

Chapter 5

The Bigger Picture

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because and only when, they are created by everybody.” – Jane Jacobs



This guide has emphasized local planning to foster mobility and community quality of life through attention to the interaction of transportation and land use at a relatively fine grain. The patterns and principles presented in the guide call for careful investigation of how neighborhoods, public spaces, and elements of the circulation system—streets, sidewalks, paths, parking, and transit stops—can work together to encourage lively communities, successful local economies, and environmental quality. In this final chapter, attention turns from the local to the regional and statewide perspective.

Effective planning for local mobility inevitably means looking beyond a town's borders and considering not only local trips, but regional development patterns, commuting trends, transit service, truck traffic, and other "big picture" issues. These larger regional trends often set the broad context for municipal planning decisions. In preparing the Circulation Element, attention to the regional context and coordination with neighboring communities as well as county and state agencies will increase the likelihood of attaining local goals.

The process of creating regional transportation facilities, such as extensions of

the state's rail transit network, often demands an exceptional degree of coordination between jurisdictions. The same is true of many road and bridge improvement projects. Airport expansions and new freight facilities, such as warehouses and truck terminals, often affect the entire region, as do trends in truck traffic on the state's principal freight corridors.

In preparing the master plan, key partners may include county government, state agencies such as the NJDOT, NJ Transit, the Office of Smart Growth, the appropriate Metropolitan Planning Organization, and special agencies such as the Highlands Commission and Pinelands Commission for municipalities located in these areas. Local Transportation Management Associations are another valuable partner in the planning process.

Partnering with NJDOT

NJDOT is keenly interested in working with municipalities to help bring about greater integration of the state's transportation infrastructure and local land use patterns, and to promote the creation of distinctive, walkable environments. NJDOT offers a variety of planning grants and local aid for capital improvements that can be used toward this purpose. For instance, NJDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grants enable municipalities to develop circulation plans for these non-motorized modes. Other programs include support for Safe Routes to Schools, park-and-rides, access management planning, local planning assistance grants, and the Transit Village Initiative, which encourages transit oriented development around transit stations.

In addition to municipal grant programs, NJDOT is currently sponsoring more than a dozen Integrated Land Use and Transportation Studies for state highway corridors across the state. NJDOT is providing the participating municipalities with tools for better integrating local land use and transportation and helping to facilitate communication among neighboring jurisdictions to develop a coordinated approach for each corridor. These projects have generated new partnerships and incorporated numerous innovative features in line with the philosophy of context-sensitive design.



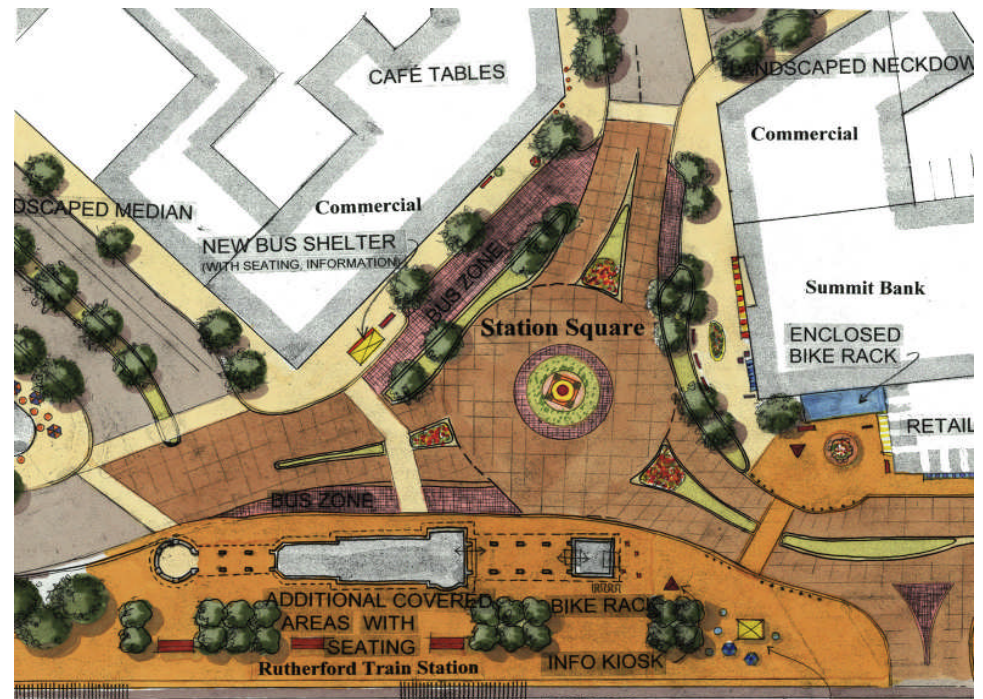
As part of the Route 31 Land Use and Transportation Plan, municipalities and state agencies are working together to develop a Framework Plan for this Hunterdon County area. NJDOT and OSG are providing technical and financial assistance to municipalities like Raritan Township (pictured) to revise their Master Plan and development plans.

