

TRANSIT VILLAGE PROGRESS REPORT



Prepared for:

New Jersey Department of Transportation

Bureau of Statewide Strategies

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November 2017

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Jersey Department of Transportation's (NJDOT) Transit Village Initiative, established in 1999, creates incentives for municipalities to redevelop or revitalize areas around public transit stations using transit-oriented development (TOD) design standards. NJDOT has established criteria and an application process for prospective Transit Village designations, and it currently has 33 designated Transit Villages. The process for applying for and possibly receiving Transit Village designation is a voluntary exercise by interested municipalities.

This report provides a summary of the progress of the Transit Village Initiative. The following is a summary of the key accomplishments of the Transit Villages.

- Perhaps the most important category of accomplishments is <u>development in the Transit Village districts</u>; all Transit Villages have completed, planned, or proposed development. Among the towns with the most notable development activity are New Brunswick, Jersey City, Rahway, Morristown, Montclair, and Orange. Transit Village development increases the potential for transit ridership by residents, workers, and other visitors, while providing economic and other benefits.
- Some Transit Villages have established <u>connecting bus or shuttle service</u> to their stations.
 These locations include South Orange, Rutherford, Bound Brook, and Riverside. As with bicycle and pedestrian improvements, such services enhance the feasibility for residents or commuters to use transit as a travel option.
- Most Transit Villages have improved <u>bicycle and pedestrian facilities</u>, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle parking. These improvements enhance the possibility of utilizing non-vehicular travel modes to and from the stations. Among the many locations with such improvements are Collingswood, West Windsor, Burlington, Metuchen, Netcong, Pleasantville, Linden, and Summit.
- <u>Place-making activities</u> are evident in many Transit Villages including Belmar, Elizabeth,
 Cranford, Dunellen, and East Orange. Place-making aims to improve the public realm
 through various elements of design and management. These elements include
 beautification and maintenance, arts facilities and activities, and other activities and events
 such as farmers' markets, concerts, and street fairs.

Interviews with Transit Village representatives found that many believe that the Transit Village designation is a "brand" that carries importance, particularly for developers, and that Transit Village development has had a positive impact upon their communities. Additionally, local and state agency representatives identified some opportunities to enhance the Transit Village Initiative. These opportunities include peer exchanges and reviews, regular reporting, and periodic forums for Transit Village communities. Such enhancements to the initiative could help further to leverage available resources and to sustain and increase the accomplishments of Transit Villages.

2 BACKGROUND

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), through its Support for NJDOT Statewide Strategies term agreement, is receiving consultant technical assistance for various task order work assignments. Task Order #2 under this agreement was to prepare a Transit Village Progress Report, which provides a summary of the accomplishments of NJDOT's Transit Village Initiative. This report will demonstrate the value of the Transit Village Initiative to New Jersey, NJDOT, and the statewide transportation system.

3 INTRODUCTION

NJDOT and NJ TRANSIT spearhead a multi-agency partnership known as the Transit Village Initiative. This initiative creates incentives for municipalities to redevelop or revitalize the areas around transit stations using transit-oriented development (TOD) design standards. TOD helps municipalities to create attractive, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods where people can live, shop, work and play without relying on automobiles.

The Transit Village Initiative encourages growth in areas where infrastructure and public transit already exist. Municipalities must meet the Transit Village Criteria and complete a Transit Village Application in order to receive designation as a Transit Village. The process for applying for and possibly receiving Transit Village designation is a voluntary exercise by interested municipalities. As of September 2017, NJDOT has designated 33 Transit Villages (see **Figure 1** and **Table 1**).

The state Transit Village Task Force comprises representatives of ten agencies, including NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT, NJ Department of Environmental Protection, NJ Redevelopment Authority, Main Street New Jersey, NJ Council on the Arts, NJ Department of Community Affairs, Economic Development Authority, Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, and the NJ Office for Planning Advocacy.

The Task Force meets six times per year, and the Task Force members work together to direct state resources into the designated Transit Villages to help achieve the redevelopment goals of the municipalities.

