective in mind.
- **Tax-base sharing**: might work for the area around the Trenton Farmer’s Market since Ewing has the best sites for housing and Lawrence has the commercial properties.
- **Schools**: there needs to be a way to integrate schools with parks in order to provide the needed recreational/athletic space for children while at the same time minimizing the school’s footprint. Recreational facilities are rarely in use during the school day, and school fields are rarely used after school and on weekends.

Middlesex County Interview
Tuesday, November 21, 2006
10:00 a.m.

In Attendance

- George Ververides, Director of County Planning
george.ververides@co.middlesex.nj.us
(732) 745-3013
- Mirah Becker, Supervising Planner, Environment, Parks and Comp. Planning
mirah.becker@co.middlesex.nj.us
- Anthony Gambilonghi, Supervising Planner, Transportation
anthony.gambilonghi@co.middlesex.nj.us
- Stan Olszewski, Supervising Planner, Land Development Review
- John Sully, Executive Director, Housing and Community Development
- George Hawkins, New Jersey Future
- Teri Jover, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- **South Brunswick**
 - There has been a lot of construction along Route 1 in South Brunswick, which makes it more difficult to acquire needed right-of-way for road improvements. For instance, on Sand Hill Road, the McDonald's and Burger King on the corners are in the right-of-way, making a grade separation more difficult.
 - The new Target, Best Buy, etc. retail development along Route 1 does include some road improvements.
 - The intersections at Route 1 and Sand Hill Road as well as Route 522 are problematic.
 - South Brunswick is not totally committed to the transit village concept.
- **Exit 8A**
 - Warehouse development at Exit 8a is causing a lot of truck traffic on county roads leading to Route 1.
 - There is no workforce housing for the employees who work in the new developments.
- **Finnegan's Lane, North Brunswick**
 - County has met with Commissioner Kolluri seeking a grade separation at Finnegan's Lane and Route 1.
 - There is concern about the new Hess gas station/mini mart opening up at the intersection.
- **North Brunswick Transit Village**
 - North Brunswick is considering a mixed-use transit village development on the vacant Johnson & Johnson site on Route 1.
 - Mayor is having difficulty with the transit village criteria that require more housing because the community is resistant to more growth.
- **Bus Rapid Transit System on Route 1 Corridor**
 - The BRT is important and the state should consider continuing the route to New Brunswick instead of ending at the proposed South Brunswick rail station. A BRT system connecting Piscataway and New Brunswick is under consideration – the Route 1 BRT could potentially tie into this system as well.
- **Princeton Medical Center, Plainsboro**
 - PMC looking to relocate from Princeton Borough to Plainsboro.
- **Commercial development**
 - The majority of new development in the county is commercial.
- **County Route 522**
 - South Brunswick Township has maintained that the realigned Route 522 serves the purpose of a Route 92.
 - Middlesex County supports Route 92 as a needed major east-west arterial in the south county area. If Route 522 is to serve as Route 92, serious consideration must be given for a grade separation between Route 1 and Route 522.
 - Currently, CR 522 is 50 mph between Route 130 and Route 27 with some traffic lights. The road more or less dead-ends at the Pigeon Swamp State Park.
 - If CR 522 is extended, Route 1 could be widened south of the intersection to allow for better flow to jobs in Plainsboro and beyond. The connections from 522 to Route 130 and 32 could also be made smoother to improve traffic.
- **Route 92**
 - County is a proponent of Route 92; however, if constructed, the BRT will be even more necessary to offset some of the additional commuters that will be brought into the region.
- **Bike trail plan**

