



May 2009
Volume 5, Number 1

Welcome to Volume 5, 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.

It's official. After a decade of planning, work is set to begin on the new rail tunnels under the Hudson River. In this issue, we discuss this project, known as the Access to the Region's Core (ARC), and how it is likely to reshape our region. When completed in 2017, ARC will double the number of trains that can travel between New Jersey and Manhattan, and provide, for the first time, a one-seat ride to many of the state's rail towns. It will also bring change—the time to plan for which is now.

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.

Thanks for reading and we hope you enjoy!

Click here for a [PDF](#) file of the entire newsletter (370 KB). Get [Adobe Acrobat](#) here.

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ARC to bring TOD opportunities to NJ's rail towns

After more than a decade of planning, a much-needed new passenger rail tunnel underneath the Hudson River connecting NJ and NYC is becoming a reality. We examine why NJ's communities need to plan for this increased rail capacity.



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](#))



Tell Us What You Think!

Let us know what you liked and didn't like in this issue.

Send your comments, criticisms and ideas for future articles to: vtc@policy.rutgers.edu

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ARC to bring TOD opportunities to NJ's rail towns

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After more than a decade of planning and hoping, a pair of much needed new passenger rail tunnels underneath the Hudson River connecting New Jersey and New York City is becoming a reality, bringing a one-seat ride into Manhattan a step closer for thousands of New Jersey commuters. The \$8.7 billion project, referred to as Access to the Region's Core (ARC), is the first of its kind in a century—the type of large “mega project” mass transit investment that can transform a region. In 2017 when ARC opens for service, its new tracks will more than double the number of trains that can travel beneath the Hudson, allowing up to 48 trains per hour to travel between New Jersey and New York. Currently, only 23 trains can make the trip each hour. This additional train service is expected to eliminate 22,000 automobile trips a day. The project will also create a huge new six-track station under 34th Street in Midtown Manhattan adjacent New York Penn Station with convenient connections to all of Manhattan's west side subway lines.

Project Map



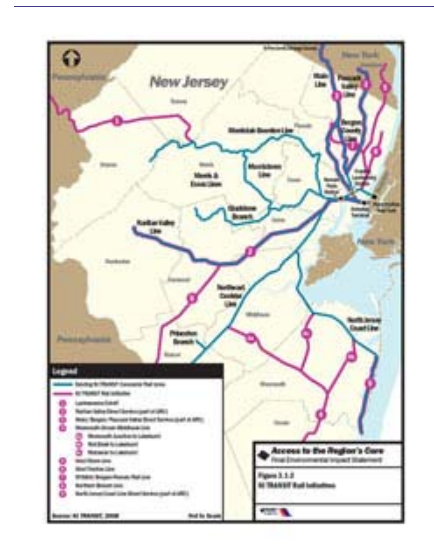
Location of ARC

ARC, the first new link between New Jersey and New York City since the lower deck of the George Washington Bridge opened in 1962, represents the type of far-reaching infrastructure project that demonstrates how important public transit is to maintaining and enhancing the region's vitality. The project is one of a number of major transit expansion projects currently underway in the region, including the Long Island Rail Road's East Side Access project, the first phase of the Second Avenue Subway, and the extension of the Number 7 subway line to Manhattan's far west side development zone. In doing so, the New York metropolitan area is providing vital arteries that will help ensure its economic health in the 21st century.

The Federal Transit Administration in March issued a key approval enabling construction to begin and NJ TRANSIT and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey put the first contracts out to bid soon after. The first construction project is about to begin in North Bergen with a rail underpass beneath Routes 1 & 9. Tunneling will follow soon after within Manhattan. New Jersey assigned \$130 million of its federal transit stimulus funds towards the project. The project is being promoted as a major job generator: 6,000 construction jobs over the next 10 years and an estimated 44,000 permanent jobs—many of which will be filled by those commuting from New Jersey. As it stands now, the Port Authority has committed \$3 billion to the project, NJ TRANSIT has secured \$1.5 billion, and an additional \$1.25 billion will come from New Jersey toll road revenues. The federal government is expected to fund the remaining \$3 billion. In another sign of federal support for the project, President Obama's 2010 budget proposal includes an “Early Systems Work Agreement” for ARC and an additional \$200 million in funding.