For municipalities that have state highways within their borders, NJDOT also offers the opportunity to develop a State Highway Access Management Plan. An Access Management Plan serves as a mutual agreement between the state and the municipality, and may include incentives for developers regarding access improvements. There are currently only two such plans in New Jersey—Stafford Township’s plan for Route 72 and Colt’s Neck’s plan for Route 34—though others are pending. In Stafford Township, the Access Management Plan and the addition of roadway network were used to help control gridlock and aid in traffic flow. In Colt’s Neck, the town wanted to ease congestion and achieve more control over the “look” and “feel” of the highway, and they codified this in the Municipal Master Plan and the Access Management Plan. The procedure for such Access Management Plans is detailed in Chapter 9 of the NJDOT Access Code.

Partnering with NJ Transit

NJ Transit also works closely with municipalities across the state in developing transit services, terminals, parking facilities, and related community enhancement projects. The Transit-Friendly Communities for New Jersey program provides federally supported grants for local improvement projects around transit stations. Under these grants, NJ Transit and its project partners have worked to strengthen downtown investment and improve the areas around train stations, including pedestrian facilities, in eleven municipalities. Since stations are often located at municipal borders, several of these initiatives have spurred collaboration between neighboring municipalities.

NJ Transit is also a potential partner for public-private development projects that include a transit station, known as joint development. By working with NJ Transit, municipalities can help leverage the economic benefits of station area redevelopment and create attractive focal points for other community activities.



Partnering with the Office of Smart Growth



Another state agency with a critical interest in local circulation planning is the Office of Smart Growth (OSG), located in the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. OSG is responsible for ensuring that local plans are consistent with, and help to implement, the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) which guides overall growth and development for New Jersey. OSG welcomes efforts by municipalities to better integrate their land use and transportation planning by examining the relationship between mobility and community form. A number of relevant grant programs are offered, including Smart Future Planning Grants which focus on seven key areas: design guidelines for creating places, downtown and Main Street revitalization, green building, parking, transfer of development rights (TDR), charrettes, and greyfield redevelopment.

One way that municipalities can support state and regional planning goals—and achieve a higher-priority status from funding sources—is through the Plan Endorsement process. Through this effort (which is discussed later in this chapter) municipalities and counties work to ensure that their Master Plans are consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP).

Working with Neighboring Communities

Neighboring municipalities are perhaps the most important partners for any master planning effort. Neighboring communities may opt to develop or update their master plans or circulation elements in tandem, thus achieving the synergy of a larger effort, ensuring consistent approaches at the borders, and realizing greater efficiency in the planning process itself. Alternatively, bordering communities may wish to develop a joint master plan for a specific site or area of mutual concern.