- The county has been working to provide bike trails along the corridor.
- In December, 1997 NJDOT completed the Route I Corridor Bicycle and Pedestrian Case Study covering Middlesex and Mercer counties. (NJ Future has a copy of the report.)
- PSE&G has been reluctant to give access to its property for a proposed plan to add a trail along the northbound side of Route I from Woodbridge Center Drive to just south of CR 501, where it would connect with the Middlesex Greenway.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Housing costs / availability**
 - People are moving to Pennsylvania for cheaper housing and driving back into New Jersey for jobs.
 - Developable land in the county is more and more scarce, which drives up the cost of land. The towns/county are buying up land for parks, which further reduces the availability of land for workforce and affordable housing.
- **Property taxes and municipal zoning**
 - There is growing animosity to build any housing that will bring children.
 - Municipalities are not zoning based on capacity. Infrastructure is struggling to support new development.
 - There is little state or county control over local land use decisions. These incremental decisions are undercutting state priorities.
 - Under current zoning, most of the housing is slated for (or has occurred in) the corridor's outskirts – typically between Routes I and 27.
- **Lack of regional control over regional issues**
 - If smart growth strategies are being pursued on the Route I corridor, then it is critical that regional/county entities be identified and empowered to negotiate with municipalities around the needed land use decisions.
- **Traffic**
 - The county needs more east-west roads to allow better traffic flow between residential developments along Route 27 and Route I/the NJ Turnpike.
 - Route I needs to be widened through South Brunswick.
- **Lack of coordination**
 - There are a multitude of studies underway at various state, regional and local levels covering transportation, environmental and smart growth issues. There needs to be greater coordination of these studies, so that limited funding resources can be effectively applied.
- **Politics**
 - Municipal leaders are making decisions based on short-term goals.

State Incentives & Assistance

- **Department of Transportation**
 - DOT should have a Route I highway plan to ensure that any necessary right-of-ways (for road improvements or BRT) are preserved.
 - The state needs to be stricter about giving out access permits. For smaller projects, DOT should consider using marginal service roads as an alternative/a solution to multiple access points and driveways along Route I.
 - DOT should make improvements at intersections first – also consider computerized signalization along Route I.
 - Develop a statewide truck route system. This will help avoid confusion and traffic caused by individual municipal truck prohibitions.
- **Public education**
 - There is a perception that workforce and affordable housing is bad and that density is unattractive. Need to combat those concepts with hard numbers to justify the change in development patterns.
 - Find successful examples of transit villages – perhaps sponsor a trip to visit one in person.
- **Regional planning**
 - The state needs to have the political courage to allow for more regional control over development decisions. Could consider designating a Route I Region, similar to the Pinelands, that would have power to control the region's land use.
 - County Enabling Act needs "more teeth," particularly to intercede when there are developments with regional impact. Could limit county involvement to projects of a specific size.
 - Consider forming a Transportation Development District for the corridor; however, there would need to be clear leadership to guide the plan.

- **Housing subsidies**
 - In order to create the needed workforce and affordable housing the state will have to increase subsidies to the private market.
- **Technical assistance**
 - Many of the recommended smart growth tools are complicated for municipalities to use and implement. It would be helpful for the state to simplify and provide more technical assistance to municipalities on various topics, including Transfer of Development Rights.
- **New Brunswick**
 - Support development in New Brunswick – an existing urban area.
 - City already has a transit village designation.
- **North Brunswick Transit Village**
 - State needs to stand beside the mayor to help “sell” the concept to the constituents, particularly the aspects requiring more housing.
 - For the project to succeed, physical improvements to Finnegan’s Lane will be needed to reduce traffic impacts of the new development on existing residential areas.
- **Exit 8A “confidence builders”**
 - Monroe could use better signs to lead trucks in the right direction, thereby avoiding residential areas.
 - Develop a truck depot for early arrivals to the warehouses.

Somerset County Interview

November 29, 2006

9:30 a.m.

Attendees:

- Bob Bzik, Director, Somerset County Planning Office
bzik@co.somerset.nj.us
- Rebecca Hersh, NJ Future
- George Hawkins, NJ Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

Somerset County's role in all of these projects is to:

- ❖ Provide a regional perspective
- ❖ Coordinate inter-municipal efforts
- ❖ Integrate transportation and land use planning decisions
- ❖ Maintain funding resources

