



# Transit-Friendly Development

Newsletter of Transit-Oriented Development and Land Use in New Jersey

January 2008  
Volume 4, Number 1

Welcome to Volume 4, Issue 1 of Transit-Friendly Development, a newsletter designed to keep municipal officials, planners and advocates up-to-date on the potential for development and redevelopment around transit stations. This joint effort between NJ TRANSIT and the Bloustein School's Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) at Rutgers University aims to enrich the transit-oriented development (TOD) conversation in New Jersey's diverse communities by highlighting what is happening in the state and around the country: best practices, model programs, legislation and local problem-solving experiences.

The theme of this issue is bus transit and TOD. For many, transit-oriented development conjures images of rail stations or light rail service. But fixed guideway transit comes at a hefty price. For many communities, bus transit is the best and most cost-effective way to move their residents around. But are bus transit and transit-friendly development compatible? Maybe not in all locations, however, by adopting some of the best characteristics of rail transit, bus rapid transit (or BRT) has served as the basis of intensive transit-supported development.

We hope local leaders and the public find these articles of value as all of us strive to create livable, sustainable and thriving communities. We always appreciate reader comments, so send us your comments, criticisms and ideas for future articles. We can be reached via email at: [vtc@policy.rutgers.edu](mailto:vtc@policy.rutgers.edu)

Thanks for reading, and we hope you enjoy!

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## This Issue's Focus: A New Face of TOD—Bus Rapid Transit



Evidence is beginning to emerge that BRT investments can serve as anchors for transit-oriented development provided that two hurdles can be overcome—the issues of impermanence and incremental implementation. Boston, Los Angeles and Cleveland show what can be accomplished when planners consider BRT and TOD together.

## Special Feature: A Housing Market Perspective of TOD



At the 2007 NJ State League of Municipalities Conference, held in November, Jeffrey Otteau, president of the Otteau Valuation Group, Inc., offered his perspective of the New Jersey housing market, drawing particular attention to housing in transit-friendly locations. He believes that with the deep slump in New Jersey's housing market, one bright spot remains—locations that are transit-rich.

## Recommended Reading



See our reviews of recent publications about TOD. In this issue we highlight articles which look at the issues of bus-supported TOD, walking distances and TODs impact on the environment.

For past reviews—see our online annotated bibliography. ([more](#))

## What's New

### Transit Village Update

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### NJ TOD News

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Renewed Trenton Station Spurs Redevelopment

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## A New Face of TOD: Bus Rapid Transit

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With environmental and energy conservation concerns mounting, so has the demand for high quality public transit as an essential part of a sustainable urban future. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), with the strong support of the Federal Transit Administration, has emerged as an efficient and affordable investment concept for converting existing, traffic-clogged urban bus routes into a modern, fast, reliable service. New Jersey's large bus network, serving areas with high and medium density, is fertile ground for an evolution of Bus Rapid Transit.

Urban planners are asking whether BRT can attract economic development comparable to light rail projects, such as the Hudson-Bergen line. The evidence is just beginning to emerge that the more extensive BRT investments can serve as anchors for transit-oriented development. According to TCRP Report 102 (2004) by Cervero et al, only eight percent of TODs throughout the nation are served by bus.

Two hurdles are usually cited. One is the issue of impermanence: because bus lines can be changed or abandoned relatively easily, they are less attractive to investors. A second issue is that because BRT projects are often implemented incrementally, the absence of dramatic change in service quality may not attract investor attention. The more striking the changes associated with BRT—upgraded stations, bus shelters and dedicated lanes—the greater the sense of permanence that can often attract economic activity.

BRT can incorporate many of the most desirable features of rail transit, but each application differs. Some of the more ambitious BRT projects use buses or specialized vehicles on roadways or dedicated lanes to move passengers quickly and efficiently from one destination to another. More advanced BRT vehicles also use optical or magnetic guidance, which allow vehicles to leave stations and travel more quickly and to be spaced closer to one another.

BRT also can offer the following features:

- Frequent service
- Limited stops
- Passenger information systems that provide real-time information about arrival, departure, and travel times
- Traffic signal prioritization
- Cleaner and quieter vehicles
- Pre-boarding fare collection
- High-quality passenger facilities

When used in conjunction with smart growth land use policies, the selective application of these techniques can support transit-oriented development.

Another advantage of BRT over rail or light rail can be lower cost. However, BRT can take many forms and encompass many different kinds of improvements, making it difficult to compare costs directly. That being said, the most extensive BRT systems cite lower per mile costs than most light rail systems and all commuter rail systems. Many transit agencies do not have the resources to build rail, but may have funding to implement BRT. Additionally, since BRT encompasses a range of improvements, agencies may be able to implement improvements incrementally as funding allows.