The project can play a crucial role in laying the groundwork for transit-oriented development in rail towns throughout the state. ARC can replicate the experience of NJ TRANSIT's MidTOWN DIRECT service which dramatically boosted housing demand and home values and encouraged TOD near stations thanks to the introduction of one-seat service to Manhattan. ARC has the potential to do the same, but on a grander scale by providing one-seat service from virtually every one of NJ TRANSIT's railroad train stations into midtown Manhattan. Once ARC is complete, the following rail lines will receive direct (transfer-free) service to Penn Station New York and the new 34th Street station, as well as increased service:

- Main Line
- Bergen County Line
- Pascack Valley Line
- Raritan Valley Line
- Port Jervis Line
- North Jersey Coast Line (points south of Long Branch)
- Morristown Line (points west of Dover)
- Boonton Line (points west of Montclair State University)



Possible One-Seat Services and New Lines

[Click to enlarge](#)

The following rail lines will get more frequent and express service:

- Northeast Corridor
- North Jersey Coast Line (Long Branch and northward)
- Morristown Line (Dover and eastward)
- Montclair Line (east of Montclair State University)
- Gladstone Branch

The project will enable NJ TRANSIT to increase train frequencies for off-peak and weekend service, offering riders the convenience of using rail to destinations such as New York, Newark's Prudential and Performing Arts centers, the Meadowlands Sports Complex, the Jersey Shore, and the state's universities. In addition, ARC has the potential to open up options for new train lines to be built in the future.

The tunnel offers other profound economic and lifestyle benefits. Communities along all of New Jersey's rail lines will have the opportunity over the next eight years to carefully consider and proactively plan for what the future with ARC will bring. By planning for more intensive mixed-use development within walking distance of their train stations, New Jersey's rail towns can prepare to meet the needs of the majority of households by providing a lifestyle less dependent on auto use. ARC ought to be the impetus for rail municipalities to create compact, walkable neighborhoods centered on an even more useful and convenient NJ TRANSIT rail system. Those communities that are prepared for the changes that ARC will bring will be more likely to benefit from its impact.

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Recommended Reading

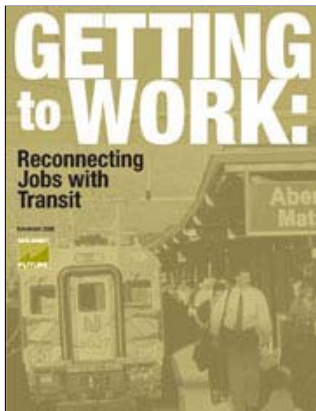
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Getting to Work: Reconnecting Jobs with Transit (2008)

By [Tim Evans](#)
[New Jersey Future](#)

The policy and research group, New Jersey Future, recently released *Getting to Work*, a report by research director Tim Evans, documenting the commuting habits of New Jersey residents and demonstrating the important connection between the state's pattern of employment locations and its transportation challenges. (For full disclosure, Evans is a member of our editorial board.) In *Getting to Work*, Evans examines data drawn from both national sources—the 2000 Census, the 2006 American Community Survey, US Bureau of Labor Statistics and US Department of Transportation—and state sources, such as the New Jersey Department of Labor and NJ TRANSIT.



[Click for link](#)

According to Evans' analysis, New Jersey residents experience the third longest commute times and their time spent traveling to work is growing more rapidly than elsewhere in the nation. Evans finds that many of the state's historic, dense and transit-friendly job centers have been forsaken, with the notable exception of Jersey City, as job growth moved to suburban office parks. Commute destinations have been, and continue to be, spread out as the number of major workplace destinations grows. This decentralization of employment results in an omni-directional rush hour that inhibits carpooling and effective public transit. Worse still, some of the older job centers, often possessing good transit access, have actually been losing jobs, contributing to their economic plight. The redistribution of employment to car-dependent office parks also undermines state policy goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, because such destinations draw more cars onto the road, increasing average vehicle miles traveled.

One hopeful circumstance is that New Jersey has an extensive rail transit system in place and a workforce willing to use transit—provided it takes them where they need to go. Evans contends that the focus of transit-oriented development has largely been on higher density residential uses, but that employment-related uses near transit hubs are at least as important in achieving New Jersey's policy goals. The report recommends the state take a more active role in recentralizing jobs around transit- and pedestrian-friendly locations.

TOD 202: Station Area Planning: How to Make Great Transit-Oriented Places (2008)

By [Reconnecting America's Center for Transit-Oriented Development](#)

In a follow up to its *TOD 101: Why Transit-Oriented Development and Why Now?*, Reconnecting America's Center for Transit-Oriented Development has produced *TOD 202: Station Area Planning: How to Make Great Transit-Oriented Places*. This handbook is designed to promote best practices in transit-oriented development by simplifying the complex decisions involved in planning for TOD. This concise guide has two distinct parts: a typology of TOD place types designed to distinguish the unique characteristics of TOD places and a guide to station-area planning principles. The typology describes seven distinct place types—defined by size, density, building type and use—along with advice on how to identify these TOD types. Accompanying illustrations, as well as characteristic and development matrices, help the reader understand the nuances of place-specific TOD. The second part provides a checklist for important station-area planning principles, such as creating meaningful community involvement and managing parking effectively. Examples provided throughout the text demonstrate these planning principles in action.



