



BUILDING A TRANSIT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY



PLACE
ACCESS
DEVELOPMENT
PARKING
PARTNERSHIPS



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Across the nation, Americans are rediscovering the places the automobile age left behind. Long-neglected downtowns, built generations ago around public transit systems, are drawing a second look from people and businesses weary of traffic congestion and auto-oriented sprawl, who seek instead the benefits of being near one another, and near transit options. Such communities are focal points of the "smart growth" movement. The movement has deep roots in New Jersey, perhaps because the Garden State has more cars per mile of road than any state in the nation. The urgency to "grow smarter" led in 1992 to adoption of New Jersey's State Development and Redevelopment Plan, with the specific goals of building and rebuilding "communities of place."

New Jersey's communities are representative of the spectrum of community types across the nation when it comes to building or rebuilding communities around transit. Its rail stations operate in many settings, from older downtowns, to established suburban commuter villages, to regional park-and-rides. Many of these stations will soon see new and expanded service, as a result of NJ TRANSIT initiatives and in turn, their communities will experience new parking and development pressures, which will require sensitive, community-based planning that respect the needs of both the commuter and the community.



For the past two years, the program described in this report **Transit-Friendly Communities for New Jersey** has brought together diverse community and professional partners to develop specific ways that New Jersey towns and cities can become more “transit-friendly,” by planning their growth in partnership with transit investment. The program was built on NJ TRANSIT’s initiatives to make train stations themselves “passenger friendly;” and statewide smart-growth initiatives to reduce sprawl and encourage new development within walking distance of transit stations.

Oftentimes communities are not prepared for prospective growth at or near their stations. Station use may be constrained by lack of adequate parking, an absence of feeder services, and inhospitable walking or biking options, sometimes resulting in greater traffic congestion. Moreover, there has been a lack of awareness in many New Jersey communities about how to leverage transit investments to revitalize downtowns, encourage business and local economic development, and reduce reliance on the private car.

Communities that plan their growth in partnership with transportation investment stand to reap a host of benefits, from fewer traffic problems, to more vital downtowns, to higher property values. What follows is a guide for communities seeking to be “transit-friendly.” It has two purposes:

→ **To document the key findings and conclusions from NJ TRANSIT’S “Transit-Friendly**

Communities for New Jersey” pilot community planning assistance program; and

→ **To convey lessons learned to other communities both in New Jersey and nationally, to help guide their own efforts.**

BACKGROUND: NEW JERSEY’S PASSENGER RAIL SYSTEM

During the past 20 years, NJ TRANSIT has invested more than \$8.2 billion to repair, rehabilitate, expand and connect the state’s passenger rail lines many of them built more than 100 years ago by competing rail companies.

NJ TRANSIT’s commitment has reversed years of transit and rail station neglect and has begun to have a positive impact on investment and property values in many communities surrounding these stations. These connections and upgrades of existing commuter rail lines, and the construction of new light rail lines, go a long way toward providing an interconnected, statewide rail network, with 160 commuter rail stations and 26 light rail stations serving the majority of state residents. Ridership has doubled in this 20-year period, a greater increase than experienced by any other major U.S. transit system in this same period, evidence of the public demand for transit investment and connectivity.

However, as of 2002, the network did not yet operate as a single system. Only four rail lines offered direct service to Penn Station in Manhattan: The Northeast Corridor, the North



Jersey Coast and, since 1996, the Morris and Essex lines, which were connected to the Northeast Corridor with completion of Midtown Direct service (a.k.a. the Kearny Connection). The Raritan Valley line serves Newark Penn Station, and the remaining rail lines converge on Hoboken, requiring awkward and time-consuming transfers to reach Manhattan.

To overcome the disjointed nature of the rail system, NJ TRANSIT is completing a massive capital program to connect all these passenger lines into one seamless system:

→ **The Montclair Connection (completed in 2002) merges the Montclair Branch and the Boonton Line, and connects these two Hoboken-bound lines directly to Manhattan.**

→ **The Secaucus transfer station will provide the remaining Hoboken-bound lines (Main/Bergen, Port Jervis and Pascack Valley) with direct access to Manhattan. Ridership is expected to nearly double at the 30 stations that will gain direct service to New York with the completion of this project.**

These projects will transform northern New Jersey’s rail network, giving millions of residents in communities near 80 rail stations direct access to midtown Manhattan, for the first time, as well as to one another.

Construction has also been completed on the first phase of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail System, which opened in 2000 and now connects Bayonne to Hoboken, and to existing east-

west transit links. When completed, the line will extend along the Hudson River waterfront to Bergen County.

Finally, construction is underway on the Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System which, when completed, will connect Camden to Trenton and the Northeast Corridor.

Together, these connections, upgrades and new lines cost more than \$2 billion, and will result in an interconnected rail network with more than 200 stations serving the majority of state residents.

Supporting the growth and the efficiency of transit in New Jersey is best accomplished by ensuring that the investments of the past are used most effectively. New Jersey’s rail stations and hundreds of bus stops are the gateways for moving around the state and to neighboring New York City and Philadelphia. By planning collaboratively, NJ TRANSIT and the various host communities can ensure that these gateways are attractive and accessible. In addition, transit facilities are public investments that can be used by communities to attract private and public/private partnership redevelopment, thus contributing to the success of the local economy.

¹ As part of the renovation of South Orange Train Station, local merchants were recruited to operate businesses in the retail spaces located underneath the trestle. They draw local people to the station on a regular basis, as well as provide high-quality baked goods and other passenger-related services. The landscaped outdoor seating and the new plaza function as a civic square for the town.

² NJ TRANSIT’s Secaucus transfer station, to be completed in 2004, will connect communities in northern and western New Jersey to midtown Manhattan.



THE PROGRAM: TRANSIT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES FOR NEW JERSEY

The "Transit-Friendly Communities for New Jersey" program began formally in 1999 with the awarding of a Federal Highway Administration grant to NJ TRANSIT from the Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program (TCSP), part of the federal transportation legislation of 1997 known as TEA-21.

TCSP was created to provide a source of federal grant funding to transportation agencies "to investigate the relationships between transportation, the community at large, and private sector-based initiatives" and to plan and implement strategies for transportation and related community improvements. Congress set the program funding at \$120 million over the fiscal 1999 to 2003 period of TEA-21.

NJ TRANSIT was one of only 30 grantees to receive funds from among the 500-plus applicants. The grant to NJ TRANSIT totaled \$535,000. The program was expanded through a local match from NJ TRANSIT and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, bringing the available support to \$845,000 for local technical assistance to rail station communities.

Under this grant, NJ TRANSIT worked with a consortium of nonprofit organizations, the The New Jersey Office of Smart Growth (formerly the Office of State Planning), and local public and private sector partners to leverage transit investments for stronger downtowns in 11 selected communities: **Bayonne, Hackensack, Hillsdale, Hoboken, Matawan, Palmyra, Plainfield, Red Bank, Riverton, Rutherford and Trenton.**

The Transit-Friendly Communities for New Jersey program has provided educational workshops and technical assistance to a wide range of rail station communities throughout the state. The program has allowed NJ TRANSIT to leverage the talents and resources of its nonprofit and government partners in the areas of community revitalization, regional planning, urban design and inter-modal planning to help strengthen the future of communities around NJ TRANSIT stations. The program is a model for other New Jersey municipalities to use in leveraging transportation investments to improve their station area environment, create strong downtown centers, expand transit ridership and make their stations the focus of their community's life.

The following pages detail five key findings of the program, and 22 specific lessons for leveraging transit to build stronger communities. To learn more about the communities selected for the program and their train stations, and for a background on the Transit-Friendly Communities of New Jersey team members, see [About the Rail Stations Selected](#) on page 37.

KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED



MAKING THE STATION A COMMUNITY DESTINATION

LESSON 1

Stations can serve as a focal point for civic pride, and can be an amenity to the community

LESSON 2

Stations can serve as an anchor for local business, and as information centers for the community

LESSON 3

Stations can build a sense of community by functioning as venues for a wide range of community activities and events

LESSON 4

Stations can link places in a community



PROVIDING CONVENIENT STATION ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS – AND PERHAPS SPECIAL SHUTTLE BUSES

LESSON 5

The closer one gets to the station, the more important the pedestrian and bicycle environment

LESSON 6

Different modes of access can be effective alternatives to "drive and park" at rail stations

LESSON 7

State and local transportation agencies can be effective partners in ensuring safe and seamless access to transit stations



SUPPORTING THE DISTRICT AROUND THE STATION AND ENCOURAGING NEW DEVELOPMENT

LESSON 8

Consider the station in the larger planning framework of the community

LESSON 9

Focusing development around train stations can mitigate regional traffic impacts

LESSON 10

Non-traditional planning tools are needed to manage the complexities of station-area redevelopment

LESSON 11

Communities will recognize the benefits of density if they have a role in shaping the vision

LESSON 12

Communities can take advantage of the strong market for residential development near transit stations

LESSON 13

Communities are embracing the concept of "mixed-use" development



BALANCING PARKING WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS

LESSON 14

Communities can balance regional parking needs with their development goals, whatever the community size

LESSON 15

Parking facilities need to fit within the community through sensitive design

LESSON 16

At stations where most people arrive on foot, designs that favor pedestrians are preferable

LESSON 17

Shared parking facilities near a station offer an efficient way to meet the needs of commuters, residents, businesses and visitors

LESSON 18

Parking and pedestrian needs must be planned together



CREATING AN ONGOING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN TRANSIT AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

LESSON 19

Partnerships are needed at all stages of the planning and development process

LESSON 20

Without inter-municipal cooperation, community success in leveraging transit may be limited

LESSON 21

The business community can be a great resource in enhancing a station area, especially when stations are downtown

LESSON 22

Community participation and facilitation techniques work best when tailored to the local situation

1. WHAT IS A TRANSIT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?



1 The Hilldale Train Station building and grounds have tremendous potential to serve as venues for community events, programs and information.



**MAKING THE STATION
A COMMUNITY DESTINATION**

LESSON 1

Stations can serve as a focal point for civic pride, and can be an amenity to the community.

LESSON 2

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Stations can build a sense of community by functioning as venues for a wide range of community activities and events.

LESSON 4

Stations can link places in a community.

**HILLSDALE
RED BANK
TRENTON**

2 The Transit-Friendly Communities program recommended reconfiguring amenities at the Red Bank station to make the space more flexible, and to add streetscape and pedestrian improvements to better link the station to the emerging retail districts and neighborhoods and to link these districts to one another through the station.

3, 4 In 1998, the Red Bank station building, plaza, parking lots, and bus transfer area were redesigned to make the station more attractive and to create opportunities for programming community events and activities on the plaza.



3



4

5 Existing Conditions at Trenton Station

6 New station area plan for Trenton showing improved passenger and pedestrian amenities, enhanced connections to the light rail station and downtown Trenton.



5



6



7

7 The Rahway Train Station has been transformed into a civic landmark, with actively programmed public spaces that host farmers markets, crafts fairs, and retail vendors.

8 Rahway station early 1990s, prior to NJ TRANSIT's station renovation project.



8

MAKING THE STATION A COMMUNITY DESTINATION

11

PLACE
LESSONS 1-4



A rail station need not be just a place for transportation. By creating places where people come together, train stations can become focal points for a variety of community activities, if some kind of plaza or public space is provided. These activities and events reinforce the central role of the station in community life.

Station buildings, too, can be thought of as "places." Rather than a structure that is just open in the morning to sell tickets, the use of a station can be expanded, in partnership with the local community, to serve other uses. These uses can range from a community information center to a caf  to multipurpose community rooms.

Moreover, a train station can enhance an entire surrounding neighborhood, and help to make commercial districts work more effectively. Opportunities to link cultural and mixed-use places to the station often exist. For example, a rail station can provide a welcoming presence and act as a focal point for information and activities that are community-wide. Improving the pedestrian environment around a station also creates an opportunity to revitalize a surrounding business district, by connecting businesses to commuters/customers. It can also attract new businesses to serve the needs of commuters.

To draw out ideas for how to make stations better community places, Project for Public Spaces (PPS) uses a tool called the Place Performance Evaluation, or the "Place Game." This tool helps communities understand the key elements of "place," including comfort and a positive image, easy access and linkages, interesting and regularly occurring uses and activities and creating a sociable environment elements which, when put all together, effectively result in the creation of a great "place."

I. WHAT IS A TRANSIT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?

LESSONS LEARNED

LESSON 1

Stations can serve as a focal point for civic pride, and can be an amenity to the community.

While a station needs to be attractive, maintained in good condition and open to the public for use, of paramount importance is providing the amenities that make the station easy to use, comfortable for passengers and welcomed by the community as a source of civic pride.

In **Trenton**, an auto drop-off area currently dominates the exterior of the train station. There are few places to sit, bus shelters are too small and poorly maintained and there is no place for community activity. A new **Trenton** station plan being developed by NJ TRANSIT includes a proposal by the Transit-Friendly Communities program to create station entrances with covered waiting areas, adjacent retail shops, a bike parking area and a public plaza with seating, landscaping and public art that could be programmed to host a variety of community activities.

Simply providing amenities is not enough, however. They need to be placed with some attention to location, how they will be maintained and their function relative to other amenities a situation PPS terms "triangulation." Experience shows that a bench placed next to a waste receptacle under a lamppost is more likely to be used by people sitting to eat lunch or wait for the train at night, than would a bench standing apart from the lamppost or waste receptacle.

In **Red Bank**, news boxes take up much of the covered outdoor waiting area and constrict

passenger circulation. Most of the benches located on the station platform are not under weather protection, and so are not used in cold or inclement weather and prevent the plaza from being conveniently programmed for a farmers' market or other events suggested in community meetings. The Transit-Friendly Communities program recommended relocating the benches, not only to make the station more comfortable, but to allow the plaza to become a more active community space as well.

LESSON 2

Stations can serve as an anchor for local business, and as information centers for the community.

With proper design and incentives, train stations can attract a variety of activities and service establishments, and provide satellite retail opportunities for local merchants. Coffee shops, newsstands, video store rentals, branch bank and post offices, health clinics, dry cleaners and day care centers can be found at rail stations around the country. These uses were recommended at and surrounding larger stations in the Transit-Friendly Communities program, where ridership could support them. For example, the new Trenton station will have expanded retail and services; plans proposed for the area immediately adjacent to the Essex Street station in Hackensack include retail, residential, commercial, office and civic uses that can serve both train riders and the surrounding neighborhood as the station develops into a new center for the city.



1 The Back in Time Caf  in Bradley Beach draws the community to the train station to chat, have breakfast, as well as to take the train.

2 The Maplewood concierge located within the train station allows 70 local merchants to provide services to transit passengers at the same time.

When facility size is limited, the idea of concierge service may be appropriate. At the **Maplewood** train station, for example, a concierge takes orders in the morning for carry-out dinner, flowers and videos, and takes in dry cleaning, film for developing, keys for duplication, etc. The concierge has local merchants fill these orders during the day, and brings everything back to the station in the evening for customers to pick up on their way home. Such a service has been recommended for the **Aberdeen/Matawan** station.

Many visitors to a community will seek out information about that community. As these visitors, it is hoped, increasingly arrive by train, the train station itself could become a central clearinghouse for information about transit service, community activities and events, retail and merchant services, and entertainment and recreational destinations. Even local commuters can benefit from convenient access to information about current events and activities. A local Tourist and Information Center has been recommended for the **Red Bank** train station. The **Trenton** station, which already serves as the gateway to New Jersey for Amtrak and as a major transit hub, is a natural location for the provision of extensive information about transit, the State House (history and sights) and the locations of specific government offices, and these have been recommended.

LESSON 3

Stations can build a sense of community by functioning as venues for a wide range of community activities and events.

Stations and the public spaces surrounding them plazas, parking lots, bus transfer facilities can be used by communities as staging areas for a multitude of public events and activities. Farmers markets, arts and crafts fairs, concerts, First Night celebrations and performances are featured in and around train stations throughout New Jersey, providing opportunities to activate station areas after commuting hours, and for residents to come together to celebrate in a communal public space. Red Bank's train station is located at the nexus of several diverse communities and emerging special improvement districts: the downtown; Station Plaza, which includes both the train station and the surrounding Arts and Antiques District; the Monmouth Street Arts Corridor, and the ethnically diverse residential neighborhoods that flank Shrewsbury Avenue. As such, the station plaza is a central location that could function as a town square for Red Bank, and as a venue for the coming together of these diverse groups to support and engage in open air markets, concerts and performances, swap meets, holiday celebrations, etc.

Station buildings can be used more effectively, as well. The outdoor and second floor public spaces of the **Hillsdale** station provide ample space for community programs and activities, which would complement the many events that take place in the park adjacent to the station, and support the activities of the many volunteers who, in turn, support programs and fund amenities (new lampposts, wreaths for the holidays) throughout the downtown.

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PLACE
LESSONS 1-4



LESSON 4

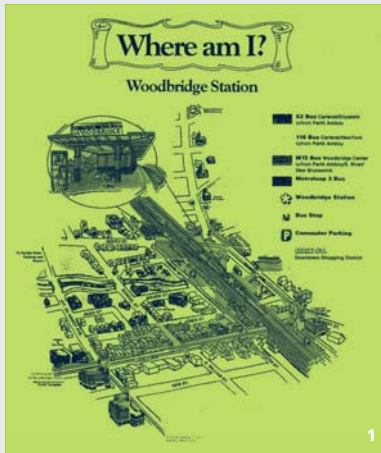
Stations can link places in a community.