One of the difficulties in gaining acceptance for BRT as an economic development tool among urban planners and the investment community is its relative scarcity, although the number of BRT systems is increasing both in the United States and abroad. Pittsburgh, which operates three busways (South, Martin Luther King, Jr. East and West) as well as a light rail route and commuter rail service, is perhaps the most notable example of U.S. cities that have successfully used BRT to provide transit service to its residents. The Martin Luther King, Jr. East Busway, opened in 1983 and extended in 2003, connects the downtown to the eastern suburbs of Allegheny County. Pittsburgh's transit agency, the Port Authority of Allegheny County, reports more than \$300 million in office, retail and residential development has occurred near its Martin Luther King, Jr. East Busway stations.

Other BRT systems are also showing promise, both as efficient ways for people to travel and for spurring local development. Boston, Los Angeles and Cleveland have recently embraced BRT by establishing new urban routes. (See below for a brief discussion of proposed development at Los Angeles County's El Monte Transit Hub, as well as Boston's Silver Line. Also, see our article about Cleveland's Euclid Avenue corridor, [Cleveland Moves Forward with Bus-Supported TOD](#), in the national news section.) Abroad, Bogotá, Columbia is notable as a city that has built a successful BRT system that has contributed to increased land values.

### **Bogotá, Columbia**

In 2000, Bogotá opened its BRT system, known as the TransMilenio, to improve its residents' quality of life and increase productivity in the city. TransMilenio officials have reported that their fast and reliable BRT system, which operates on a dedicated lane located in the middle of major roads and highways, has reduced travel time by 32 percent, gas emissions in the city by 40 percent, and accidents in the corridors where the system operates by 90 percent. TransMilenio has proven enormously popular; by the end of March 2002, ridership had increased to nearly 645,000 passengers per day.

Today, the system has 14 express routes and operates 18 hours a day, operating double-long red buses along most of the system. TransMilenio also runs smaller, “feeder” buses, which pick up passengers from local neighborhoods and deliver them to major stations and terminals. These feeder buses are free to TransMilenio riders.

In one of a small number of studies done examining the relationship between BRT and land values, Rodríguez and Targa found in 2004 that residents of Bogotá were willing to pay as much as 9.3 percent more for their homes in order to reduce their walking time to a BRT station by five minutes.

### Los Angeles (El Monte), California

In eastern Los Angeles County, the City of El Monte is placing its faith in bus travel as it moves forward with the Titan Group’s \$1.2 billion El Monte Transit Village development. The El Monte Bus Hub is just 14 miles east of downtown Los Angeles and among the busiest transit centers in Southern California. It serves many routes, including MTA’s Metro Express and Foothill Transit’s Silver Streak bus rapid transit line, both of which use the El Monte Busway, a high occupancy vehicle lane stretching to Los Angeles on Interstate 10.

In September 2007, the El Monte city council approved Titan’s plan and environmental impact report which includes 500,000 square feet of office space, 1,850 residential units (much of it affordable), and 560,000 square feet of commercial space, as well as a 200-room hotel and 11 acres of public parks. The Titan Group expects to break ground on what is believed to be the largest TOD in California. The developer estimates that the project will bring the city of El Monte an additional \$3.5 million in annual revenues.



**El Monte Transit Village  
Conceptual Drawing**  
Source: The Titan Group



**El Monte Preliminary Concept  
Layout of Land Uses**  
Source: The City of El Monte, CA

### Boston, Massachusetts

In Boston, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) has completed two of three sections of the Silver Line, a BRT system which features both electric and diesel vehicles. The system makes fewer stops than typical bus lines and has upgraded stations. Several infrastructure improvements, including roadway resurfacing, the widening of the brick sidewalks, and the addition of historic lighting fixtures, have also been made along the Silver Line route. The MBTA has reported that ridership on the Silver Line is 96 percent higher than it was on the previous local bus service. In addition, the authority has said that evening peak travel times have been reduced by 25 percent.

The first section of the Silver Line was opened in 2002, connecting Dudley Square with downtown Boston along Washington Street. Silver Line Phase I was designed to replace local bus service which, in turn, had replaced the elevated Orange Line, which was demolished 20 years ago. Buses travel on the street in a combined bus and right-turn only lane for the majority of the route, though they also travel in mixed traffic (general street traffic) and for a short segment, along an exclusive contraflow lane. The second phase of the Silver Line opened in 2005, connecting South Station to the South Boston Waterfront area, with three routes emanating from a main (trunk) route serving Logan International Airport, Boston Marine Industrial Park and City Point. The trunk line of Silver Line operates in an exclusive right-of-way tunnel for the mile between South Station and Boston’s World Trade Center, and in a surface right-of-way for an additional half mile to Silver Line Way.



**Boston’s Silver Line Stop**

**Source: Boston Silver Line Washington Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)  
Demonstration Project Evaluation (2005)**

A 2005 report by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) found that more than \$1.2 billion in new construction had occurred near the Phase I stations since planning began in 1997. New development and redevelopment has taken place all along the route, most heavily in Downtown/Chinatown and the South End. During this period, the Downtown/Chinatown neighborhood saw the opening of Millennium Place, a high-rise mixed use building featuring luxury rentals and extended stay apartments and Archstone Boston Common (formerly Park Essex), a building with 440 rental units over ground floor retail. The South End, where there were many vacant blocks and abandoned buildings along the Washington Street corridor, gained more than 1,700 new or renovated housing units, of which 900 are designated as affordable. The neighborhood has also gained about



The Silver Line's exclusive right-of-way tunnel.