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[Complete List of Recommended Readings](#)

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TOD Conference News

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Downtown New Jersey 2009 Annual Conference

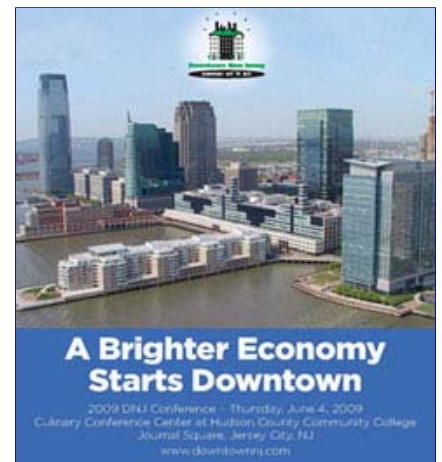
June 4, 2009
Culinary Conference Center at Hudson County Community College
Journal Square, Jersey City

The 2009 Downtown New Jersey Conference, "A Brighter Economy Starts Downtown" will be held in Jersey City at Journal Square. Journal Square is one of the state's 19 Transit Villages, and the focus of the city's Vision Journal Square redevelopment plan. See our [December 2008 issue](#) for more information.

Jeffrey Otteau, president of Otteau Valuation Group, Inc., will provide the keynote: "Economic Recovery: It's Starting Downtown." Mr. Otteau has been a featured author in this newsletter. See our December 2008 issue for his article "Transit-Oriented Housing—Shelter in a Storm?" Also invited are Governor Jon Corzine and Former US Attorney Chris Christie.

The sessions will include:

- New Retailers and Restaurants for a Changing Economy: Who are They? and How to Attract Them to Your Downtown?
- Incentives for Developers: The Pros & Cons of PILOTs, Abatements, and other Inducements
- One Tunnel, Lots of Trains, Coming to Your Downtown: Will You Be Ready?
- Money? Any Money? How to Find Short-term Credit and Long-term Loans to Put People to Work in Your Downtown
- Higher Education Institutions: Is There a Role for Them in Your Downtown?
- Bricks to Clicks: Getting Merchants and SIDs Online & Selling



The day will end with a reception at the historic Landmark Loew's Jersey Theater in the heart of Journal Square.

Downtown New Jersey, Inc. is a resource to all of those interested in supporting the state's downtowns and business districts. For more information about the organization and the 2009 conference, see the [Downtown New Jersey website](#).

Rail~Volution 2009 Rides into Boston

October 30-November 1, 2009
Westin Waterfront Hotel
Boston, Massachusetts

Rail~Volution—a conference for those who believe strongly in how land use and transit can create greater livability and greater communities—will be held for the first time in Boston. The conference will bring together practitioners of all kinds interested in:

- Innovative approaches to transit and other alternative forms of transportation
- Best practices for land use and transit from around the U.S. and beyond
- Planning for future growth in their community

The conference will include hands-on workshops that feature case studies and how-to discussions; symposia that provide in-depth explorations of issues facing every community; and inspiring plenary sessions that showcase some of the best livability minds in the country and the world—all for attendees to return home with a palette of new ideas and a toolbox of new strategies for making communities more livable.



Rail-Volution began in 1989 as a series of outreach and advocacy events geared towards developing advocates for the Portland, OR metropolitan region's MAX Light Rail System. In 1995 Rail-Volution became a national conference—the only one of its kind—focused on land use and transit issues and their affect on communities.

For more information, see the [Rail-Volution website](http://www.railvolution.com) or send an inquiry to: info@railvolution.com

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Cranford Advances Riverfront Project

The township of Cranford, situated 15 miles from New York City on NJ TRANSIT's Raritan Valley Line, has been focusing on downtown issues for over two decades since it gained the first state-designated downtown Special Improvement District (SID) in the 1980s. Designated a Transit Village by the NJ Department of Transportation in 2003, the township has focused in the past few years on realizing plans developed in the early 1990s for a Victorian-themed streetscape redesign, and subsequent plans to prioritize downtown redevelopment and business recruitment. These plans included several pedestrian safety initiatives and transit-friendly developments in the downtown.