While the station can be a destination in itself, it can also help link other important destinations and places in the community. Local information or signage at or near rail stations could be enhanced at nearly every station studied in the Transit-Friendly Communities program. Maps of downtowns, lists of local merchants and services available, information about key destinations, or current events listings are just some of the ways that communities can take advantage of the rail station to convey information to visitors and residents. The Transit-Friendly Communities team has recommended various types of information be included not just at stations but provided on information kiosks located in prominent places throughout the downtowns. For example, two new light rail stations have been built in **Bayonne** just one block east of Broadway, the city's commercial spine. With a third station (at 22nd Street and Avenue E) currently under construction, the team has recommended that the city create and install better signage and information at the stations, as well as at the intersection of Broadway and the streets which lead to the stations, which would better link the stations with the retail district.

However, links are not made by signs alone. Creating and maintaining pedestrian connections making it easy to walk between destinations is also critical. The **Red Bank** train station area has already been redesigned to create more public space, and the borough is helping implement

a series of signage, "streetscaping", traffic calming and retail enhancement efforts in cooperation with emerging districts around the station.

However, there are still many missing links. Adequate sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and positive land uses lining the route in addition to directional signage are all needed to encourage people to walk in all directions around the train station.



1 This artist-designed "Where am I?" map at Woodbridge station provides direction to downtown Woodbridge businesses and services, most of which are located just a half a block from the train station on Main Street.

2 The weekly summertime jazz concerts in the parking lot of the East Orange station highlights the central role played by the train station.



I. WHAT IS A TRANSIT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?



1 At Davis Square, Somerville, MA pedestrians and businesses have benefited most from the strong physical and visual connections linking this subway station to the main shopping district and central square.

2 The Transit Friendly Communities team studied how to improve bicycle access to, and facilities at, rail stations.

3 Bicycle Parking at the Aberdeen/Matawan train station.

PROVIDING CONVENIENT STATION ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS – AND PERHAPS SPECIAL SHUTTLE BUSES

LESSON 5

The closer one gets to the station, the more important the pedestrian and bicycle environment.

LESSON 6

Different modes of access can be effective alternatives to “drive and park” at rail stations.

LESSON 7

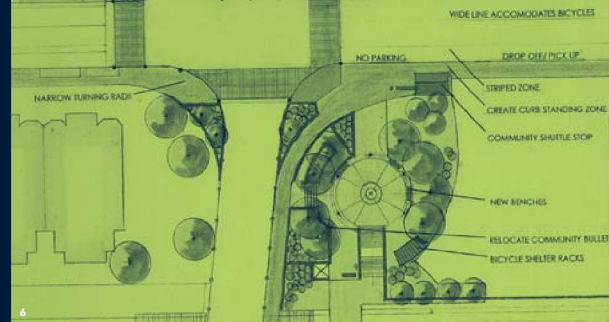
State and local transportation agencies can be effective partners in ensuring safe and seamless access to transit stations.

**ABERDEEN/MATAWAN
RUTHERFORD**



4 Rutherford station area proposed plan, with new roundabout, improved pedestrian crossings, bus drop off areas, sidewalks, crosswalks, and amenities.

5 View east along Rutherford Central Business District (Park Avenue) towards the rail station (existing conditions).



6 The Transit Friendly Communities plan for improving the intersection of 45th Street and Avenue E in Bayonne facilitates safer pedestrian crossings, passenger pick up and drop off, and bicycle access.

7 Because of wide lanes and fast moving traffic, the intersection of 45th Street and Avenue E in Bayonne is currently difficult for pedestrians to negotiate.



8 The HOP shuttle in Boulder, CO circulates through the downtown as a “hop-on-hop-off” service, and is used by commuters, shoppers, residents, and students at the University of Colorado.

9 The reconfigured entranceway to the South Orange station provides adequate passenger pick up and drop off areas, sidewalks, bus stops and short term parking, all located around a roundabout.

PROVIDING CONVENIENT STATION ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS – AND PERHAPS SPECIAL SHUTTLE BUSES

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ACCESS
LESSONS 5-7



Rail stations function as the center of many communities, with thousands of people passing through on a daily basis. This creates conflicting demands among rail passengers who arrive by car, by bus, on foot or by bicycle. In the past, decisions about improving access to stations have largely focused on improving auto access, while pedestrian and bicycle access was not comparatively addressed.

Given the increasing ridership at the many NJ TRANSIT stations studied under this program, it is extremely important to supplement auto access and develop ways for people to more conveniently walk and bicycle to stations, or to catch a shuttle bus. Studies have shown that people will frequently walk up to half a mile to reach a commuter rail station, and will bicycle greater distances. The quality of that walking and biking experience is critical, however, and none of the communities in the program had ever really considered this challenge. Even passengers who drive or take a bus to a rail station are pedestrians at some point in their trip, and so the design of the pedestrian environment immediately surrounding a station is a key factor in everyone's transit experience.

Efforts to improve pedestrian and bicycle access may require new relationships with state, county and local traffic engineers. In acknowledgment of this, New Jersey's Department of Transportation is pursuing a new strategy of "Context Sensitive Design" in its partnership with communities, which considers road design in the context of local usage and community goals. Balancing pedestrian needs with those of cars through ample sidewalks, crosswalks and amenities is an important goal of this program.

Non-automobile access to rail stations may also be enhanced by jitneys, shuttle buses or van services within neighborhoods, downtowns or communities as a whole. Improved bicycle facilities at stations - including bike racks and bike lockers - would also offer people another means of reaching the station other than the car.

1. WHAT IS A TRANSIT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?

LESSONS LEARNED

LESSON 5

The closer one gets to the station, the more important the pedestrian and bicycle environment.

The configuration of roadways around rail stations often favors vehicles over pedestrians. Space allocation decisions at stations have often favored the car, ensuring adequate roadway space and turning capacity, adequate parking, and room for buses to maneuver - often at the expense of pedestrians and bicyclists. Just a block or two from the station in **Rutherford**, the community is very pedestrian and bike friendly, with widened sidewalks, paved crosswalks, street lighting and street furniture. At and near the station, however, which is located at the confluence point of a number of area roadways, vehicle and pedestrian conflicts are more severe.

The Transit-Friendly Communities team identified many obstacles in the 11 communities studied to reaching stations on foot: particularly hard-to-cross intersections, which may lack a traffic light or even a crosswalk; sidewalks that are too narrow or sometimes lacking altogether; vehicles traveling too fast; or unattractive adjacent development. In **Matawan**, improving pedestrian linkages from the **Aberdeen/Matawan** station to **Matawan's** historic Main Street business district was recommended. Although a relatively short walk, few do it because of the obstacles that make it an unpleasant experience: some streets do not have sidewalks, others are obstructed by parked cars and key intersections are difficult to cross. In **Hoboken**, where new development is taking place at a

rapid rate, improving pedestrian and bicycle access to the proposed 9th Street light rail station (part of the Hudson/Bergen Light Rail system) and around proposed new developments was a topic for discussion during that community's "Place Game" exercise. The findings suggest that the ground floors of future buildings need to be better designed with active uses to make the pedestrian experience of walking to the future station more pleasant.

Perhaps the most severe obstacles to pedestrian and bicycle access were found in **Trenton**, where linkages from the existing rail station and the future light rail station at Clinton Street (part of the Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System) to the downtown and Market Street involve a trek through, under and around the major highways that surround the station and, in effect, cut the station off from the rest of the city. Here, pedestrians have worn paths through the area, but appropriate, permanent solutions are needed.

Community and road planning around new transit stations (such as the stations proposed for **Bayonne**, **Riverton**, **Palmyra**, **Hoboken** and **Trenton**) need to create pedestrian access points, and easy, safe pedestrian access from buses, parking lots and drop-off areas. In **Hackensack**, the Transit-Friendly Communities team recommended ways for reconfiguring Essex Street, transforming it into a more walkable "urban boulevard" that would not only make the station more accessible, but would create an attractive setting for new development as well.

LESSON 6

Different modes of access can be effective alternatives to "drive and park" at rail stations.

Every mode of access to a rail station must be planned and designed to be attractive and to facilitate movement to the station and among the different modes serving the station. In **Trenton**, for example, NJ TRANSIT has located a station stop along the forthcoming Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System directly across Clinton Street from the existing commuter rail station. The Transit-Friendly Communities program has recommended NJ TRANSIT work with the community to create "raised" crosswalks and curb "bump outs" and shift an existing bus stop to facilitate easier and safer pedestrian movement between these two stations. In **Rutherford**, recommendations have been made for reconfiguring existing bus stops in relationship to a proposed "modern roundabout" (see Lesson 7) to be located in front of the rail station. In each community, recommendations have been made to improve the movement of pedestrians and bicyclists to and from the station, and to nearby retail and residential activities.