Source: *Silver Line Waterfront Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) 2007 Project Evaluation, Boston, Massachusetts (2007)*

128,000 square feet of retail space.

A 2007 FTA evaluation of Phase II Silver Line found significant new development in the South Boston Waterfront, a former industrial area. From 1998, when the project was announced, to mid-2007 when the evaluation took place, office and retail construction had produced about 2 million square feet of development. The area has also gained more than 1,200 apartments and 800 hotel rooms. More recently (January 2008), the Marriott Renaissance Boston Waterfront Front Hotel has opened, one of 13 major projects that will add nearly nine million square feet of new development in the area.

The MBTA is currently working on plans to build a third and final phase of the system which will connect the two sections that have already been built. The Silver Line Phase III will operate in a one-mile tunnel, beginning at South Station and heading northwest beneath Essex Street. New Silver Line stations will connect with the existing Chinatown Station on the Orange Line and the Boylston Station on the Green Line.

### **BRT in New Jersey**

When discussing development opportunities associated with improved bus transit systems, planners and transit officials in New Jersey and elsewhere are increasingly considering BRT as an economically prudent alternative to rail and a far superior option to traditional bus service.

Although there are currently no BRT lines in New Jersey, Newark, which is served by nearly four dozen bus routes that carry about 250,000 passengers daily, is slated to receive a partial application on Springfield Avenue in the spring of 2008. Officials are also considering other BRT routes in Newark, including connecting Bloomfield Avenue via Broad Street to the Airport/Port area. Funding for this project is being sought from the Liberty Corridor program.

Two other BRT systems are under consideration. The Central New Jersey Route 1 BRT would operate along the Route 1 corridor between South Brunswick and Trenton. This transit enhancement has been proposed to help alleviate congestion along this busy corridor and to enhance existing transit, primarily the north-south Northeast Corridor rail route and the short spur track that connects the Princeton Junction and Princeton stations (or the Princeton "Dinky"). An alternatives analysis study completed in 2006 proposed a long-term system plan to be implemented in phases. The proposed BRT routes would connect key points along the Route 1 corridor and in outlying areas in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, with major ridership generators in the corridor. These include several large office parks, shopping malls, Princeton Borough and Princeton University.

The plan recommends exclusive BRT guideways, BRT priority improvements, development of BRT stations and park-and-ride lots outside of the Route 1 corridor. It is estimated that the BRT system would serve over 15,000 riders daily, more than doubling the number of work trips using transit. Many of these work trips would be a result of increased employment along the core of the BRT, predicted to rise by 40 percent to about 100,000 jobs by 2025. NJ TRANSIT is currently working to define the initial phase of the system.

The Greater New Brunswick BRT project is in the initial planning stages, with officials studying the potential for improved service along key corridors that include municipalities proximate to the New Brunswick rail station—Edison, Highland Park, Franklin (Somerset), North Brunswick, Piscataway and East Brunswick. Officials predict that a BRT system would increase the potential for New Brunswick by providing additional transit options for those working or living in the city.



# Transit-Friendly Development

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## A Housing Market Perspective of Transit-Oriented Development

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With the deep slump in New Jersey's housing market, despite mortgage rates holding at 30-year lows, one bright spot remains—locations that are transit-rich. That was the analysis of Jeffrey Otteau, president of [Otteau Valuation Group, Inc.](#), a well-regarded real estate appraisal and research group, during a presentation at the 2007 NJ State League of Municipalities Conference.

According to Otteau, New Jersey is part of the national housing affordability crisis arising out of exaggerated home prices, spurred by low interest rates. Median home prices in the state have risen since the early 1970s from about \$75,000 to nearly \$400,000 in 2005. In 1999, a family earning the median income could more than afford to put down 20 percent and make their payments on a 30-year fixed rate loan, but that is not true today. Today, one out of every six residents spends more than half of their income on monthly housing expenses, and the average New Jersey resident suffers the second highest monthly housing costs in the nation.

The housing affordability gap between prices and personal resources has been aggravated by lagging personal income and the state's loss of high paying jobs. Some indicators for the immediate future do not look promising, Otteau contended, such as a dimming employment picture, a poor business tax climate and accelerated outward migration of affluent residents.

Factors driving this jump in housing prices are numerous. One of them is that the urban housing market, particularly in Manhattan, has remained strong. Manhattan's outsized housing prices, amounting to \$1,100 per square foot, allows home sellers in the surrounding suburbs to exact premium prices from potential home buyers who are leaving Manhattan and considering New Jersey as a residential location. (This factor points to transit-rich locations, particularly those served by rail, holding, and likely remaining, as the strongest element in the state's residential market.)