One of these efforts, a redevelopment project called Riverfront, is currently underway, and promises to bring more businesses and housing into downtown. The Riverfront project would revitalize a nearly three-acre site bordered by South Avenue, High Street and Chestnut Street that included a warehouse, an abandoned gas station, and a junk yard. In December 1998, the site was identified as an area in need of redevelopment. Located between the Cranford station and the Rahway River, Riverfront will provide new retail, condominium, and office space.



Riverfront Site

Note: Cranford Station located north of the site

In late 2008, Cranford signed a redevelopment agreement with Garden Homes, which made numerous presentations to the community regarding the details of the project's progress and design. Current plans call for 106 housing units (including 16 COAH-designated units to meet affordable housing requirements), 22,000 square feet of retail space, 14,000 square feet of office space, and two large public plazas—one along the Rahway River and another between the planned mixed-use buildings on South Avenue. Garden Homes has been preparing detailed engineering and architectural drawings, as well as working on environmental permits in cooperation with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, due to the site's proximity to the Rahway River. Construction is expected to begin in the next 12 to 18 months.

Another large piece of Cranford's effort to develop around transit is the award-winning Cranford Crossing project, recently completed by Westminster Communities. The mixed-use development features 50 condominiums, 22,000 square feet of retail space, and a large municipally owned parking garage providing over 300 parking spaces to commuters,

shoppers, retailers, and residents. Located just a block from the station, Cranford Crossing is the largest downtown development project undertaken in Cranford in a century and is located at the center of the township's SID. Currently, 30 percent of Cranford Crossing's retail space has been filled, and two businesses are in negotiations for space. The project's housing has been an unquestioned success – when still under construction, the developer had a list of over 1,300 interested parties for the 50 rental units. As of April 2009, 48 out of 50 units were rented.



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Denver Links Affordable Housing with Transit

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in February granted \$250,000 to Denver and awarded \$2 million in low interest loans to Enterprise Community Partners to help preserve and provide affordable rental housing for working families near public transit. Using the loans, Enterprise will capitalize the startup of the Denver Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) fund to finance the preservation and creation of more than 1,200 units of affording housing within one-half mile of existing and new rail service, and within one-quarter mile of high-frequency bus routes. The MacArthur Foundation funds will be used to leverage additional private capital; currently \$15 million in pledged investment has been devoted to the fund. The grant to Denver will enable the city's Office of Economic Development to establish a national model of public-private partnerships linking housing and transit development.

These funds are part of MacArthur's "Window of Opportunity" initiative, a 10-year, \$150 million effort to improve at least 300,000 affordable rental homes nationwide, as well as bring about policy reforms to preserve a total of a million homes. In the current round of grants, the MacArthur Foundation is distributing \$32.5 million nationwide to preserve more than 70,000 affordable homes. The program is designed to counter affordable housing losses through demolition, condo conversion, expiring government subsidies, and rising rents. These threats to the affordable rental housing market affect one-third of all U.S. households that currently rent; it is feared, in the near term, that rental households are expected to grow in number due to rising foreclosure rates, placing additional demands upon the limited supply.

The Denver TOD fund is being established as the Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) undergoes the largest current public transit expansion in the nation—an effort that may offer an opportunity to ease transportation and housing costs for low-income families. In 2005, RTD began its FasTracks program—a 12-year comprehensive plan to build and operate commuter and light rail; expand and improve bus service; and develop park-and-rides throughout the eight-county metro region.

Recent economic growth and renewed interest in urban living have increased demand for housing within Denver. This rising demand has pushed housing costs out of the reach of many of Denver's working families—especially in locations with good access to downtown employment. Consequently, Denver families earning between \$20,000 and \$50,000 spend 59 percent of their income on housing and transportation, according to a [2006 study](#) by the Center for Housing Policy. This situation appears to be worsening as increased demand has raised rents while affordable units have been cleared to make way for higher-priced units. A recent market study by BBC Research and Consulting concluded that at least 25,000 additional units are needed to meet Denver's low-income housing demand. By providing low-income households access to affordable housing near public transit, the Denver TOD Fund would reduce two of the most important cost burdens faced by families.

Another partner in the Denver effort, the Urban Land Conservancy (ULC), will be the TOD fund's sole borrower and will be responsible for acquiring property and working with local partners to create and preserve housing. Target properties include existing federally assisted rental properties, unsubsidized affordable rental properties, and vacant or commercial properties in desirable locations. The ULC will be able to hold properties for up to five years in order to maintain flexibility in securing long-term subsidies for affordable housing.