Beyond the immediate station area, access modes need to be designed to maximize their probability for success. Bus and community shuttle services, for example, must have their routes and stops located near concentrations of prospective rail riders, a serious challenge in low-density suburban communities.

LESSON 7

State and local transportation agencies can be effective partners in ensuring safe and seamless access to transit stations.

Under the New Jersey Department of Transportation's "Context Sensitive Design" program, there are new opportunities for local governments to explore innovative roadway designs, which are more sensitive to the context of the road's use within the community. In **Rutherford**, congestion at an old-style traffic circle located in front of the train station compounded the difficulties facing pedestrians trying to reach the station, and diminished the opportunity for the surrounding Station Square to become a pedestrian destination. After an extensive traffic analysis, coupled with input from NJ TRANSIT and the Transit-Friendly Communities team, the borough, Bergen County and NJDOT partnered to test a newly configured "modern roundabout" which was successful in improving both traffic flow and pedestrian safety. Another example: the boroughs of **Riverton** and **Palmyra** are working with Burlington County to change the lane configuration on Broad Street to reduce excessive speeds and make the street easier to cross - something which will be even more important after their respective light rail stations open.

Municipalities have the opportunity to explore partnering with NJDOT even if the road to be considered for context-sensitive re-design is not a state highway, as NJDOT has many programs which can be used to enhance bicycle and pedestrian access to stations.

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ACCESS
LESSONS 5-7



1. WHAT IS A TRANSIT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?



SUPPORTING THE DISTRICT AROUND THE STATION AND ENCOURAGING NEW DEVELOPMENT

LESSON 8
Consider the station in the larger planning framework of the community.

LESSON 9
Focusing development around train stations can mitigate regional traffic impacts.

LESSON 10
Non-traditional planning tools are needed to manage the complexities of station-area redevelopment.

LESSON 11
Communities will recognize the benefits of density if they have a role in shaping the vision.

LESSON 12
Communities can take advantage of the strong market for residential development near transit stations.

LESSON 13
Communities are embracing the concept of "mixed-use" development.

1 The proposed light rail station area at 22nd Street in Bayonne is a mix of commercial, industrial, and residential uses. This road connects directly to the "Down Center" portion of Broadway, one block away.

2 Issues raised by the "as of right" development shown here for Bayonne include: 1) Buildings surrounded by parking; 2) residential densities not commensurate with transit access; 3) station-related circulation not addressed.

3 Special district zoning with design guidelines and regulations tailored to the specific configuration of the station area and adjacent properties can, as illustrated here, promote a development that: 1) deals with parking in a creative way allowing the buildings to relate to the street; 2) achieves higher residential densities near transit and; 3) integrates the station into the design of the new buildings for better circulation, enhanced security and shared amenities for residents and transit riders.

**BAYONNE
HACKENSACK
RUTHERFORD
PLAINFIELD
RIVERTON**



4 In Hackensack new mixed-use development creates a strong relationship between the station and Essex Street, here reconceived as a tree-lined boulevard which is itself part of a larger network of improved streets linking neighborhoods and destinations.

5 The Hackensack station area is the linchpin for a much larger redevelopment plan that includes a new medical arts district, and a stabilized industrial/residential mixed-use area. The immediate station area includes new commercial development, municipal uses and structured parking.

6 The existing context in Hackensack is poorly defined with much undeveloped and under-utilized property.

7 Existing Essex Street station in Hackensack

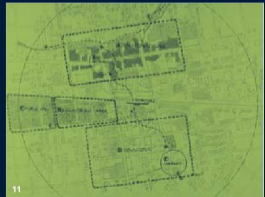


8 In Riverton and Plainfield, local residents view new light-rail stations as an opportunity to restore the historic role of the station area as a centerpiece of these two quiet downtowns. To that end, the towns provided ambitious visions for context-sensitive infill buildings that respected the particular geometries and circumstances of each town.

9 New development must respect the finely-scaled pedestrian character of the Riverton corner.

10 Metuchen, has been successful in promoting context-sensitive residential development on infill sites within a quarter mile of the station.

11 This planning framework diagram for Plainfield helps identify issues and opportunities for connecting the station to its larger context. In Plainfield, the planning framework diagram 1) reveals the strategic position of the station between two gateways to the downtown; 2) shows the potential to connect to a grainery system near the main shopping street and; 3) suggested issues related to connecting to a public housing project near the station.



SUPPORTING THE DISTRICT AROUND THE STATION AND ENCOURAGING NEW DEVELOPMENT

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DEVELOPMENT
LESSONS 8-13



Each transit station offers a community an opportunity to leverage public investment to attract new private or public/private partnership redevelopments. These can be thought of in three categories, from the most aggressive to the most modest: comprehensive redevelopment strategies for adjacent neighborhoods, redevelopment of sites immediately adjacent to the station, and scattered site infill development in the larger station area.

From a transit perspective, locating residential development closest to a train station is the most advantageous; but all forms of mixed-use development can support transit in a number of ways (and vice versa), if certain planning principles are followed: new development must create connections from the station area to the surrounding neighborhoods, new development must activate the station area with new visible activities and all buildings must help define a clear space around the station.

From a community perspective, transit supportive development presents the opportunity to invigorate the downtown with more residents and more activity as well as enhancing the municipal tax base. Increasingly, developers understand that NJ TRANSIT is a willing potential partner for joint development, which can have the benefits of increasing ridership (when the development has a residential component), satisfying commuter and community parking needs and creating valuable and lucrative development.

I. WHAT IS A TRANSIT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?

LESSONS LEARNED

LESSON 8

Consider the station in the larger planning framework of the community.

Every case study in the program benefited from placing the station into its larger townwide context, regardless of the scope of redevelopment under consideration. Aspects of this larger planning framework include the relationship of the station to townwide systems of open space, connections to important corridors and street networks, and the locations of important destinations or other significant community planning initiatives.

In **Plainfield**, mapping the larger planning framework revealed the strategic position of the station as the link connecting the downtown business district, surrounding residential neighborhoods and two major gateways into the city. In **Matawan**, the planning framework identified how a series of connecting roads, which came together at the station area, could be used to better link **Matawan**, **Aberdeen** and their shared train station.

The larger planning framework enables prioritization of redevelopment opportunities, leverages the transit resource over the largest possible area and over the broadest set of issues, and informs specific ideas about the development projects themselves in terms of building orientation to the street and building size.

LESSON 9

Focusing development around train stations can mitigate regional traffic impacts.

It was clear that some of the towns involved in the Transit-Friendly Communities program had the misconception that development could occur without traffic impacts. While there is some potential for transit to mitigate local traffic impacts, particularly through reduced parking ratios, the real benefits come when trips to and from the central business district shift from car to transit. Moreover, office development usually preferred over residential development because it is seen as an aid to local tax revenues, without increasing educational costs is likely to add many times the peak-hour auto trips to local roads as would a similar-sized residential development.

In **Hackensack**, station-area development is at the center of a much larger initiative that includes the stabilization and enhancement of industrial and industrial/residential mixed-use neighborhoods; the promotion of larger-format commercial developments closer to the nearby interstate highway; and the creation of a "health services" district near the station to accommodate the expansion needs of a major regional hospital. The Transit-Friendly Communities team has recommended the Essex Street station area become part of a new, transit-friendly mix of development along Essex Street, and that Essex Street be redesigned as an "urban boulevard," creating a defined, pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly street edge. Although there will be many commuters to this station when the plan is

complete, the station-area development plan does not rely unrealistically on rail commuting because there is also excellent highway access to the area.

LESSON 10

Non-traditional planning tools are needed to manage the complexities of station-area redevelopment.

Zoning can be good at describing what is not permitted, but it is a poor tool for describing what one would like to see happen. The Transit-Friendly Communities case studies revealed the extent to which the immediate physical setting of the station is often very idiosyncratic in terms of block size and configuration, pedestrian and vehicle circulation patterns; indeed, the station setting is often at odds with the design of the station itself.

Bayonne has developed an excellent new Transit District Overlay zone to promote higher-density, mixed-use development near a soon-to-be-constructed light rail station (part of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail system). However, design studies reveal that while this new zoning may enable transit-friendly development, it cannot prevent poorly designed conventional development. Nor do the new regulations address the particular circumstances of the blocks immediately adjacent to the station. For this reason, area-specific plans and special-district regulations that include specific "transit-friendly" design guidelines to minimize poorly designed conventional developments are more appropriate

for the areas immediately adjacent to the station. Area specific plans and zoning also provide the municipality with more flexibility in soliciting proposals and negotiating with developers; but also often increase the administrative burden for the town.