Through its corridor planning studies, NJDOT has conducted a number of individual projects aimed at balancing land development and transportation systems, across community boundaries. For example, The Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy is a collaborative effort by state agencies, MPOs, and 15 municipalities in 3 counties to develop a sustainable economic and transportation strategy. This strategy also encourages regional and local access management measures and improved street connectivity between Route 1 and other roadways. Additionally, NJ Transit is working with the team to examine the feasibility of developing a Bus Rapid Transit System for the corridor. If people can choose among different safe and convenient travel modes and paths, including transit, walking, bicycling, and more than one roadway route, the region's roadways will retain their capacity longer.



As part of the Route 9 Integrated Land Use and Transportation Plan in Ocean County, three adjacent municipalities are working together to achieve common goals in support of mixed use growth while improving congestion and safety issues in the area. Berkeley Township is leading the efforts to develop a Town Center. The township worked closely with a developer to convert his original plans for one “big box” site into a mixed use town center. Beachwood and Pine Beach will have their existing grid networks connect into the new center circulation to alleviate congestion on Route 9 and provide alternate routes for local trips. In order to improve a problem intersection in the area and improve the network connectivity, Pine Beach plans to provide an easement of land from a school property for new network connections in the area.

Working with MPOs

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are regional bodies that coordinate transportation planning for multiple counties surrounding a metropolitan center. The MPOs have a critical role in setting long-term and short-term transportation investment priorities for their respective regions, and in developing corridor plans. MPOs also sponsor a variety of transportation improvement projects at the local level, including pedestrian and bicycle safety projects. Each of the MPOs in New Jersey has policies in place to promote a coordinated approach to transportation and land use planning. They are another important resource for local circulation planning and project funding.

In New Jersey, unlike most other states, every county and municipality falls under the jurisdiction of one of the MPOs. Two of the MPOs work solely in the state, while one is a bi-state authority. The MPOs are listed below.

<i>North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)</i>	<i>Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)</i>	<i>South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO)</i>
Bergen County	Burlington County	Atlantic County
Essex County	Camden County	Cape May County
Hudson County	Mercer County	Cumberland County
Hunterdon County	Gloucester County	Salem County
Middlesex County	+ 5 counties in Pennsylvania	
Monmouth County		
Morris County		
Ocean County		
Passaic County		
Somerset County		
Union County		
Warren County		

Regional Scale Facilities

The seven patterns included in this guide have focused on local transportation facilities and land uses that are common to most municipalities, such as local circulation systems, neighborhoods, shopping streets, and transit stops. Additional specialized or regional scale land uses – and their specialized transportation needs – may also need to be considered in the master plan if they occur or are proposed for construction within the municipality or nearby. Examples include the following uses:

- Campus-style developments, such as universities, hospitals and medical centers, high technology centers, or large-scale religious complexes;
- Hotels and convention centers;
- Stadiums, arenas, and other large-scale performance centers;
- Major museums, entertainment centers, and theme parks;
- Government centers or courthouses;
- Prisons and detention centers;
- Cemeteries;
- Specialized commercial zones, such as auto malls;
- Industrial parks and manufacturing sites;
- Farming, fisheries, and food processing;
- Landfills and waste processing sites;
- Oil refineries;
- Freight facilities, including ports, warehousing, truck terminals, truck stops, and rest areas;
- Airports, including general aviation facilities, and
- Special event sites (including state and county fairs).



Interchange 8A on the New Jersey Turnpike has emerged as a significant center of distribution in New Jersey, with over 50 million square feet of warehouse space.

Freight transportation facilities are of particular significance. New Jersey is one of the leading centers of warehousing in the United States, with over 830 million square feet of industrial property, much consisting of warehousing and distribution centers. Approximately 30 percent of all truck trips in New Jersey are associated with warehousing.

Although the national and global movements of freight are beyond the jurisdiction of a municipality, local governments need to be aware of the demands placed on their towns by truck traffic and warehousing. Designating and signing truck routes that avoid bottleneck locations, such as weight-restricted bridges, underpasses, and narrow intersections, is one important strategy for consideration. Truck exclusion zones can also be used in certain situations to protect residential neighborhoods from heavy truck traffic. However, many roads need to remain open to truck traffic to ensure efficient delivery of goods and supplies to local industries. Truck exclusion can also have unwanted spillover effects on parallel routes.