Battling Old Sprawl with New Development: Tysons Corner, Virginia

An archetypal "edge city" suburb where people shop and work, but do not live, Tysons Corner, Virginia, has embarked on an effort to retrofit its sprawling landscape into a more dense, urban environment that could serve as a model for similar locations around the nation. A suburb of Washington, DC, Tysons Corner is home to only 17,000 residents, but hosts the largest retail area on the East Coast south of New York City, with more than 3,400 hotel rooms, 100,000 jobs, and 25 million square feet of office space.

Technically an unincorporated area within Virginia's Fairfax County, the area is now marked by a sprawling ocean of parking lots,

office parks and shopping malls. Last fall, Fairfax County supervisors unanimously approved a vision plan, known as [Transforming Tysons](#), to encourage land owners to build higher, denser, more transit-oriented and more walkable neighborhoods. The impetus for the vision plan was the upcoming construction of four new Metro stations as part of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail project. These new stations will connect the area with Metro's Orange Line at East Falls Church, providing high-quality access to downtown Washington.

The vision and area-wide recommendations plan, the result of nearly three and a half years of public discussion and consensus-building, was created by the Tysons Land Use Task Force. The task force was formed in 2004 by the Fairfax Board of Supervisors to evaluate the area's transportation system and land use and to look at the area's potential for redevelopment. The 36-member task force includes representatives from community groups, nonprofits, businesses, neighborhood representatives, developers, and organizations for the environment, arts, housing and transportation. After the vision plan was approved last fall, it was referred to the county planning commission for the development of a detailed comprehensive plan and specific language for the county zoning ordinance. It is expected that full implementation of the plan will take several decades.

The vision plan recognizes that the four highways traversing the community are likely to remain vital arteries for access to the area, but recommends creating eight distinct neighborhoods in Tysons Corner. These smaller-scale districts are planned to have the look and feel of urban neighborhoods. A key piece of the vision plan is its recommendation to allow developers to build at the highest density within a walkable, one-eighth mile radius of the new Metro stations. According to the plan, this density is essential if Tysons Corner is to continue to thrive as a jobs center and to avoid worsening the area's already-debilitating traffic congestion. The plan also calls for giving landowners broad new rights to build at much higher densities and height, constructing narrower streets in a grid pattern, adding sidewalks, and establishing restaurants and shops at sidewalk level.

County supervisors hope that the plan will improve both the region's economy and its environment. According to the task force's report, if Tysons is redeveloped as proposed, real estate and sales tax receipts collected locally could more than triple. They also expect the town's residential population to grow significantly, from 17,000 today to as many as 100,000—bringing new residents who would support local shopping, nightlife, and other activities that would stimulate the economy.

The plan's recommendations include:

- Allowing landowners to build structures as large in volume as six times the area of the parcel size. A building that covers every square inch of a property, for example, could be six stories high
- Permitting higher-density development in four of the eight planned urban neighborhoods that are closest to the planned Metro stations. For more distant neighborhoods, connections would be made by a free circulator bus line
- Requiring developers to contribute to a neighborhood's common good through the creation of a new street grid, open space, public art and other cultural amenities
- Creating a mix of uses in all new development; street-level retail, entertainment, and residential and office space, would be promoted
- Offering incentives to encourage construction of affordable and workforce housing

How to pay for the grand plans outlined in the vision remains a question. To fund new infrastructure, the task force is looking at special taxing districts or a development authority with borrowing power. The plan relies on developers to contribute to the new infrastructure and amenities, and urges Fairfax County to explore public funding mechanisms that could assist developers without placing additional property tax burdens upon residents. It is also hoped that by allowing developers to build at very high density—without suburban requirements such as parking and set-back requirements—the county will be able to exact fees in return for having offset infrastructure costs.

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New TOD Resource: Metro New York TOD Newsletter to Launch

The Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center is pleased to announce the launch of a new e-publication, the Metro New York TOD Newsletter. This newsletter will extend the TOD conversation to a wider audience, bringing the message of transit-friendly development to the entire New York metropolitan region. The focus of this publication will be TOD efforts in New York City, the Hudson Valley, Connecticut and Long Island. The Metro New York TOD Newsletter will be a sister publication to our Transit-Friendly Development Newsletter which will continue to report on TOD throughout New Jersey and the nation.

Providing feature articles, news updates, and suggested readings, the Metro New York TOD Newsletter will lead and inform the TOD conversation in the region's diverse communities—spreading the word about best practices, model programs, legislation, and the key issues that affect acceptance of TOD at the local level. More broadly, the Metro New York TOD Newsletter will provide a medium where state, county, and local leaders, and the public at-large can learn how to create livable, sustainable, and thriving places—and discover why such places are vitally important to the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut region as it moves ahead in the 21st century.