- **Somerville Train Station TOD Project.** Working with RPA on visioning efforts and a public forum. Project has been incorporated into Somerville's redevelopment plan. Will select a developer by the spring of 2007. Mixed-use development with retail, office space (mostly geared towards biotech), and a mix of housing units with multi-family units, loft apartments, etc. Embraces green infrastructure concepts; preserves wetlands and links with Duke Farms by meshing with the Duke Farm master plan. When compared to other towns trying to plan for TOD, this project has worked well because of: complete nonpartisan support; the fact that Somerville is the county's only regional center; the site is a brownfields site that needed to be cleaned up; the county and town worked together to provide the public with analyses of traffic and fiscal impacts as well as schoolchildren impact (town had early access to Listokin report results); partnering with RPA provided an important visioning process; and the project had complete and active support from the county.
- **Somerset County Regional Center Vision Initiative.** An inter-municipal success story. The first tri-municipal master plan in NJ. Worked with RPA and received a NJAPA award in November. Emphasis of the plan was expanding and improving connections between places. One goal is to link all of the high schools in the Regional Center with a greenway network.
- **Route 206 Corridor Major Planning Initiatives**
 - **Somerville Borough Landfill Redevelopment.** A former 120-acre landfill between Route 206 and the Raritan Valley Rail Line and the Somerville Station. Putting several thousand dwelling units and a few hundred thousand square feet of commercial space on the site. A mixed-use extension of downtown Somerville.
 - **Orlando Drive Redevelopment, Raritan Borough.** Recently initiated planning study; will develop a vision plan and corridor design plan. Planned to be a mix of residential and commercial uses with strong pedestrian connections into the Duke Farm. The development is a connection of the spine road that runs through the landfill and ties into Somerville's Main Street and the train station TOD project.
 - **Veteran's Administration Depot, Hillsborough Township.** Built during WWII, still owned by the VA. Contains 1.2 million square feet of warehouse space that was used for military storage; was in operation until the early 90s when the VA administration began to dispose of surplus property. The site was identified by the county as a prime intermodal goods facility opportunity (it is next to the Lehigh Valley rail tracks) in a region-wide NJTPA report, the "New Jersey Freight Performance Study." As a result, the county began an intermodal goods analysis of the site to look at how the rail line could be more effectively used and to look at the surrounding area (currently zoned as light industrial) to see how it could be developed into an economic development node that would provide a bigger economic boost to Somerset County and Montgomery Township.
 - **Hillsborough Transit Ready Development Node.** At the intersection of the Route 206 Bypass and Amwell Road, where Amwell intersects with the West Trenton train line. The county is working on a visioning process and developing a vision plan to give Hillsborough an outline of a transit-ready overlay zone and provide it with the master plan elements to accompany the overlay zone. Using both county and grant funds for the process. Two public forums were held this fall. For the viability of this project, however, it's important that the West Trenton line be reinstated as a passenger line. County is working to get all the towns along the train corridor to sign a transit-ready land use compact and agree to provide transit

supportive land uses along the line. This agreement would help the project get funding – transit supportive land uses are part of the criteria for getting New Starts and Small Starts funding from the Federal Transit Administration.

- **Montgomery Township/Belle Meade Transit Ready Node.** Located where the West Trenton line intersects with Route 206. The county is working with the towns to put into place a transit-ready development node. Montgomery has been a little gun shy because it is concerned about creating any more development that would make the Route 206 bypass necessary.
- **Montgomery Town Center.** Around the Route 518/Route 206 intersection. Includes the Montgomery Promenade, a large mixed-use project being developed by the same developer that owns Market Fair. Also includes a mixed-use redevelopment of the North Jersey Development Center, which Montgomery is calling Skillman Village. It will be a cultural and civic center with some supporting office uses.
- **Hillsborough Township Town Center.** The town has been trying for years to reclaim a stretch of Route 206 and transform it into a main street. They created an overall vision plan in the late 90s that won a national APA award. The goal is to establish a focal point in town for employment, recreation, and government activity. Plan is pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use, with lots of landscaping, traffic calming, sidewalks, bicycle paths connecting to surrounding neighborhoods, etc. Project cannot be done, however, without the Hillsborough Bypass.
- **Hillsborough Route 206 Bypass.** The controversial Hillsborough Bypass is key to the Hillsborough Town Center project. The bypass would take a great deal of through-traffic off of the corridor, and the existing stretch of 206 would be de-designated and given over to Hillsborough so it could design it with much more flexible design standards. Montgomery and Princeton Townships and Princeton Borough, however, do not want the bypass to happen.