LESSON 11

Communities will recognize the benefits of density if they have a role in shaping the vision.

It is axiomatic that communities sometimes resist more intense development because of impacts on traffic, on schools and on neighborhood quality of life. Nevertheless, the communities studied in the Transit-Friendly Communities program were willing to increase density when it advanced the larger goals for community and neighborhood revitalization. These communities recognized that transit-friendly development is a way to reclaim marginal properties surface parking lots, abandoned industry for better and taxable uses.

Riverton is a small and quaint town. Yet, its vision of a more complete light rail station area led **Riverton** to create an ambitious redevelopment plan that will add significantly to the density of the village center. The level of local acceptance for this vision is directly related to the level of community and stakeholder participation in creating the vision, reflecting the community's desire to shape development rather than simply react to developer proposals. The success of **Riverton's** redevelopment planning is based on broad stakeholder participation.

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DEVELOPMENT
LESSONS 8-13



LESSON 12

Communities can take advantage of the strong market for residential development near transit stations.

The search for “ratables” leads to office and retail development, not housing. However, many of the communities in this program understand that the strongest market is for new housing. There is an emerging understanding that the fiscal impacts, particularly on the school system, can be controlled through unit size and configuration. Although some infill single-family housing has been suggested as part of station neighborhood revitalization, most of this proposed housing near the stations is apartments, generally not desirable to families with children. In both **Riverton** and **Palmyra**, “living over the shop” is one of the recommended uses for the infill properties along the commercial streets, as well as for several small, mixed-use buildings with apartments on the upper stories. In **Hackensack**, housing for hospital staff has been recommended as part of the redevelopment plan for the proposed “health services” district.

LESSON 13

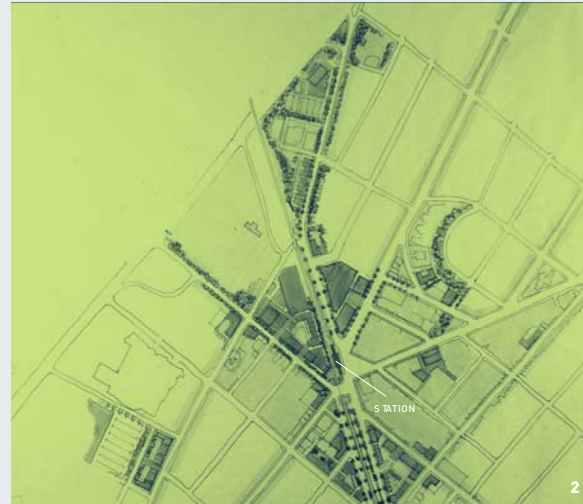
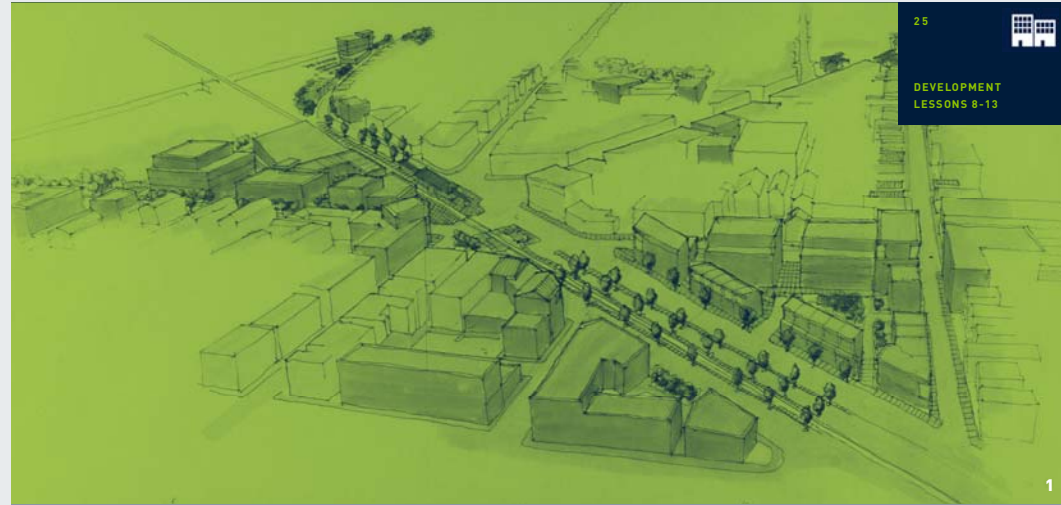
Communities are embracing the concept of “mixed-use” development.

“Mixed-use” development, once the traditional method of community development and still the hallmark of New Jersey’s most vital communities, is again becoming the desired alternative to “sprawl” development. “Mixed-use” is some-

times a catch-all concept of development that includes notions of smaller, more neighborly lot sizes, homes near shops, offices and entertainment to facilitate community activity, shared parking and, in general, synergies among uses. All of these concepts support the goals of the Transit-Friendly Communities program.

In **Rutherford**, for example, several marginal industrial properties near the station have been renovated by design-related businesses. Building on this, the redevelopment program proposed by the Transit-Friendly Communities team includes a combination of conventional apartments and artist live-work studios.

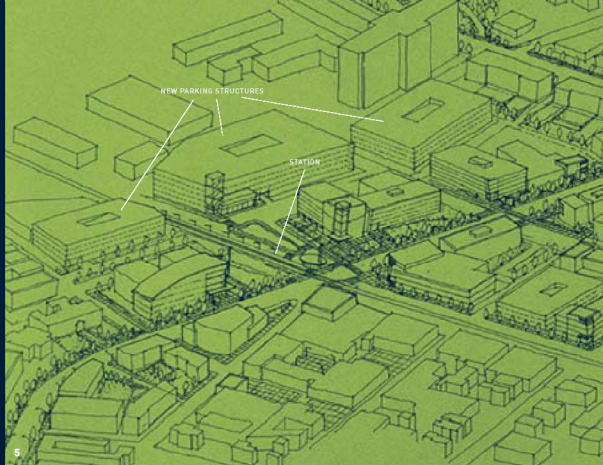
In **Hackensack**, the stabilization of the nearby industrial area includes the most ambitious kind of mixed-use development: industrial and residential uses side-by-side and perhaps, even in the same building.



1 In Rutherford mixed-use development proximate to the station includes live-work and multi-family housing in buildings of suitable scale and character.

2 In Rutherford and East Rutherford there are a range of redevelopment opportunities, from entire blocks proximate to the station, to neighborhood-supporting infill residential developments.

I. WHAT IS A TRANSIT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?



BALANCING PARKING WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS

LESSON 14

Communities can balance regional parking needs with their development goals, whatever the community size.

LESSON 15

Parking facilities need to fit within the community through sensitive design.

LESSON 16

At stations where most people arrive on foot, designs that favor pedestrians are preferable.

LESSON 17

Shared parking facilities near a station offer an efficient way to meet the needs of commuters, residents, businesses and visitors.

LESSON 18

Parking and pedestrian needs must be planned together.

1 The Hullfish Parking Deck in downtown Princeton, New Jersey is an example of how parking can be "wrapped" by grade-level retail and upper-floor residential and professional offices, allowing the street to be pedestrian-friendly and the deck to be integrated within the surrounding neighborhood in an unobtrusive manner.

2 Even surface parking lots can be pedestrian-friendly through simple, clear organization, landscaping, ample and clearly marked pedestrian ways, and special attention to the edges that abut sidewalks and public spaces.

**RUTHERFORD
HACKENSACK
PALMYRA
ABERDEEN/MATAWAN**

3 4 The utilization of parking structures is also affected by the quality of the pedestrian experience to the station. In Rutherford, utilization of the Kip Avenue garage for transit can be enhanced by implementing a variety of pedestrian improvements, such as improved lighting and streetscape design, articulated street crossings, and wayfinding signage.

5 At Essex Street Station in Hackensack, favorable highway access as well as current use patterns, suggest parking structures are needed to accommodate regional parking demand. These structures must be integral to the design of the station area. Parking structures are positioned away from the proposed Essex Street "Boulevard" and are positioned so that they are part of the ensemble of buildings that define the space around the station. Ground floor uses and visibility between the station area and the parking structures are encouraged.

6 The new light-rail stations at Rutherford and Palmyra will serve walk-on traffic from the adjacent neighborhoods. Here, accommodating the automobile is limited to providing well designed pick-up and drop-off areas, short term parking for several cars, and generally favoring the multitude of pedestrian movements between the station and the surrounding neighborhoods.

7 In some locations, such as Aberdeen/Matawan, a station may serve as a regional park-and-ride facility. These places should not become an undifferentiated sea of parking where pedestrian circulation is disregarded. Where the routes to the station are through residential neighborhoods or commercial centers, traffic calming should minimize adverse impacts to the community.