The Metro New York TOD Newsletter is supported by the One Region Funding Group and by Citi, as part of its ongoing effort to support community development efforts. The first issue of the newsletter is scheduled for distribution in early summer. We hope you that you will click here to subscribe to this inaugural issue.

Two New Jersey Cities Receive Regional Grants

Newark and Trenton in March received \$20,000 each from [The Tri-State Transportation Campaign](#) (TSTC) to promote transit-oriented development (TOD) near their bus and rail stations. These awards are part of TSTC's new Transit-Centered Development Grant Program, supported by [The Fund for New Jersey](#) and One Region Funders' Group. The funds will be used by Newark to investigate how to change city ordinances to allow for more pedestrian-oriented development along the Springfield Avenue bus rapid transit (BRT) "Go Bus" route, and by Trenton to build community support behind mixed-use and mixed-income development near the city's newly renovated transit center.

Newark will work with the New Jersey Institute of Technology and NJ TRANSIT to conduct a corridor planning study along the Springfield Avenue "Go Bus" line. "Go Bus" BRT offers customers enhanced amenities and service with 11 fixed "super stops" along the 4.8-mile corridor between the Irvington Bus Terminal and Newark Penn Station. Offering express peak-hour service, the line has proven so popular that service was doubled to 18 morning and 18 evening trips each weekday shortly after service began in April 2008. Grant money will be used to look at potential pedestrian and streetscape improvements along the corridor. As Newark is one of only a few cities pioneering the use of bus rapid transit in support of TOD, the study will also try to identify land uses for vacant and underutilized properties near stops. For more information on the potential of BRT to promote development, see *A New Face of TOD: Bus Rapid Transit* in the January 2008 issue of this newsletter.

Trenton will use its grant to capitalize on new development opportunities surrounding its train station, nearing the completion of a \$75 million renovation. The Trenton Transit Center hosts service on NJ TRANSIT's Northeast Corridor and RiverLINE light rail, Amtrak, and Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), as well as Capitol Connection bus services. Grant money will support the new station-area advisory committee, a panel composed of local residents, business owners and other stakeholders. A facilitator will be hired to help organize meetings, communicate the benefits of TOD, and reach consensus on appropriate types of development around the train station. Plans for the Vista Center—a 25-story, mixed-use office building located adjacent to the station—have already received approval. For more information on Trenton station area planning, see *Trenton Continues Station Area Redevelopment Efforts* in the July 2008 issue of the newsletter.

Trenton and Newark are two of eight cities in the New Jersey/New York/Connecticut region to be awarded grants from the Transit-Centered Development Grant Program. Over 40 applicants vied for the awards, ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000, to support efforts to encourage mixed-use, mixed-income development around transit hubs. Other communities receiving grants include: Mount Vernon, Ossining and Peekskill in New York's Westchester County; Babylon and Brookhaven on Long Island; and Stratford in Connecticut.



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Former Hive of Industry, Harrison Redevelops with Transit

Located across the Passaic River from Newark, the town of Harrison's past and future is intrinsically linked to its public transit accessibility. PATH trains depart every 3-5 minutes during rush hour, connecting Harrison with Newark, Jersey City, Hoboken, and New York City, a 20-minute ride away. At Newark Penn Station, PATH riders can transfer to NJ TRANSIT's Northeast Corridor and North Jersey Coast Line (both offering one-stop connections to Newark Liberty International Airport and Secaucus Junction rail station) as well as Raritan Valley Line trains, the Newark Light Rail system and numerous bus lines. The town is also well-served by buses that connect to NJ TRANSIT train stations, the Newark subway, PATH stations, and the cities of Newark, New York City, Elizabeth, and Jersey City, among others.

With this outstanding transit accessibility, the 1.2-square mile community has embarked on an ambitious effort to remake itself through its Waterfront Redevelopment Plan. The vision outlined in the plan calls for the transformation of 275 acres of obsolete industrial facilities into a new transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development along the town's riverfront. Historically, the town's economic engine was heavy industry, with manufacturing mostly situated in its southern third. Called a "hive of industry" by President William Howard Taft in 1910, Harrison adopted the nickname, adding it to the town flag. This label was applicable until the late 1960s when the bulk of Harrison's industry had left. From the mid-1970s to the 1990s, the town lost more than \$150 million in business ratables from its tax rolls and was faced with a rapidly deteriorating and underutilized industrial area.