A second factor is the ever-decreasing availability of land in New Jersey. Land prices in the state are among the highest in the nation. The amount of land for home construction is constrained by state and federal environmental regulations, municipal development constraints and down-zoning, except for age-restricted units. A third factor is high construction costs. A fourth factor is above average costs, such as property taxes and insurance. NJ residents pay the highest per capita taxes in the United States. In addition, monthly housing costs in NJ are 53 percent higher than the national average.

### Where the Housing Market is Growing

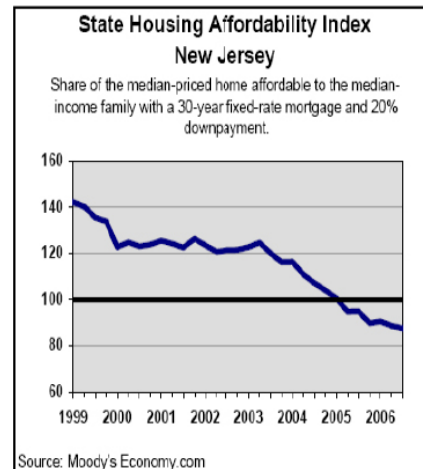
Affected by the strength of the Manhattan housing market, as well as a national trend showing distinct preferences among 20-somethings and baby boomers for live-work-play locations such as New Jersey, the one bright spot in this slumping sector is housing in transit-rich locations. While expensive suburban homes languish on the market, with 48 weeks of inventory, housing near locations with excellent rail connections to Manhattan is flourishing with less than a six-month supply of unsold homes. These markets include Glen Ridge and Montclair on the Montclair-Boonton Line; South Orange Village, Maplewood, Millburn, Summit and New Providence on the Morris & Essex Gladstone Branch; and Roselle Park, Cranford, Westfield and Fanwood, with stations on the Raritan Valley Line.

### Approaching the European Experience

Given the challenge of purchasing a home in the state, the housing market in New Jersey is becoming much more like that in Europe. The age of first time home buyers is rising as many postpone buying a home until their forties. Affordability has also constrained mobility—the average period of ownership is now 10 years and rising. To manage rising prices, 40-year mortgages are becoming more common and 50-year mortgages are on the horizon. The corollary of the home ownership market is the rental market. Rental demand is growing with an expanded and more affluent renter population as people with good salaries find that they still can't get into the home ownership market. As a result, a luxury rental market is emerging in the state.

Housing built near rail offers a real solution to this squeeze. Higher density construction and smaller unit size helps to boost affordability. These locations primarily attract young professionals and aging baby boomers, households with few school-aged children. Smaller units, studios and one-bedroom apartments, are thus the most desirable. Living in a location with excellent transit allows residents to lower monthly costs by trading transportation costs for housing. This has been borne out in recent studies that have found that those living in transit-rich locations tend to own fewer vehicles and use their vehicles less. Mixed-use development near transit delivers lifestyles that consumers seek and spurs activity in our state's downtowns.

Efforts to improve rail service reinforce this market. For example, the Trans-Hudson Express Tunnel (THE Tunnel) should serve to push the value of rail-served development higher at locations benefiting from improved service.



A reading of 100 means a family earning the state median family income (reported by the Census Bureau) can qualify for a mortgage on a typical median-priced existing single-family home, assuming a 20% down payment. An index above 100 signifies that a family earning the median income more than qualifies for a mortgage loan on a median-priced home. This index has been declining in New Jersey since 1999. In 2005, such a family could no longer afford to purchase a median priced home in the state.



## Recommended Reading

January 2008

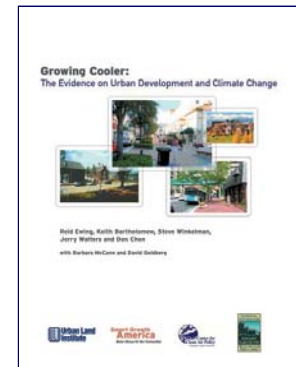
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### Growing Cooler: The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change (2007)

By Reid Ewing, Keith Bartholomew, Steve Winkelman, Jerry Walters and Don Chen  
with Barbara McCann and David Goldberg  
The Urban Land Institute, 2007

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) has issued this report to address growth and developmental strategies designed to curb greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. "Growing Cooler..." makes the case for reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as an important and neglected component of GHG reduction. The high level of energy use (and resulting emissions) attributed to the massive growth in VMT alone makes smart growth and transit-oriented development policies increasingly important as part of an overall solution, together with vehicle efficiency and fuel content changes, to reduce GHG emissions. Both regional growth simulations and project-level simulations point to density, especially infill development, as a key component in plans to reduce VMT and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The report contains useful policy recommendations for federal, state, and local governments. On the federal level, the authors advocate new Green-TEA legislation to bring about greater GHG accountability, fund existing infrastructure repairs, and orient transportation agency funding structures toward performance-oriented GHG reduction goals. States are asked to set goals for VMT reduction and meet these goals by reducing single-occupant commutes and by providing grant and technical assistance to local VMT reduction plans. Changes to development rules and approvals, such as smart growth tax incentives and ending the competitive "Fiscalization of Land Use," are ways to address these goals on the local stage. These recommendations provide useful starting points for policy discussions at all levels.