8 Shared parking is mutually beneficial for the community and the transit provider. Evening and weekend uses, such as entertainment-related activities, are particularly synergistic with parking for transit.



BALANCING PARKING WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS

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PARKING LESSONS 14-18



While accommodating improved pedestrian and bicycle access, and serving as a setting for new development, most stations must still accommodate commuter parking, even though the correct amount of parking may vary from station to station.

Many factors add pressure for additional parking at rail stations. Most obvious is the growth in ridership. But other factors are at work, as well. The added ridership has tended to come disproportionately from residential areas removed beyond walking distances from stations, requiring commuters to drive. In the distant past, such development occurred near stations and many riders could walk to them. In addition, many commuters seem prepared to shoulder the expense of an added car in the household to replace the modest walk their predecessors enjoyed. Meanwhile, the expansion of parking near stations is sometimes resisted as shopkeepers and residents alike perceive added parking for commuters as translating into more traffic and unproductive use of parking spaces during the entire day.

The amount of commuter parking provided need not dominate the station area either aesthetically or physically. Furthermore, if these parking facilities can be used evenings and weekends for other purposes, the number of total spaces can be minimized while the costs to construct and operate the parking facility can be shared.

I. WHAT IS A TRANSIT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?

LESSONS LEARNED

LESSON 14

Communities can balance regional parking needs with their development goals, whatever the community size.

Communities can benefit by coordinating their development goals with the need for commuter parking at their stations.

This can be accomplished through a combination of means, including careful design of parking facilities and efficient shared use of parking facilities, even in places where parking needs for commuters are great. At these locations the community can benefit economically from the influx of commuters, and commuters can benefit by the activities near the station. To that end, a recent NJ TRANSIT survey of rail passengers revealed that those who shopped around stations spent an average of \$2,800 per year.

In **Red Bank**, the success of the retail and entertainment activities near the station serve as a good example of how this can work to the benefit of the community and the commuter. At the Essex Street Station in **Hackensack**, structured parking proposals have been developed to meet both the needs of the expanding "health services" district and commuters in light of the growth in rail ridership expected from a new rail transfer in the New Jersey Meadowlands (the Secaucus transfer station). As part of a joint, community-driven redevelopment plan for the station area, structured parking has been proposed at the **Aberdeen/Matawan** station, which serves as a large commuter shed in Monmouth County. Smaller stations such as

Rutherford and **Hillsdale** also need to address increased demand for parking on a smaller scale, as a result of the Secaucus transfer station. In each example cited above, the communities are attempting to balance development goals with parking needs.

LESSON 15

Parking facilities need to fit within the community through sensitive design.

Parking garages have a reputation for not being aesthetically pleasing. This is often a concern in residential areas, where structured parking is not always welcome.

However structured parking facilities that serve train stations can be sensitively designed and sited within the host community. The garage should not block the line of sight to the station; drop-off and pick-up areas should be off-street; and the garage should be designed and located within the station area to minimize traffic impacts during peak times. These principles were incorporated into the Transit-Friendly Communities team development concept plan for the area immediately adjacent to the Essex Street Station in **Hackensack**.

Careful traffic studies are often warranted to judge the effect of added parking and added development at sites near stations. Communities need to work with developers to ensure they pay for their fair share of infrastructure improvements. This may be the appropriate approach in **Aberdeen/Matawan**, where the pressures for added parking and development are great.

LESSON 16

At stations where most people arrive on foot, designs that favor pedestrians are preferable.

Parking needs are more modest for two light rail stations, in **Riverton** and **Palmyra**, along the Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System now under construction. Here, the communities can focus their planning on enhancing the experience of walk-on traffic at the station.

LESSON 17

Shared parking facilities near the station offer an efficient way to meet the needs of commuters, residents, businesses and visitors.

In **Rutherford**, a new, mixed-use development adjacent to the station will provide parking for commuters as well as for its own needs. In South Orange, the station parking will be shared with a proposed performing arts center. At smaller stations like **Riverton** and **Palmyra**, modest amounts of existing, on-street parking could be used by commuters during the day and by shoppers and visitors on evenings and weekends.

LESSON 18

Parking and pedestrian needs must be planned together.

If parking facilities near stations are to be fully utilized, an attractive and safe walk between the station and the facility must exist. This problem surfaced in **Rutherford**, where the pedestrian linkages were poor between the **Rutherford**

train station and the existing Kip Avenue municipal parking garage. Once the pedestrian path between these two areas is improved, as recommended by the Transit-Friendly Communities team, this under-utilized parking resource could meet some of the community's anticipated parking needs in the near term.

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PARKING LESSONS 14-18

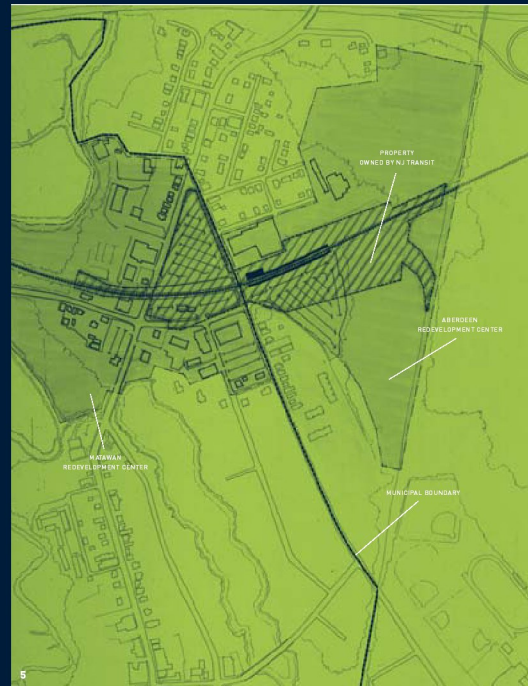
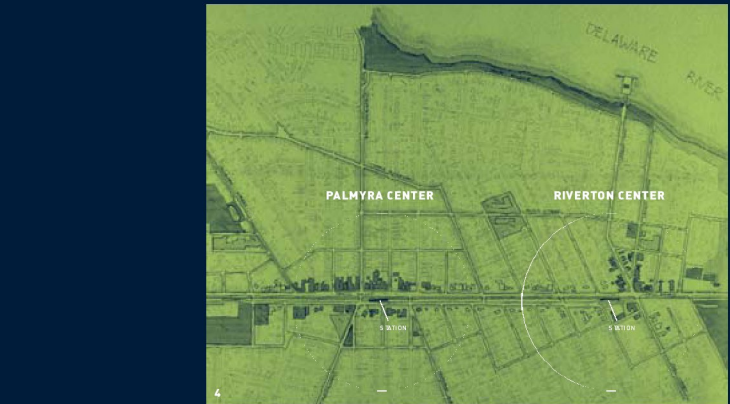


1. WHAT IS A TRANSIT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?



5 At the Aberdeen/Matawan station, the NJ TRANSIT property straddles the municipal boundary. This complex land ownership pattern is an obstacle to a joint redevelopment strategy that would recognize the shared impact and mutual benefits of a joint and comprehensive redevelopment plan.

4 Recognizing that Riverton and Palmyra (along the new Southern New Jersey Light Rail Line) are within walking distance of each other, the two towns have initiated a coordinated planning process. Among other things, they are promoting a boulevard adjacent to the rail line between the two station areas. Ongoing discussions seek to maximize the synergies between the two redevelopment efforts with each town playing to their different, but complementary strengths.



INVOLVING AN ONGOING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN TRANSIT AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

LESSON 19

Partnerships are needed at all stages of the planning and development process.

LESSON 20

Without inter-municipal cooperation, community success in leveraging transit may be limited.

LESSON 21

The business community can be a great resource in enhancing a station area, especially when stations are downtown.

LESSON 22

Community participation and facilitation techniques work best when tailored to the local situation.

1, 2 Hands-on interaction among citizen stakeholders and design and planning professionals assures that local citizen stakeholders are invested in the process and products of station area planning. The planning process itself should reinforce existing relationships and create new partnerships.

3 Different community-based planning projects suggest the use of different techniques and media. For some projects, that have moved well beyond strategic planning to more detailed architectural and urban design concerns, physical models help non-professional stakeholders visualize the three dimensional consequences of design decisions.

**RIVERTON/PALMYRA
ABERDEEN/MATAWAN**

CREATING AN ONGOING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN TRANSIT AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

31

PARTNERSHIP
LESSONS 19-22



A transit-community partnership not only affords an opportunity to pool limited resources, but also encourages the coordination and collaboration necessary for all of the pieces of a station district to fit together and to adapt to changes and new challenges over time.