- **Montgomery's concerns with the bypass' existing alignment:**

- The bypass might prevent them from using Route 601 as a bypass.
- The proposed bypass alignment goes through the existing Pike Run development, with over 2,000 dwelling units. Even though when the Pike Run project was built, they actually dedicated a right-of-way through the development for the 206 bypass.
- There are concerns about what the traffic impacts will be immediately south of the bypass when it merges back onto Route 206.
- The state has an approved NEPA document which shows the existing alignment, but it is open to tweaking it. The project is currently undergoing a supplemental EIS process.
- Montgomery is also concerned about changes in environmental conditions since the project was designed in 1988.

(A recent compromise on the bypass design was reached by NJDOT, Somerset County, and the affected towns in early 2007 with the bypass terminating near Mountain View Road; the bypass being “right-sized” past Amwell Road and a number of design changes to the intersections to reduce environmental impacts).

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Long-term collaborative planning partnerships.** Each month Somerville, Raritan, and Bridgewater (along with Somerset County) have sat down together for the past ten years. Each year a retreat is held to identify priorities for the coming year.
- **Franklin Township's rapid growth.** Particularly between Amwell Road and Cedar Grove Lane. There have been 2.7 million square feet of non-residential office light industrial space and 3,400 dwelling units proposed in the past few years alone; 2,890 of those units are age-restricted. As these projects get built, a lot of the seniors will want to get to the Route 1 corridor for shopping and entertainment. But there is no transit connection between northern Franklin and the Route 1 corridor. A jitney service connecting these major residential nodes and feeding them to Route 1 is important in the long run.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Need to think about east-west connections.** The Central Jersey Forum is too focused on a linear north-south corridor. The critical east-west connections and trying to expand alternative travel modes have taken a back seat.
- **Regional solutions require thought beyond the Route 1 corridor.** The answer to the traffic problem in central Jersey is not just Route 1. The traffic problem in the region is not linear, but regional.
- **Transit is a large part of the solution.** Transit must be expanded through the region but it doesn't seem like a state priority. Transit solutions should extend beyond the Route 1 corridor and the BRT proposal.
 - **Route 27 TOD study.** Somerset County identified Route 27 as a potential TOD bus corridor. In the study, all vacant and underutilized land was identified along the corridor; it was proposed that the density

from those undeveloped parcels be transferred to certain higher-density nodes along the corridor where the bus would stop frequently. A Bus Transit Overlay Zone would be introduced, and then all land use and design standards along the corridor would be modified to help facilitate better utilization of bus transit along the corridor. Could be a pioneering project in NJ; has been done in other states (such as Montgomery County, PA).

- **Implementation difficulties.** Route 27 is the county line so Somerset County would need the cooperation of Middlesex County, South Brunswick, and North Brunswick to implement the concept.
- **Lack of state support, particularly of transit initiatives.** The state must stop throwing cold water on creative initiatives and ideas that spring up at the local and county level. With a strong enough groundswell of support for such initiatives, financing will inevitably follow. Then, it would be incumbent upon the municipalities and counties to put in supportive land uses to take advantage of these opportunities when they arise.
 - **State-level planning must be about more than just transit villages.** NJ TRANSIT has to embrace expanding transit availability as well. As transit becomes more available, support for it broadens, and the funding will follow.