[Click for link](#)



[Click for pdf](#)

### Bursting the Bubble: Determining Transit-Oriented Development's Walkable Limits (2007)

By Brian Canepa, Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates  
Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board, No. 1992  
Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, Washington, D.C., 2007, pp. 28–34

Canepa challenges the "half-mile circle" that currently defines the limit of transit-oriented development by examining new research that cites variability in this assumption. The report underscores the importance of higher pedestrian levels of service (LOS) in expanding the walkable limits of TOD. Along with street connectivity, Canepa observes that the presence of "an aesthetic urban setting" is the greatest factor in increasing the distance that transit users will walk. He cites smaller block size, an abundance of street trees, and graffiti-free sidewalks as factors contributing to attractive streetscapes and longer walking distances. When such improvements are made, Canepa writes, the area of intensive development can be tripled in size. He also states that such improvements should be a key consideration in comprehensive transit-oriented planning.

### Strengths and Weakness of Bus in Relation to Transit Oriented Development (2005)

By Graham Currie  
Institute of Transport Studies, Monash University, Australia

Currie offers a frank assessment of the strengths and weakness of bus transit-oriented development (BTOD) and discusses many of the issues confronting BTOD. These issues include flexibility, parking, permanence, service frequency, and unfamiliarity with this form of TOD. He observes that while bus rapid transit has strong and relatively unexplored promise for TOD in high density regions, suburban local bus transport—which Currie terms "lower order" bus services—shows only limited, though still positive, potential for TOD. Currie asserts that several challenges must be addressed if BTOD is to reach its potential. Bus travel must be de-stigmatized, the lack of transit agency staffing dedicated to BTOD must be addressed and the

absence of interest and/or capacity in the bus industry must be overcome before BTOD can be a strong development strategy. Currie also highlights the issue of "scale dilution" as it affects BTOD. Local bus transit, serving a large number of stops, provides only limited support to development activity. However BRT service, like rail, tends to concentrate such activity. He notes though that the large number of bus stop locations creates greater choice for riders and supports development throughout a region.

Click here for a [pdf](#) of the paper.

Complete List of [Recommended Readings](#)

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## Towers to Rise in Journal Square

The Jersey City Planning Board has granted final site plan approval for the construction of two mixed-used towers on a 1.5-acre site immediately adjacent to the Journal Square PATH station on the old Hotel on the Square block. Journal Square is a designated "Transit Village" under the NJDOT-sponsored program. Recent designs call for a 38-story south tower and a 58-story north tower housing a total of 1,500 studio, 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom apartments above two stories of retail and five stories of parking.



Journal Square City Center Towers  
Source: Jersey City Redevelopment Agency

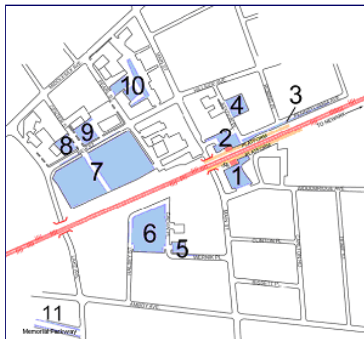
The stage was set this summer when the national real estate equity fund, [Multi-Employer Property Trust](#) of Baltimore, joined the project as a majority partner of Jersey City's Harwood Properties. The Connecticut architecture and planning firm of [Becker+Becker](#) has also joined the project. In 2006, the [Jersey City Redevelopment Agency](#) condemned the property, later reaching an agreement to purchase the property for \$2.1 million, an amount that will be reimbursed to the city per the redeveloper agreement.

A surface parking lot and one-story retail stores are currently on site. Most tenants have already relocated to nearby sites; the last tenants are scheduled to vacate by the end of the year.

Demolition is expected next spring with construction to begin in early summer. The north tower is planned to be completed before the south tower with the first housing units to be available in 2010.

## Metuchen Takes its Next Step

Metuchen, the "hole in the donut" of Edison Township, has a lot going for it—a compact and successful downtown adjacent to its rail station, good schools and attractive historic housing. Located on the Northeast Corridor line in central New Jersey, commuters are able to reach Newark and New York to the north and New Brunswick, Princeton, Trenton and Philadelphia to the south. Many commuters use the Metuchen station each day. The borough has devoted more than 1,400 surface parking spaces to commuter parking, with three lots located at the corner of Center and New streets providing more than 750 spaces.