New Jersey's 36 general aviation airports provide specialized mobility services, such as business and charter travel and medical evacuations, and often generate economic benefits to their host communities. By accommodating smaller aircraft, these airports also help to alleviate overcrowded conditions at major airports. A key local planning consideration for airports is the prevention of noise impacts, through restrictions on the construction of housing, schools, and other noise-sensitive uses in surrounding areas. Facility expansions are another key issue. For instance, municipalities may be asked to approve runway extensions to accommodate new lightweight jets that require longer runways.

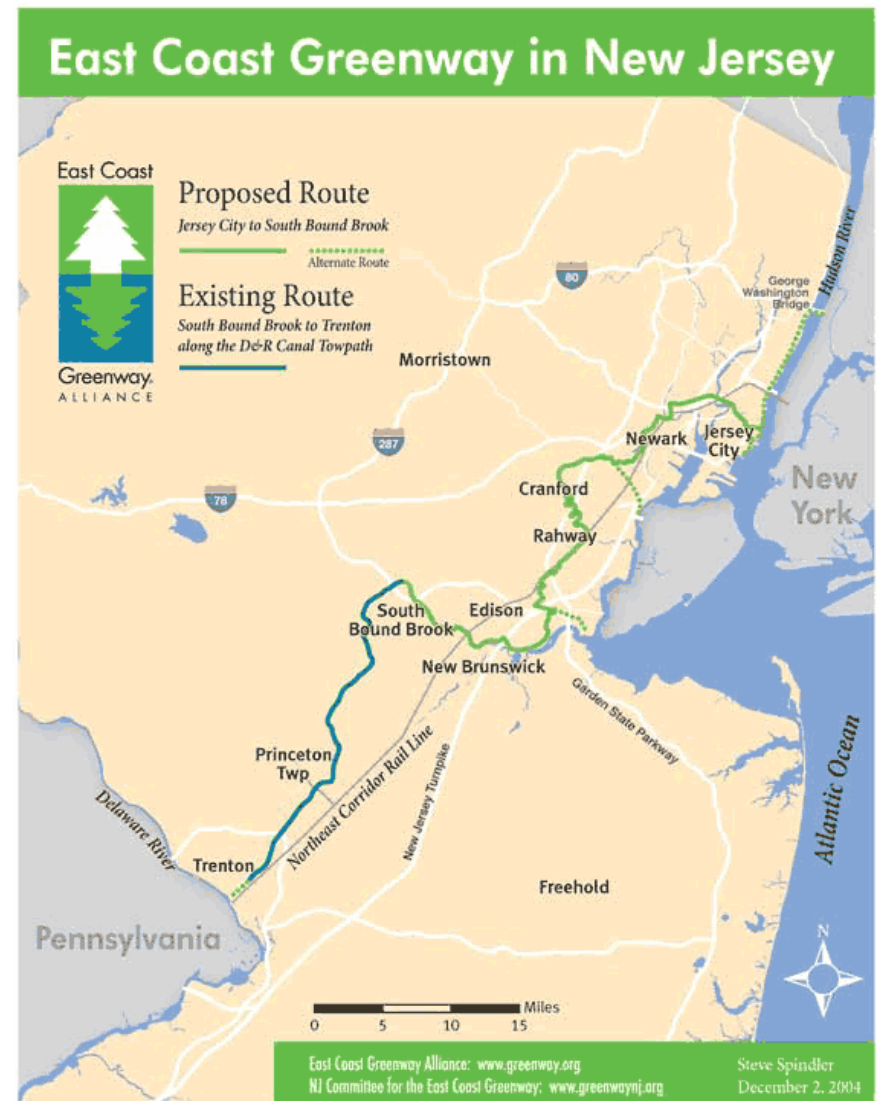


Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is an emerging technology that combines the service of a light rail system with the flexibility of a bus system. It is less costly to build than traditional rail, since it can be run on a combination of dedicated guideways and regular roads. (Image source: Central New Jersey Route 1 Bus Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis Study.)