State Incentives & Assistance

- **Route 22 corridor.** This cluster of pharmaceutical and biotech businesses poses an enormous economic growth opportunity for the region. Somerset County is taking over (from NJDOT) as the lead design entity to improve this corridor; an interlocal agreement with DOT was created to do this. There are approximately another two million square feet of infill opportunity along the corridor. Infrastructure is all in place: sewer and water, residential neighborhoods adjacent, and three rail stations in close proximity. Could benefit from OEG's involvement.
- **State assistance with inter-municipal and inter-county land use compacts.** The state should take a lead to outline a land use compact that each town in the region signs onto. The compact would speak to the basic land use principles that would complement regional smart growth projects such as the BRT. The state must provide assistance to towns for how they should handle their master plan revisions, major land development reviews, etc., in accordance with the compact. The compact would outline specific steps each town must take such as setbacks, set-asides, etc. The compact should also include a section about what the state's role will be, and what incentives the state will provide towns for taking part in the compact. Such compacts might require legislative changes.
- **Tax base sharing.** Possible within a limited zone. RPA and the Lincoln Land Institute did a white paper for Somerset County on tax base sharing to look at the concept within the regional center.
- **Creative financing mechanisms.** The state should look at financing mechanisms to get necessary physical improvements built in municipalities. Similar to the BID/SID programs, but taking that concept and creating a model that would be applicable to suburban towns as well.
- **Tax Increment Financing.** Could use more assistance with this program; it has taken Somerville a very long time to get its tax increment financing proposal approved.
- **Corridor reinvestment.** The state must realize that regional transportation improvements mean more than transit villages. Entire corridors need to be revitalized and reinvested in. Similar to what Somerset County is doing on the Route 22 corridor.
- **Assistance with regional visioning processes.** The state should take the lead in embarking upon regional visioning processes. Three-dimensional physical models are extremely important, because they produce much greater public consensus. These models can be moved around during visioning processes, and the public can physically see various scenarios.
- **Don't forget about bicycles and pedestrians.** Green seams must tie together all transportation corridors, and bicycle and pedestrian linkages should be a major component of any project.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Interview

Wednesday, December 6, 2006

10:30 a.m.

In Attendance

- Barry Seymour
Executive Director, DVRPC
215/238-2831
bseymour@dvrpc.org
- Don Shanis, Deputy Executive Director, DVRPC
- Zoe Neaderland, Senior Transportation Planner, DVRPC
- George Hawkins, New Jersey Future
- Tim Evans, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- **Transportation issues**
 - **4 major issues of concern:**
 - East-west movement in the corridor
 - Transit
 - Freight movement
 - Coordination of land use and transportation
 - **East-west movement within the corridor**
 - The Central Jersey Transportation Forum (CJTF) convened the municipalities along Route 571 (the Princetons, West Windsor, East Windsor, and Hightstown) to find out their concerns and shared goals. This resulted in Forum endorsement of a package of recommendations in March 2006
 - The CJTF is also getting ready to sit down with the municipalities along Route 518 to talk about their circulation elements and land use plans. This is the next east-west existing corridor in the ongoing task following CR 571.
 - Throughput is one of the goals in these corridor meetings.
 - **Bus Rapid Transit**
 - Municipalities would like the Governor's Office to designate a single point of contact for coordinating all the stakeholders in BRT planning. They are looking for a signal of leadership from the Governor, regardless of whether the BRT point person winds up at DOT or NJ TRANSIT or in the Governor's Office. The CJTF (convened by DVRPC) wanted to send a letter to the Governor to this effect, but decided to wait and see if the issue arose during NJ Future's interview process.
 - Municipalities have expressed willingness to change zoning to facilitate the BRT.
 - A common municipal concern is that development is getting ahead of the planning process, imperiling potential BRT rights-of-way. The private sector (for example, Sarnoff) and public sector (for example, the Princetons) are already starting to work together on BRT right-of-way.
 - It might be useful for the Governor and/or NJ TRANSIT to come up with a memorandum of understanding to ensure preservation of the rights-of-way. It might have to be the Governor's Office rather than NJ TRANSIT, because the land use issues transcend NJ TRANSIT's expertise.
- **Existing plans and projects**
 - CJTF works at the short, medium, and long-term time scales. Examples: small projects (short term), working with existing corridors (medium term), BRT (long term).
 - DVRPC maintains a **database of small-scale, unfunded transportation projects** being considered in the 21 municipalities of CJTF, noting the purpose of each project. The list amounts to a mini, unfunded TIP (transportation improvement program, which is DOT's list of funded projects that are in the construction pipeline). A screening process results in Forum endorsement and an effort to find funding for a few projects each year.
 - NJDOT could score some points with Route 1 municipalities by funding some of the small projects in DVRPC's database (as "confidence builders"), although they are mostly on county and municipal roads.