Parking lots in Metuchen  
Courtesy of NJ TRANSIT

The borough has a history of paying attention to the details that make a transit-friendly community work and recognizes that redevelopment is a continuing process. Since the early 1980s, plans have been in place for downtown Metuchen which encourage more intensive use of the several large parking lots. The master plan calls for structured parking to replace the current surface lots. Enhancements to improve the competitiveness of the business district have been implemented since the 1970s, when the borough's Main Street businesses started to suffer as customers were drawn to malls in nearby Edison (Menlo Park) and Woodbridge (Woodbridge Mall). The Main Street business district, from the train station to Middlesex Avenue (Route 27), includes several specialty retailers and restaurants. Infill development at Franklin Square brought 105 new residences to the community in 2002.

Recently, Metuchen received a Smart Future grant of \$50,000 to continue its public outreach efforts in support of redevelopment. Several days of workshops/charettes were held that focused on the New Street corridor—the street that connects Metuchen's Main Street and Lake Avenue (Route 27)—and the parking lots located along New Street and the rail line, including the Center and New street lots.

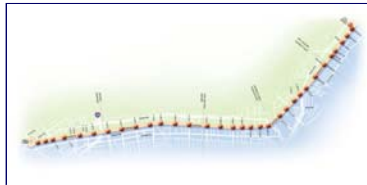
On September 23, residents, officials and planners participated in a "Benchmarking Tour," visiting several central New Jersey locations to gain inspiration and ideas about possibilities that could be transplanted to their neighborhood. The following day, local business leaders met with state and borough officials to discuss how the New Street corridor could be improved to enhance the business environment. [Main Street New Jersey](#) (a part of the NJ Office of Smart Growth) presented ideas for an improvement district that would benefit the entire borough and include existing Main Street businesses as well as new businesses in the redevelopment area.

On September 25, planning officials hosted an open house where discussions focused on circulation, public spaces, streetscapes, building types and activity programming. At the final event on September 26, planners from the firm of [Looney Ricks Kiss](#) presented a draft downtown design and circulation plan, as well as draft design guidelines for the New Street corridor.

Local concerns brought up during the meetings were economic vitality, congestion, preservation of existing parking, and expanding local services in a way that would complement local business activity. Transportation discussions involving the NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT and Borough officials focused on traffic calming measures, such as adding one or possibly two roundabouts and/or a median on Middlesex Avenue (Route 27).

## Cleveland Moves Forward with Bus-Supported TOD

Cleveland has big plans for the Euclid Avenue Corridor. Once known as “millionaires’ row,” Euclid Avenue degenerated into an example of extreme urban blight, but is now experiencing a tremendous renewal, thanks in large part to the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority’s (GCRTA) [Euclid Corridor Transportation Project](#). This \$200 million plus project is a 9.8-mile Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system known as the Silver Line. The project is nearing completion with the grand opening scheduled for October 25, 2008 when the Silver Line will be substantially completed and its first service operation will begin. The system will become fully operational in December 2008.



Euclid Corridor Transportation Project

[Click for pdf \(5.1 MB\)](#)

The Silver Line will utilize a network of stations in street medians that will allow level boarding and off-board fare collection. Other operational features will include precision docking, traffic signal prioritization, real time passenger information, frequent service and corridor “branding.” The GCRTA has already made significant improvements to promote a pedestrian-friendly environment along Euclid Avenue—new and expanded street lighting, landscaping and street trees, sidewalks and pedestrian-friendly signage. Use of the stations has been phased in, coming online as construction is completed. Passengers board using newly constructed platforms. The current 40-foot buses will be replaced by new 63-foot articulated hybrid New Flyer buses that are currently in production. The GCRTA has estimated that by 2025, 29,500 passengers will ride the line each day.

Redevelopment and new construction projects abound along the corridor with more than four dozen separate projects, more than 95 percent of which have already been completed in anticipation of the BRT. Development has been supported by different sponsors, ranging from small local developers handling the redevelopment of one or two properties, to extensive new complexes being built by the Cleveland Clinic in the Fairfax/Cleveland Clinic district, nearly four miles to the east of Public Square, and by Case Western Reserve University in [University Circle](#). For example, redevelopment has occurred throughout the historic Gateway District, located immediately east of Public Square, where a local developer has converted several long empty buildings into mixed-use residential over retail properties.

In the coming year, the Cleveland Clinic will complete construction on its new [Heart and Vascular Institute](#). The \$475 million complex will be the largest facility at the clinic and is expected to bring 1,500 new jobs to the city. It will serve as the new gateway to the Cleveland Clinic and will be easily accessible to the new BRT at the East 93rd Station located across Euclid Avenue.

In addition, Case Western Reserve continues to revitalize the University Circle neighborhood at the eastern end of Euclid Avenue. The university’s \$150 million Uptown Arts and Retail District will include 80,000 square feet of retail space, approximately 300 residential units (condos and apartments) and structured parking. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2008. Also, Cleveland’s Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) plans to lease land from the university for its new 35,000-square foot facility, to be located at the corner of Euclid Avenue and Mayfield Road near the Cornell Road station, 4.7 miles from Public Square. The Euclid Avenue Silver Line will introduce BRT to the site and to the University Circle community which are already served by light rail service.