Preliminary efforts at revitalization date from the mid-1990s. In 1997, the Harrison Town Council deemed the southern industrial area "in need of redevelopment" and two years later the Harrison Redevelopment Agency was formed. After a multi-year planning process coordinated between Harrison and a number of private developers by the community planning and design firm, Heyer, Gruel & Associates LLC, the [Waterfront Redevelopment Plan](#) (49 MB) was born with the vision of transforming southern Harrison. The plan provides a 20-year framework to re-make the area with more than 7,000 new residential units in a range of sizes and prices, 3.4 million square feet of office space, more than one million square feet of retail space, an entertainment complex with a 25,000-seat soccer arena for the Major League soccer team the New York Red Bulls, street-level retail, and a waterfront gateway park. All new housing, jobs, shopping, entertainment and recreational opportunities will be within walking distance of the Harrison PATH station which is so well linked to the state's transit network.

The designated redevelopment area encompasses about 35 percent of the town, covering most of the area south of I-280, straddling both sides of the PATH station and stretching to the Passaic River. The redevelopment area is located in the midst of existing residential, commercial, and office uses in Harrison, as well as across the river in Newark, and existing community facilities. The redevelopment effort will build upon the area's existing infrastructure, including roads, public transportation, and water, electric and sewer facilities, but will also require upgrades to accommodate the higher densities and new uses. The plan calls for a new road network with on-street parking, wide sidewalks, and street trees.



River Park at Harrison

A number of projects are underway:

1. Along the waterfront, Millrose Developers, a joint venture between Millennium Homes and Roseland Property Company, is completing the first phase of [River Park at Harrison](#). The project is located in the River Park District between First Street and the Passaic River. This first phase will include 313 housing units and a riverwalk park along the Passaic waterfront. The first half of River Park is complete and the second half is underway. The process of securing the land and the necessary approvals for a second phase has begun, but is expected to take some time to finalize. The second phase, expected to include a southerly extension of the new neighborhood and riverwalk, is about a year away from entering the development approval process. Millrose has been designated to redevelop an area

encompassing 14 blocks located north of the PATH line. When completed, the entire project will include a total of 1,000 new residences, 40,000 square feet of neighborhood retail, and 800,000 square feet of commercial/office space.

2. The Harrison Commons project is a joint venture between Canyon-Johnson Urban Fund; The Pegasus Group; Endeavour, LLC; Applied Harrison, LLC; and Harrison Commons, LLC. Located north of the PATH station, the project is in the midst of Phase 1 with a 1,650-car garage (in concert with the Hudson County Improvement Authority,) 477 residential units and 35,000 square feet of ground floor retail under construction along Frank E. Rodgers Boulevard. Approval for Phase II, which includes an additional 255 units with 14,750 square feet of retail on the boulevard, is under review by the planning board.
3. The Red Bull soccer arena is currently under construction by the team's ownership. Expected to open in time for the 2010 season, the arena is located just 0.3 miles from the Harrison PATH station.
4. Advance Realty, the designated redeveloper for the entire area south of the PATH station, is working on infrastructure to extend the street grid and create eight new city blocks. This will lay the framework for a new neighborhood surrounding the Red Bull Arena. Advance Realty's vertical site plan is currently being finalized and will offer a dynamic mixed-use environment that interconnects the Passaic River with the arena and the PATH station. The approval process is expected to begin shortly.



Under Construction
Red Bull Arena

It should be noted that all the new development will occur within walking distance of new parks and open spaces. The planned waterfront gateway park will restore a valuable resource for Harrison that has been sorely lacking for generations – access to the Passaic River waterfront, one of the state's most environmentally abused and underutilized waterways. Once complete, the walkway and park will remain in the public domain, offering a significant recreational amenity for the town. In addition to providing open space, the urban greenway project will restore sensitive stream bank areas and incorporate flood control measures to protect the town from flooding from the Passaic River.

The vision outlined in the Harrison Waterfront Redevelopment Plan is becoming a reality. As Harrison redevelops as one of New Jersey's premiere transit-friendly municipalities, it is providing its residents with a new economic base, thousands of new housing units, and a long-sought connection to the Passaic riverfront, and should serve as a model for other communities looking to redevelop around transit.

Somerville Landfill Redevelopment Stalled by Recession; Downtown Somerville Awarded Improvement Loan

Redevelopment plans for the 160-acre former landfill site near Somerville Borough's Raritan Valley Line station have been delayed, a victim of today's economic uncertainty, despite ongoing station rehabilitation work by NJ TRANSIT and other planned improvements to the borough's downtown.