Regional partnerships are also important in promoting major greenway and trail facilities. There are numerous regional trail proposals in various stages of development throughout New Jersey. Examples include the national East Coast Greenway initiative, the Capital-to-Coast Trail, which will run from Trenton to the shore at Manasquan, and the Liberty to Water Gap Trail, a continuous walking route from Liberty State Park in Jersey City to the Delaware Water Gap. Each of these trail projects offers mobility benefits to municipalities located along the routes, as well as opportunities for nearby municipalities to add connector routes.

Planning for large land uses such as hospitals, office parks, religious complexes, and performance centers is inevitably complex, with wide-ranging regional impacts on mobility and community form. However, some of the same principles described in this guide are applicable to large-scale uses as well. For instance, locating such facilities near transit—or planning jointly for the development of transit and large-scale uses—can dramatically reduce traffic impacts. Integrating campus-style uses with nearby neighborhood centers or shopping streets, so that employees can walk to local shops and restaurants, is a great improvement over constructing office parks in isolation. For hospitals and college campuses, incorporating these facilities in mixed-use neighborhoods with transit access also provides more

equitably for the mobility needs of those workers and students without access to personal vehicles. Locating a hotel in a distinctive mixed-use neighborhood provides visitor amenities that cannot easily be matched by hotels located at generic highway interchanges. Parking for large-scale uses can be sensitively designed and pedestrian-friendly as well.



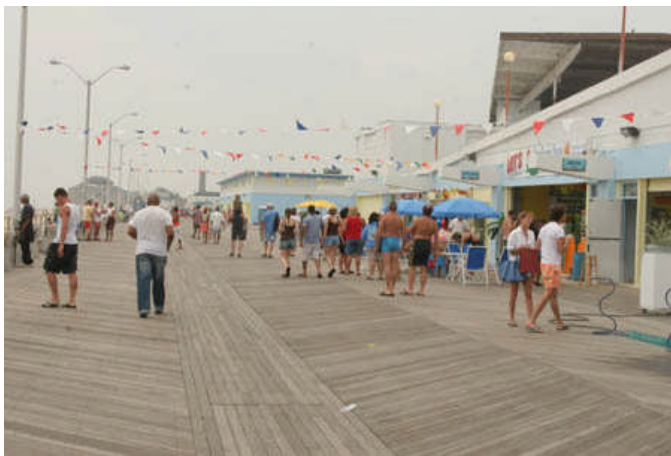
The East Coast Greenway is a proposed 2,600 mile path linking cities from Maine to Florida. The Greenway will provide an urban alternative to the Appalachian Trail. In New Jersey, the proposed route will connect from the D&R Canal Towpath north toward Jersey City. Municipalities along the route have an opportunity to develop local connections to this unique facility.

Plan Endorsement

Plan Endorsement is a voluntary process established at the state level in New Jersey to promote consistency between local master plans and the goals and objectives of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP). The Plan Endorsement process is administered by the State Planning Commission with the participation of a variety of state agencies. The process includes opportunities for dialogue with state officials and provides for coordinated, “one-stop” access to technical assistance and funding from state agencies. Municipalities may apply for Plan Endorsement on their own, or neighboring municipalities may work together and seek Plan Endorsement as a group. (Middlesex County, for example, is developing a multi-jurisdictional plan that collects municipalities into groups for planning purposes.)

From a financial standpoint, an endorsed plan entitles a municipality or county to a higher priority for available funding and state agency technical assistance. A variety of state and federally funded programs give “priority points” in the competitive process to municipalities that are a part of the Plan Endorsement process. In addition, preparing a petition for Plan Endorsement is a requirement for those municipalities seeking certification from the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) under the Third Round COAH rules.

Plan Endorsement also has regulatory benefits. Greater coordination between local governments and state agencies in the development of master plans leads to land use planning that is better integrated with regulatory decision-making at the state level. This results in a more streamlined approvals process from the Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) for specific projects that are consistent with the SDRP.