According to the GCRTA, the projected economic impact by 2025 of the entire project will be:

- 7.9 million sq. ft. in commercial development
- 5400 + new or renovated residential units
- \$1.3 billion in capital investments
- \$62.1 million in annual local taxes
- \$1.98 million in annual GCRTA sales tax revenues
- 13,000 new jobs

A dedicated transitway will stretch from Public Square in the city’s central business district and pass University Circle near the Cleveland-East Cleveland border, connecting the region’s two largest employment districts. The BRT route will continue eastward to the Rapid Transit Louis Stokes Station at Windermere in East Cleveland. Key funding sources for the initiative include: the GCRTA, Federal Transit Administration, Ohio Department of Transportation, City of Cleveland and Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency.



Courtesy of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority  
Photo credit: Lorie Beabes

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Courtesy of Sasaki Associates, Inc.

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### NY Governor Creates Smart Growth Cabinet

Governor Eliot Spitzer recently created a New York Smart Growth Cabinet to review state agency spending and policies to determine how best to discourage sprawl and promote smart land use practices. Consisting of high-level policymakers from the Empire State Development Corporation and the departments of Environmental Conservation, Transportation, State, and Housing and Community Renewal, the Cabinet will coordinate cross-agency activities and develop "smart growth" policies that cater to New York's unique regional needs.

Governor Spitzer has appointed several agency leaders with first-hand experience in smart growth: Transportation Commissioner Astrid C. Glynn implemented Massachusetts's smart growth program; Upstate Economic Development Chair Dan Gundersen worked on smart growth initiatives in Pennsylvania and Maryland; Deputy Secretary of State for Local Governments Robert Elliott advanced smart growth initiatives in the Hudson Valley as Mayor of Croton-on-Hudson and President of the New York Planning Federation; and Environmental Conservation Commissioner Pete Grannis advocated smart growth and sustainable development as a lawmaker for three decades.

### Beacon Embraces Transit-Oriented Development

The city of Beacon, located 60 miles north of New York City, continues with efforts to develop near its newly modernized rail station. On October 30, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) issued a Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) for "Be in Beacon," a transit-oriented development project at its Metro-North Railroad (MNR) station located on the Hudson riverfront. The MTA is looking for qualified developers interested in designing and building a mixed-use TOD on an 18-acre property currently used for commuter parking, MNR offices and commercial and light industrial buildings. This is the first ever TOD project undertaken by MNR. In mid-December the agency hosted representatives from more than 50 interested companies for an extensive tour of the site and surrounding community.



Parking lot at the Metro-North Beacon station which will be redeveloped  
Courtesy of the PCAC

With a population of nearly 14,000, Beacon has experienced a revival in recent years as a result of concerted efforts by city officials and Metro-North. (See the [July 2007 issue](#) of Transit-Friendly Development Newsletter). To help move the project forward, the city recently rezoned the property for TOD. The RFEI will help the MTA formulate a Request for Proposal (RFP) that will be used to select a developer. Final responses to the RFEI are due to the MTA by February 7, 2008.

[Click here](#) for a pdf of the RFEI. A slide show from the [Be In Beacon](#) tour is also available.

### Gov. Corzine Signs Urban Transit Hub Tax Credit Act

Governor Jon Corzine has signed the Urban Transit Hub Tax Credit Act in an effort to encourage redevelopment and job growth at locations served by transit. Conceived by the Governor's Office of Economic Growth and passed by the Legislature in December, the statute establishes a tax credit program for qualifying businesses that make capital investments and increase employment around targeted urban rail transit hubs. The act stipulates that a business can qualify for up to \$75 million in tax credits (corporate business tax, insurance premium tax or gross income tax liability credits for up to 10 years) to cover the costs of investing in facilities within a designated urban transit hub and which employ at least 250 people. The state Commerce Commission will designate sites that qualify, generally located within a half-mile radius of rail stations. The program targets municipalities that are eligible for urban aid, have at least 30 percent of real property value exempt from property taxes, have property base wealth measured as equalized valuation under \$100,000 per capita and have a commuter rail station. Nine municipalities qualify—Camden, East Orange, Elizabeth, Jersey City, Newark, New Brunswick, Paterson, Trenton and Hoboken.

### Redevelopment plans for Beverly and Edgewater Park

A planning study and intensive public participation process, sponsored by Burlington County, have produced a proposal to build approximately 200 new residential units and between 25,000- and 30,000 square feet of new commercial space near the Beverly/Edgewater Park RiverLine station. Presented to the public in October, the plan is part of Burlington County's effort to revitalize communities along the RiverLine/Route 130 corridor.