Communications/Issues with Neighboring Communities

- **Straddling 2 MPOs.** The Route 1 corridor region sometimes suffers from straddling 2 MPOs (Middlesex and Somerset counties are in the NJTPA's study area, while Mercer County is in DVRPC's), but if they can cooperate they can offer significant economic development opportunities.

- Route 1 is like a river, where what you do upstream affects everybody downstream. One example is Forrestal Center, whose owners are concerned about what happens at Quaker Bridge Mall because they worry about accessibility for their workers who come from the south.
- The set of municipalities being interviewed by NJ Future is not coextensive with the membership of DVRPC's CJTF. It is critical that the Route 1 efforts communicate with each other.

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Limited experience with center-based development**
 - There are very few developers who are experienced with doing mixed-use projects
 - Financial institutions are nervous about funding complex, mixed-use projects because of the unknowns. They tend to partition their markets the same way developers do. This means that even developers who would like to do mixed-use development sometimes can't get funding for it.
 - There is a lack of experience in designing a good mixed-use project, so that the different uses are integrated and not merely adjacent to one another (how to get "mixed-use" and not just "multi-use").
- **Housing**
 - Municipal leaders generally contend that they can't approve housing projects without getting voted out of office. Anti-housing bias is a big obstacle.
- **General opposition to growth**
 - Many municipalities' zoning does not allow mixed use.
 - There is a generalized resistance to "density." Ironically, the argument about density attracting "those people" is a specious one most of the time, because the projects all end up being high-end.
 - High density isn't always exclusively high-end. A moderately-priced multi-family housing project recently won architectural awards in Philadelphia's Fishtown neighborhood.
 - Some developers claim that prices increase as density increases, although it's not clear whether they mean this on a per-unit basis or merely a per-square-foot basis.
- **Lack of regional perspective**
 - Counties are not as involved as they should be in guiding development.

State Incentives & Assistance

- A **legal shield** from the state would be helpful to protect municipalities that try to make good land use decisions but are afraid of being sued by developers.
- DVRPC supports allowing municipalities to charge **impact fees**.
- They also support **tax base sharing** but agree that this is a much tougher political battle.

Other notes (things DVRPC wanted to find out from NJF):

Barry Seymour asked George what type of state assistance municipalities have typically asked for. George gave a couple of examples:

- North Brunswick said they need better access to the Johnson & Johnson site if it's going to be developed as a TOD, otherwise neighboring residents will oppose the TOD out of traffic concerns. They want Finnegan's Lane extended.
- Mercer County, West Windsor, and Lawrence expressed concerns for the BRT in the face of the Quaker Bridge Mall expansion. The Governor's Office is getting involved to help ensure that the mall developer's plans won't mess up the BRT plans.

DVRPC questions about the BRT:

- Barry Seymour asked about Lawrence Township's feelings about the BRT. George said it was not a unified voice. Some council members are pro-BRT, some are more lukewarm, scared of upsetting the Quaker Bridge Mall developer.
- Don Shanis wanted to know if park-and-ride came up in the discussions of the Quaker Bridge Mall expansion. George said yes – that Lawrence would like the park-and-ride to be farther out, like on the PA side of the river. Lawrence is upset with DOT for not acting faster to turn Business Route 1 into a boulevard.
- Zoe Neaderland commented that she thought DOT has spoken positively about Business Route 1. George said that DOT doesn't want to fund the boulevard project unless they see more effort from Lawrence to cooperate on the BRT.

Don Shanis asked George whether the inclusion of Trenton in the NJF interviews (Trenton is not a member of CJTF) has changed the conversation. George mentioned Mayor Palmer's anger over Capital Health System's hospital moving out of the city.

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority Interview
Monday, November 27, 2006
10:00 a.m.