Asbury Park was the first municipality to receive Initial Plan Endorsement from the Office of Smart Growth. Both the famed boardwalk and the downtown streets serve as community gathering places—and both are subjects of concentrated redevelopment efforts. (Image source: City of Asbury Park website)

Plan Endorsement rules are currently undergoing revision, with adoption of revised rules expected in 2007. Currently, there are two levels of Plan Endorsement – Initial and Advanced. Municipalities that have received Initial Plan Endorsement from the State Planning Commission (SPC) can opt to apply for Advanced Plan Endorsement, which automatically results in COAH certification and approval of the petitioner’s open space, habitat conservation, and water resources management plans by NJDEP. To apply for Initial Plan Endorsement, a municipality should attend a Pre-Petition meeting with state agency representatives, prior to submitting a copy of the municipal master plan and related documents to the State Planning Commission.

Each of the participating state agencies has identified several guidelines to be met during the Plan Endorsement process. The New Jersey Department of Transportation and NJ Transit have developed a joint set of expectations for municipalities seeking Initial Plan Endorsement. Municipalities should have in place either an adopted circulation element or a transportation overview and strategy document. The circulation element or strategy document should consider all travel modes, including public transit, bicycle and pedestrian mobility and the movement of freight. Parking and land use should also be addressed. In addition to an inventory of existing facilities, the document should address community goals and objectives for the transportation system, assess the current system and evaluate future needs.

NJDOT also seeks an indication that applicants for Plan Endorsement are working with surrounding communities to solve regional transportation problems. They should be able to demonstrate support for land use patterns conducive to transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel, including the intent to explore opportunities for Transit-Oriented Development. NJDOT also looks for municipalities to have a comprehensive parking management strategy in place. In addition, NJDOT considers whether local zoning conforms to the NJDOT Access Code, which governs access onto state highways. Municipalities affected by public use airports must also demonstrate that they comply with the Air Safety and Zoning Act of 1983.

Thus, a strong circulation element is an asset when a municipality applies for Plan Endorsement. Likewise, Plan Endorsement promotes effective circulation planning that takes into account mobility and community form. Municipalities that commit themselves to enhancing the circulation elements of their Master Plans and to taking part in the Plan Endorsement process demonstrate their dedication to improving their communities and regional planning throughout New Jersey.

Resources for Stepping Back

Statewide Plans

New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan. New Jersey State Planning Commission, adopted March 1, 2001.
www.nj.gov/osg/plan/index.shtml

Transportation Choices 2025: New Jersey's Long Range Transportation Plan. New Jersey Department of Transportation and New Jersey Transit Corporation, March 2001. <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/works/njchoices/reports/lrp/lrptoc.pdf>

Policy and Technical Guidance

Complete Guide to Planning in New Jersey (2nd edition, 2003), Edited by Jennifer L. Zorn, NJAPA.

New Jersey FIT: Future in Transportation. New Jersey Department of Transportation.
<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/works/njfit/>

Plan Endorsement Guidelines (2004), New Jersey Office of Smart Growth, Department of Community Affairs.
<http://www.nj.gov/dca/osg/docs/2004peguidelines.pdf>

State Highway Access Management Code (New Jersey Administrative Code Title 16 Chapter) (2005), New Jersey Department of Transportation.
<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/eng/documents/NJHAMC/pdf/accesscode.pdf>

State of New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, 2006 edition.

MPO Plans

Access and Mobility 2030: Regional Transportation Plan for Northern New Jersey. North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, Inc. (NJTPA), September 2005.

<http://www.njtpa.org/planning/rtp2030/rtp2030.html>

Destination 2030: Future Land Use and Transportation Facilities. Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), June 2005. http://www.dvrpc.org/LongRangePlan/2030/LRP_Admin.pdf

2025 Regional Transportation Plan. South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO), June 2001. <http://www.sjtpo.org/>