Transit-oriented development surrounding this station is challenging for two reasons: the site, currently occupied by vacant underutilized buildings, is located in two different municipalities; also, the site is a half-mile distant from each municipality's downtown. The plan specifically calls for the development of a transit-oriented village with residences to be marketed to aging baby boomers and older couples approaching retirement. The commercial space would likely be used for small cafes, restaurants and retail stores. The residential and commercial space would be built in both Beverly and Edgewater Park. The study will also recommend streetscape improvements to be made along the half-mile section of Cooper Street that connects the station and downtown Beverly in order to encourage people to walk between the downtown and the light rail station.

The process began in September 2006 when representatives from [Whitman, Reguardt & Associates](#) (WR&A) of Wilmington, DE, an engineering, architecture and planning firm, gathered input from residents and public officials in both communities. [Basile Baumann Prost Cole & Associates](#), an economics and real estate development advisory firm, has also been involved in the process.

"This was a very highly public-driven process," said Jeff Riegner, of WR&A. "We got some practical stuff, some crazy stuff and some stuff in-between. Residents really want development that is going to build on some of the neat, small-town fabric that Beverly has right now."

Both Riegner and Mark Remsa, the county's director of planning and economic development, said the plan has been well received by the public. Because Beverly is only 0.6 square miles, Remsa said the entire community has the potential to be transit-oriented. The Beverly City Council recently adopted a [redemption plan](#), which includes many of the zoning and other changes needed to implement the recommendations made in the study. Remsa said the next step is for officials in Edgewater Park to adopt a similar plan for their community.

"You don't get buy-in from a community unless there is public participation," Riegner said. "These plans never work unless the community owns them. Although this started as a county effort, I believe this became a town effort by virtue of the participation they had."

A copy of the presentation, as well as maps and renderings of the area, can be found on the Burlington County Department of Economic Development and Regional Planning website at: [www.co.burlington.nj.us/departments/economic](http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/departments/economic)

### Somerville Plans Move Forward

Somerville has taken another step to develop the 160-acre landfill site near its Raritan Valley train station. In September, the borough approved a new plan for the site that includes 1,200 housing units, office or R&D facilities, a 50-room hotel, cinema, retail and civic space, as well as parking. The plan is the product of [Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates](#). The borough has issued an RFQ/P seeking parties interested in pursuing the project. Qualifications and Proposals are due by March 14th, 2008.

Redevelopment of the landfill site is one part of Somerville's efforts to redevelop several neighborhoods proximate to its train station. The Borough has also been working on plans for the Landmark (West Main Street Area) and East End districts; revisions to redevelopment plans for each neighborhood have recently been presented to the planning board. Also as part of its redevelopment efforts, Somerville has recently been accepted into the [Main Street New Jersey](#) program—a state initiative that promotes the historic and economic redevelopment of traditional business districts.

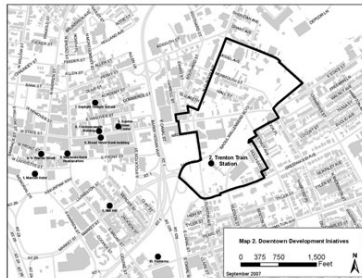
For more information, see our [July 2007](#) newsletter or Somerville's Redevelopment [website](#).

## Renewed Trenton Station Spurs Redevelopment

With funding from the [Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission](#), Trenton has embarked on plans to redevelop the area around its train station, one of the busiest on the Atlantic seaboard and the southern terminus of NJ TRANSIT's Northeast Corridor commuter operations. The station connects those services with Amtrak intercity service to New York, Philadelphia, Washington D.C. and Boston, as well as SEPTA local service to Philadelphia. The station also provides a convenient connection (across the street) to the RiverLine which provides frequent light rail service to Burlington and Camden counties, including connections to PATCO service to Philadelphia. A major renovation of the station has been underway since 2005 with work to be completed by mid-2008. Attention is now being turned to the surrounding area.



Trenton Station  
Courtesy of dDP



Trenton Station Redevelopment Area

[Click to enlarge](#)

The city has received responses to its recently issued RFP for the Trenton Train Station Redevelopment Area. The RFP adopted "TOD-type redevelopment goals" and calls for market feasibility and demand analysis, as well as an urban design component. The plan encourages higher density, mixed-use development adjacent to the station to increase opportunities for employment, strategic parking reductions, retail and entertainment uses as well as a variety of housing types. Bill Valocchi, supervising planner for the City of Trenton, says the development will be "destination-type, high density, mixed-use, and transit-oriented...things that make environmental sense."

Redevelopment in New Jersey's capital city is already underway. Recent projects within a half-mile radius of the station include 22 new single family homes in the landmark [Mill Hill](#) neighborhood and the conversion of the 12-story [Broad Street Bank](#), Trenton's first skyscraper, for first floor retail and office space and 124 1- and 2-bedroom rentals. Occupancy is planned for January 2008. Ongoing projects include the Trenton Town Center, a mixed-use complex consisting of retail, office, residential condominiums and structured parking located one-half mile from the train station, and the South Warren Street Revitalization project, the transformation of the former Carousel Cleaner building into a mixed-use residential and retail property.