In Attendance

- David Stein, Director, Regional Planning
dstein@njtpa.org
(973) 639-8404
- Lois Goldman, Manager, Corridor Studies and Project Planning
lgoldman@njtpa.org
(973) 639-8413
- George Hawkins, New Jersey Future
- Teri Jover, New Jersey Future

Background/Major Issues/Existing Plans

- **Background**
 - NJTPA consists of the 13 counties of northern and central New Jersey.
 - The NJTPA Board consists of representatives of the 13 counties; the cities of Newark and Jersey City; NJDOT; NJ TRANSIT; the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; the Governor's Office; and a Citizen's Representative.
- **Regional Transportation Plan**
 - NJTPA is in the process of updating the plan for 2009.
 - The plan will continue to make the connection between a strong economy and a safe, efficient, and reliable transportation system.
- **I-78 Corridor Study**
 - Looking at two counties in Pennsylvania in addition to Hunterdon, Warren, and Somerset counties in New Jersey.
 - Looking for recommendations to get more people to use transit.
 - Phase One: enhance bus system through park and rides and new or expanded service.
 - Phase Two: study extending the Raritan Valley line west toward Phillipsburg. Funding for phase II of the study is in hand, and NJ TRANSIT will be the lead agency, with NJTPA participation.
 - Several towns are concerned that new park and ride facilities may attract a large influx of Pennsylvanians and they do not want to spur more development with the investment. Other towns are more receptive to the concept of new facilities. NJTPA has been working closely with corridor towns and counties to incorporate this valuable local input.
- **Freight Movement**
 - Projections suggest that truck traffic in the region will double within the next 25 years.
 - Trucks are integral to NJ's economy and are necessary to support the basic needs of its residents.
 - Freight facility improvements need to be addressed, including truck stops as well as highway and rail projects that serve goods movement.
 - NJTPA endorses the use of brownfields for freight-related purposes including additional space for logistics activities (warehousing, value added processing, etc.).
 - NJTPA has worked with the freight community regarding traffic-related issues in Middlesex County at Exit 8A.
- **Bus Rapid Transit**
 - BRT systems are emerging nationally as a viable alternative for new investment in transit, given the cost of installing new rail lines.
 - NJTPA is supportive of the proposed Route 1 BRT and of a new study examining its extension into the Brunswick area.
 - NJTPA is an active member of CJTF, which is supporting BRT study efforts.
- **Bicycle / Pedestrian planning, Middlesex County**
 - It is important to consider bike/ped treatments to support the overall transportation system of the Route 1 corridor.
 - NJTPA funded a Route 18 study that outlines simple improvements to the system that would make the environment more conducive for bicycle and pedestrian travel.

- NJTPA recently conducted a series of Walkable Communities Workshops in each county. The sessions outline simple solutions to make it safer and encourage more walking. (Workshops were held in South River – Middlesex County and Bridgewater – Somerset County.)

Obstacles for Center-Based Growth

- **Municipal zoning**
 - Historically, there has not been strong land use and transportation coordination. This has led to development that does not reflect smart growth principles.
- **Local capacity**
 - Towns are not always capable of dealing with the development pressure as they often lack in-house technical expertise to deal with broader planning issues. Developers often pit towns against one another.
- **Ratables chase**
 - Some municipalities prefer commercial development and do not want to zone for housing because it costs more than it brings in property taxes. These “disincentives” built into the property tax system negate the benefits that planning could bring.

State Incentives & Assistance

- **Improve education**
 - Need to counteract the dropout rate and build a system that prepares graduates for the jobs of the 21st century.
- **Put money into transit and the transportation system.**
 - Improve and increase utilization of existing transit systems. Investing in transit can be cheaper than the costs of expanding roads and buying cars (people spend 20% of their income on transportation costs, most of which is auto-related).
 - Provide better financing and subsidies for transit. Offer free rides on new service to help market public transportation.
- **“Sell” the Transit Village concept**
 - Need to make the financial argument for transit and transit villages.
 - Use visioning process to lay out the issues and let people work the answers through on their own. People need to convince themselves of the idea, which takes time.
 - Good design is essential to the success of a transit village. Scale is important – the feel of the street must relate to people.