Plans for the landfill followed a two-year public process to establish a vision for the property's reuse and its integration into the downtown. In late 2007, the borough adopted the Landfill Redevelopment Plan, calling for a mix of commercial and residential development and open space. In March 2008, Somerville issued an RFQ/P seeking development partners. That request yielded a single response by a partnership led by Pulte Homes. As a result, a second request for qualifications was issued and in September 2008 the borough received responses from four firms. In addition, Somerset County Business Partnership also proposed a limited development on the corner of the property for office use.

Somerville had expected to complete interviews and award the contract by March 2009. However, none of the interested firms chose to proceed, citing an inability to access capital and uncertainties regarding required infrastructure and site remediation. Facing inaction from private developers, Somerville plans to keep the project moving by improving roughly 45 acres of the former landfill site for open space and recreational areas through environmental remediation and infrastructure improvements. To this end, Somerville has applied to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection for designation of the former landfill as a Brownfield Development Area (BDA.) The hope is that these improvements and the station project will dispel some of the developers' perceptions of uncertainty and allow Somerville to divide the redevelopment area into several smaller projects.

Meanwhile, the station improvement project reached a milestone in March when the NJ TRANSIT Board of Directors awarded a \$15.3 million contract to Terminal Construction Co. of Wood-Ridge to complete planned upgrades to the station. One of the project's objectives is to meet ADA requirements, as Somerville is the last of 35 key stations to receive accessibility upgrades. Upgrades include a pair of 710-foot long high-level platforms with canopies, two new elevator cabs, a climate-controlled waiting room on the inbound platform with a ticket office and restrooms, heated platform shelters, ramps, stairs and a head house for the pedestrian tunnel entrance. Existing facilities, such as the elevator shafts, the pedestrian tunnel, tunnel stairs and exterior stairs to South Bridge Street will be rehabilitated. Other additions include security cameras, two new Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) and LCD and LED signs. Work is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2010.

The borough is continuing its efforts to improve its pedestrian environment and connections to its rail station. [Downtown Somerville](#), the borough's Main Street organization, was named the only recipient of state funds through the Downtown Business Improvement Zone Loan Fund for FY09. The \$600,000, zero interest loan will leverage an additional \$1.2+ million and enable Downtown Somerville to improve the borough's pedestrian gateways as well as four major shopping lots. This effort will increase lighting and facilitate pedestrian connections to the Somerville Station as well as improve parking management and circulation throughout the downtown.

For more information about Somerville's efforts, see our [January 2008](#) and [July 2007](#) newsletters or Somerville's Redevelopment [website](#).

Communities Advance Safe Streets to Transit Projects

The New Jersey Department of Transportation recently awarded its first Safe Streets to Transit (SSTT) grants to 15 communities, including Absecon City, Camden City, Clifton City, Edgewater Borough, Egg Harbor City, Elizabeth City, Florence Township, Hoboken City, Lyndhurst Township, New Brunswick City, New Providence Borough, Ocean City, Plainsboro Township, Voorhees Township, and Woodlynne Borough. The program is part of Governor Jon Corzine's five-year, \$74 million Pedestrian Safety Initiative. SSTT grants will total \$5 million over a five-year period.

Allocated from the state's Transportation Trust Fund, the SSTT grants will be used by counties and municipalities to install and upgrade sidewalks and pedestrian barriers, and improve lighting and drainage on roads near transit stations. Aside from the obvious benefit of increasing pedestrian safety, these projects are meant to encourage transit usage by making it easier to walk or bike to transit facilities. SSTT represents collaboration between the NJDOT, the Department of Law and Public Safety and the Motor Vehicle Commission.

Among the initial SSTT grants, New Brunswick received \$147,000 to improve pedestrian safety near its train station by creating a designated "kiss-and-ride" drop-off area to accommodate passengers arriving by car. Camden will use \$170,000 in SSTT funds to improve pedestrian access and safety along Market Street, improving accessibility to two of its stations—the City Hall Station on the PATCO High-Speedline and the Cooper Street/Rutgers RiverLINE Station. Hoboken will receive \$80,000 to improve commuter and pedestrian safety near Hoboken Terminal by installing pedestrian railing along Hudson Place. Ocean City has been awarded \$100,000 in support of Haven Avenue Bike Route Phase I. To encourage drivers to accommodate bicyclists, funds will be used to implement traffic calming measures such as reduced speed limit and additional stop signs along this "share the road" facility.

For more information about the SSTT program, see <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/business/localaid/safe.shtml>

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