The key to advancing transit-friendly programs is the right mix of local leadership and consensus building among the variety of interests in a community. The Transit-Friendly Communities program discovered (or rediscovered) that there is no single formula that works best in all communities. Local history often dictates the direction that these partnerships take. For example, in some communities there is a longstanding community "culture" of heavy involvement in civic affairs, which necessitates a "bottom-up" approach. In other places, there is no such history and less trust among constituencies. In those cases, trust is best gained by bringing together disparate groups in a setting where they can work on their common problems and issues.

I. WHAT IS A TRANSIT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?

LESSONS LEARNED

LESSON 19

Partnerships are needed at all stages of the planning and development process.

In some places, the elected officials already have a strong vision of the direction they wish to go and have initiated a collaborative, community-based planning effort with assistance from staff and/or consultants. Specifically, in **Bayonne, Hoboken, Red Bank, Palmyra, Riverton** and **Rutherford**, the Transit-Friendly Communities team served to help confirm and refine the thinking of the local leadership or local planners before such plans were shared widely with the larger community. In other cases, communities may not be as far along in their vision, for many reasons, including limited planning or funding resources, disagreements regarding the vision for the community and changing leadership. In these cases, partnerships can be useful in overcoming the obstacles.

LESSON 20

Without inter-municipal cooperation, community success in leveraging transit may be limited.

In many places the train station sits at the border of two municipalities, acting as either a bridge or barrier between them. Where these political, institutional or geographical obstacles could be overcome through cooperation between municipalities, it was possible to provide better comprehensive planning to the benefit of both towns. **Rutherford** and **Matawan** fell into this category. In both cases the Transit-Friendly Communities

team enlarged the outreach program to involve the neighboring communities of **East Rutherford** and **Aberdeen**, respectively.

A variant of this approach occurred in two towns in Burlington County: **Palmyra** and **Riverton** that are preparing to receive light rail stations along the Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System. The towns are adjacent to one another, with their prospective centers only about one mile apart. The towns realized that their issues were similar and it was in their interest to comprehensively plan both of their respective town centers and the area between them.

LESSON 21

The business community can be a great resource in enhancing a station area, especially when stations are downtown.

Several communities in the Transit-Friendly Communities program received visits from Downtown Business Assistance Teams (DBATs) organized by Downtown New Jersey, Inc. These DBAT visits occurred in **Matawan, Palmyra, Plainfield, Red Bank, Riverton, and Rutherford**.

The DBAT teams were composed of downtown managers, planning consultants, business leaders and municipal officials assembled from the membership of Downtown New Jersey, to evaluate the current and future potential of the local commercial districts near the targeted train stations.

The teams invited local business owners and other stakeholders to look at business retention and attraction in their commercial districts.

The process examined streetscape conditions, faded improvements, signage redevelopment, as well as advertising, special events and other marketing of the business districts. While interacting with the local business and community leaders, the DBAT teams suggested ways of organizing a commercial district revitalization plan and, in some cases, suggested the formation of a Special Improvement District to carry out the improvements.

LESSON 22

Community participation and facilitation techniques work best when tailored to the local situation.

In each case, after initial discussions with municipal elected or appointed leaders, the Transit-Friendly Communities team mapped out a program of community outreach with the best chance of success in arriving at a practical and effective set of recommendations. These outreach programs took many forms. Workshops, charrettes and/or meetings with varying mixes of local citizens, stakeholders, appointed or elected officials were held in **Bayonne, Aberdeen/Matawan, Hackensack, Hoboken, Palmyra, Plainfield, Red Bank, Riverton, Rutherford** and **Trenton**. In **Hillsdale**, the Transit-Friendly Communities team presented its observations and recommendations at a local Planning Board meeting, which was open to the public. A place-making exercise (the PPS "Place Game") involving citizens making observations in the field was performed in **Plainfield** and **Hoboken**.

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PARTNERSHIP
LESSONS 19-22



GETTING STARTED



In Aberdeen/Matawan, a host of short-term improvements created ways to score some quick successes.

Take a good look. See how people use the public places, streets, buildings and transit system in your community.

Assess the strengths and issues of your community's station area. What are the assets of your station and its surrounding area? What are the weaknesses? Make sure you look at all of the factors of a transit-friendly community, including streets and sidewalks, building stock and vacant lots that might be redeveloped.

Be open to learning from others. No one community or leader has the monopoly on good ideas; many have come before and have tackled these problems, and found solutions.

Know your planning tools. These range from zoning ordinances to land-use inventories to traffic studies to pedestrian surveys and everything between and beyond.

Gather your resources. Identify realistic local funding sources and, if needed, pursue additional funds through county, state, federal and nonprofit available sources. Also, harness your people resources, either "in-house" or from the outside.

THE PROCESS



Be inclusive, identify partners and work collaboratively to reach consensus.

Be inclusive. Bring in all those who have a stake in the community, and who can serve as leaders to get things done. And, perhaps more importantly, bring in those who might be inclined to stop you from getting things done.

Get the word out. Use the media and all the communication techniques at your disposal to involve the entire community. No one can say later that they did not know that planning was going on.

Cultivate local champions. Make certain you gain the early and active support of local elected and appointed officials (unless of course you are one, in which case you're one step further along).

Bring other levels of government along. Make sure other levels of government are brought into the process. Remember that the county traffic engineer may have more to say about what you can or cannot do than anyone else.

Use whatever technique works. These may include workshops, charrettes, or field trips to successful places to drive the process forward.

Reach consensus. Work collaboratively with all who care to define the direction you want to head in. Create a shared vision. The best way to put a plan in place is to have everyone reach agreement on the desired result. It helps everyone to focus. Within the vision, establish short- and longer-term objectives and actions.

MAKING IT HAPPEN



In Rutherford, a new roundabout was successfully tested by restriping the street and by using plastic bollards to direct traffic in new patterns.

Reorient planning resources. Develop a strategy to focus and guide the use of existing technical and, if needed, funding resources.

Find the money. Mine all the implementation programs available. There may be more out there than you think.

Score quick successes. Get something out "on the street" to gain credibility for the plan and the process. This gathers momentum for the rest of the plan which may be harder to put in place. Nothing succeeds like success.

Identify partners. Each of the partners in the Transit-Friendly Communities program offers unique services that communities beyond the program might also use to local advantage. A brief description of these partner offerings follows; a summary of the partner organizations is included in the Appendix.



Four components of a great place.

The Transit-Friendly Communities for New Jersey

NJTRANSIT: Offers community planning technical assistance in shaping "transit-friendly" land use visions for areas at and surrounding local transit facilities.

Project for Public Spaces, Inc.: Facilitates public forums, workshops and committees that give people an opportunity to identify issues, contribute ideas and make decisions about improvements to the places where they live and work.

Regional Plan Association: Recommends policy initiatives and physical and human infrastructure investments; takes positions on major current public policy issues.

Downtown New Jersey, Inc.: Offers conferences, seminars and visiting teams to assist business communities with revitalization.

New Jersey Future: Conducts research and analysis on land-use issues; recommends policy initiatives in support of the State Plan and smarter growth in state land-use.

The New Jersey Office of Smart Growth (formerly the Office of State Planning): Works to improve the efficiency and reduce the costs of land development and infrastructure in New Jersey by expanding areas of coordination and cooperation among state and local agencies.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITIES SELECTED

To determine which communities would be recipients of the technical assistance available from the Transit-Friendly Communities team NJ TRANSIT held two workshops in late 1999, one in **Hackensack** (Bergen County) in northern New Jersey, and the other in Roebling (Burlington County) in southern New Jersey. The workshops described the program and solicited applications from municipalities for technical assistance. The Bergen County workshop site was selected to encourage the participation of communities likely to be affected by the completion of the Secaucus transfer station, a project that will increase the pressures for parking and development at 34 northern New Jersey commuter rail stations. The Burlington County workshop site was chosen because of the impending construction of a new light rail line, the Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System.

At the workshops, speakers from within and beyond New Jersey provided a range of ideas and information on leveraging transit investment to the attendees, invited from governmental and non-governmental entities within rail communities. The attendees were invited to submit applications for the technical assistance on behalf of municipalities.

Thirty-six applications were received and evaluated. Recognizing the desire of the program to receive results applicable nationwide, communities were chosen that reflected a variety of conditions and local needs. The following were among the considerations: → where settings offered a variety of landuses and densities, including both center-oriented

and non-center-oriented development, and both urban and suburban environments; → where development or redevelopment opportunities existed; → where the Secaucus transfer station would have a major impact on the community; or → where new light rail lines were under construction (both the Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System and the recently opened Hudson Bergen Light Rail System); → where station parking was constrained; → where communities were organized to work for implementation; and → where the team believed that significant "value added" could be provided.

Because it would be impossible to fund effective technical assistance to such a large number of applicants, an evaluation process was used to select 11 communities with 13 transit stations from among the applicants. The communities chosen to participate in the Transit-Friendly Communities program were: **Bayonne, Hackensack, Hillsdale, Hoboken, Matawan, Palmyra, Plainfield, Red Bank, Riverton, Rutherford and Trenton.**

ABOUT THE RAIL STATIONS SELECTED

The 13 stations and 11 jurisdictions selected for the program are located on seven separate rail lines (see Table 1). Seven stations are commuter rail stations; six stations are served by light rail. All the commuter rail stations are in operation. Four of the six light rail stations are on lines or portions of lines not yet in service.

Table 1
Station Characteristics

Station	Rail Line	Surrounding Land Use	Station Open?	Terminal	Average Weekday Passengers Boarding	Average Travel Time to Terminal (minutes)	Distance to Terminal (miles)	Number of trains per weekday, inbound	% Park at station	% Walk to station
Regional Commuter Rail Stations										
Aberdeen/Matawan	North Jersey Coast	Predominately parking	Yes	Penn Station - NY	3,500	55	33.2	35	84.9	4.7
Hackensack - Essex St.	Pascack Valley	Industrial and mixed	Yes	Hoboken *	263	25	12.1	6	76.1	8.0
Trenton	Northeast Corridor	Residential, office, highway	Yes	Penn Station - NY	4,662	50	56.7	45	59.7	7.3
Neighborhood Commuter Rail Stations										
Hillsdale	Pascack Valley	Small town center, largely retail	Yes	Hoboken *	285	47	21.0	7	70.5	11.1
Plainfield	Raritan Valley	Medium town center	Yes	Newark, transf. to NY	901	32	16.2	27	45.2	31.0
Red Bank	North Jersey Coast	Near town center, mixed	Yes	Penn Station - NY	1,795	70	42.9	31	62.8	16.2
Rutherford	Bergen County	Medium town center	Yes	Hoboken *	685	19	7.7	18	44.9	35.7
New Light Rail Stations										
Bayonne - 45th St.	Hudson-Bergen	Residential one-side, indust. other	Yes	Hoboken	500	15	6.4	66	NA	NA
Bayonne - 34th St.	Hudson-Bergen	Residential one-side, indust. other	Yes	Hoboken	1,100	17	7.0	66	NA	NA
Bayonne - 22nd St.	Hudson-Bergen	Residential one-side, indust. other	No	Hoboken	NA	NA	7.0	NA	NA	NA
Hoboken - 9th St.	Hudson-Bergen	Housing, industrial	No	Hoboken	NA	NA	2.1	NA	NA	NA
Palmyra	South Jersey LRT	Small town center, retail, resid.	No	Trenton, Camden	NA	NA	25.8	NA	NA	NA
Riverton	South Jersey LRT	Small town center, retail, resid.	No	Trenton, Camden	NA	NA	24.9	NA	NA	NA

* When Secaucus transfer station opens will reach Penn Station with one transfer.

Table 2
Summary of Investigations by Station

Station	Streetscape Analysis	Rider Surveys	Ped/Bike Analysis	Wayfinding Analysis	Intermodal Analysis	Community Outreach
Aberdeen/Matawan	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Municipal officials
Bayonne	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Meetings with officials and organizations
Hackensack - Essex St.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Municipal officials
Hillsdale	Yes	No	No	No	No	Presentation to local planning board
Ninth Street- Hoboken	Yes	No	No	No	No	Workshop with stakeholders
Palmyra	Yes	No	No	No	No	Workshop with local officials
Plainfield	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Stakeholder meetings
Red Bank	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Workshops + interviews with stakeholders
Riverton	Yes	No	No	No	No	Workshop with local officials
Rutherford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Public workshops
Trenton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Stakeholder meetings

Station	Land Use Analysis	Redevelopment Analysis	Station Design Concepts	Retail Analysis	Parking Analysis	DBAT
Aberdeen/Matawan	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Bayonne	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Hackensack - Essex St.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Hillsdale	No	No	No	No	No	No
Ninth Street- Hoboken	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Palmyra	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Plainfield	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Red Bank	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Riverton	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Rutherford	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Trenton	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No

DBAT denotes Downtown Business Assistance Teams provided by Downtown New Jersey, Inc.

Three of the seven commuter rail stations **Aberdeen/Matawan, Hackensack, and Trenton** – are regional, with passengers traveling relatively long distances to reach them. In these cases, fewer than 10 percent of the boarding passengers reach the station on foot. The other four stations serve mostly their immediate neighborhoods, with up to a third or more passengers walking. Some are set in local downtowns, while others are found outside traditional downtown locations. The use of the stations varies substantially: **Trenton** experiences about 4,600 riders per day, while **Hillsdale** and **Hackensack** each see fewer than 300 riders per day. With the opening of the Secaucus transfer station, the three Bergen County stations of **Hackensack, Hillsdale** and **Rutherford** will see a significant increase in ridership.

Of the six light rail stations in the program, only two on the Hudson-Bergen line in **Bayonne** are currently open. Two of the remaining stations chosen for the program will be added to that line in **Bayonne** (22nd Street station) and **Hoboken** (9th Street station); the other two stations (**Riverton** and **Palmyra**) are part of the Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit system now under construction.

The “transit-friendly” issues in the 11 communities varied as well. This led the technical team, after consultation with local officials, to perform many types of investigations (see Table 2). This table also summarizes the types of outreach performed in each locale.

It is hoped that these tables taken together can serve as a “quick reference guide” to assist readers in identifying which individual station reports best match their own circumstance or needs.

In addition to this summary, separate reports for these stations detailing the findings for each have been prepared. To obtain copies, contact Vivian E. Baker, Project Manager at NJ TRANSIT: (973) 491-7822 or [vebaker@njtransit.com].

THE PROGRAM EVALUATOR

Rutgers University’s Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy houses the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center and within it the Voorhees Transportation Policy Institute (VTPI). The Institute was created to facilitate informed public discussion of transportation policy issues in New Jersey. VTPI serves as a communications center committed to simplifying and clarifying information and data related to transportation issues and policies for public understanding in order to foster more informed policy choices by voters and public officials. VTPI specializes in identifying and exploring transportation linkages to other public policy areas, such as economic development, land use, political governance, finance and social policy.

THE TRANSIT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES FOR NEW JERSEY PROGRAM PARTNERS

NJ TRANSIT is the nation's largest statewide public transportation system carrying 760,000 daily trips on 238 bus routes, two light rail lines and 12 commuter rail lines. It is the third largest transit system in the country with 163 rail stations, 26 light rail stations and more than 17,000 bus stops linking major points in New Jersey, New York and Philadelphia. www.njtransit.com

The New Jersey Office of Smart Growth (formerly the Office of State Planning) is a division of the Department of Community Affairs. The Office staffs the State Planning Commission and is responsible for developing the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The Office works with state agencies, local governments, civic groups and the private sector to promote and implement the State Plan's vision for New Jersey. www.njstateplan.com

Downtown New Jersey, Inc., founded in 1988, is a nonprofit organization that focuses on the state's commercial business districts. DNJ's members include business operators, public officials, community volunteers, downtown district management professionals, real estate professionals and anyone else with an interest in the health and viability of local business districts whether urban, suburban or rural, traditional downtowns, neighborhood shopping districts or outlying commercial corridors. www.downtownnj.com

New Jersey Future is New Jersey's oldest and largest nonprofit and nonpartisan smart growth organization providing research and advocacy for policies on improved land use, taxation, transportation and affordable housing.

New Jersey Future uses its research, analysis and communications to promote implementation of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and to achieve its goals with smart growth policies and practices. www.njfuture.org

Project for Public Spaces, Inc. is a nonprofit technical assistance, research, and educational organization. Its mission to create and sustain public places that build communities is achieved through programs in parks, plazas and central squares; transportation; public buildings and architecture; and public markets. Since its founding in 1975, the organization has worked in more than 1,000 communities, within the U.S. and abroad, helping people to grow their public spaces into vital community places. www.pps.org

Regional Plan Association is the oldest regional planning organization in the nation. It provides research and advocacy on issues involving transportation, economics, land use, open space, urban design, growth and governance. The Association covers the three-state New York New Jersey Connecticut metropolitan area centered on the Port of New York. www.rpa.org

The Voorhees Transportation Policy Institute, located within Rutgers University's Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, was created to facilitate informed public discussion of transportation issues in New Jersey. VTPI serves as a communications center, fostering informed public policy choices and linking transportation to other public policy areas such as economic development and governance. www.policy.rutgers.edu/tpi

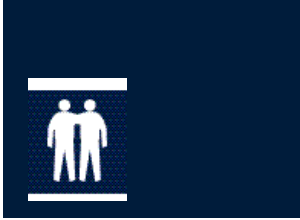
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