Figure 1 Transit Villages

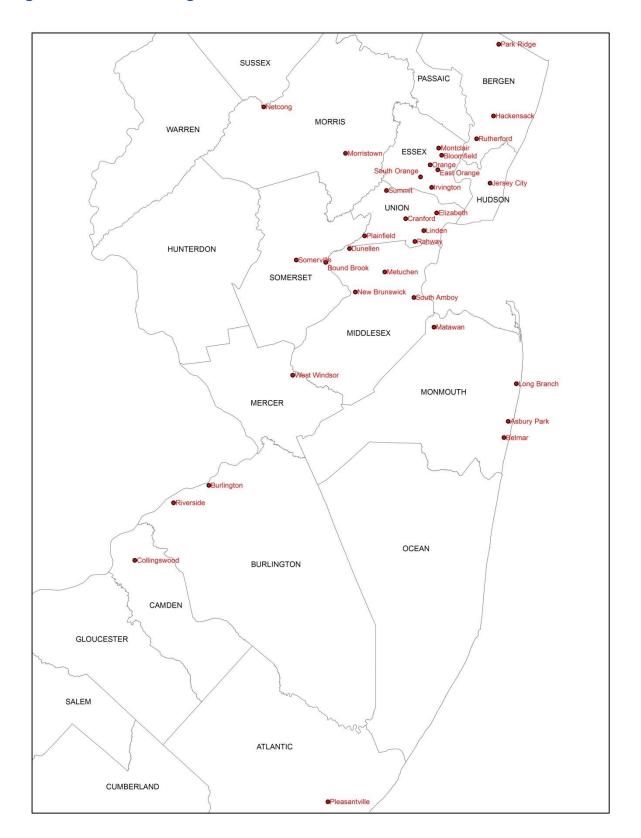


Table 1 List of Transit Villages

<u>Location</u>	Year Designated	<u>County</u>	<u>MPO</u>
Pleasantville	1999	Atlantic	SJTPO
Morristown	1999	Morris	NJTPA
Rutherford	1999	Bergen	NJTPA
South Amboy	1999	Middlesex	NJTPA
South Orange	1999	Essex	NJTPA
Riverside	2001	Burlington	DVRPC
Rahway	2002	Union	NJTPA
Metuchen	2003	Middlesex	NJTPA
Belmar	2003	Monmouth	NJTPA
Bloomfield	2003	Essex	NJTPA
Bound Brook	2003	Somerset	NJTPA
Collingswood	2003	Camden	DVRPC
Cranford	2003	Union	NJTPA
Matawan	2003	Monmouth	NJTPA
New Brunswick	2005	Middlesex	NJTPA
Journal Square/Jersey City	2005	Hudson	NJTPA
Netcong	2005	Morris	NJTPA
Elizabeth/Midtown	2007	Union	NJTPA
Burlington City	2007	Burlington	DVRPC
City of Orange Township	2009	Essex	NJTPA
Montclair	2010	Essex	NJTPA
Somerville	2010	Somerset	NJTPA
Linden	2010	Union	NJTPA
West Windsor	2012	Mercer	DVRPC
East Orange	2012	Essex	NJTPA
Dunellen	2012	Middlesex	NJTPA
Summit	2013	Union	NJTPA
Plainfield	2014	Union	NJTPA
Irvington	2015	Essex	NJTPA
Park Ridge	2015	Bergen	NJTPA
Hackensack	2016	Bergen	NJTPA
Long Branch	2016	Monmouth	NJTPA
Asbury Park	2017	Monmouth	NJTPA

4 OTHER INFORMATION and STUDIES

This section provides information on other efforts at assessing and promoting TOD in New Jersey, including other studies of the Transit Village Initiative. **Appendix B** provides a summary listing of these resources.

The Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) http://vtc.rutgers.edu, located within the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, is a national leader in the research and development of innovative transportation policy, and TOD is one of VTC's areas of research focus. VTC has established a webpage, nitod.org, which provides updated information on news and events in the state and around the country in TOD, including best practices, model programs, legislation, and local problem-solving experiences. The website, a collaboration between VTC and NJ TRANSIT, also provides a periodic newsletter, Transit-Friendly Development.

In 2003, VTC researchers completed an *Evaluation of the New Jersey Transit Village Initiative* http://reconnectingamerica.org/assets/Uploads/bestpractice181.pdf and presented the results of this work at the first Transit Village Symposium. This evaluation included reviewing literature about TOD and key factors in its effectiveness, analyzing demographics of designated Transit Villages, interviewing stakeholders about success factors and obstacles, and surveying public opinions and attitudes. This report recommended an annual accounting and record keeping by municipalities and state agencies to monitor economic activity, environmental activity, transportation activity, and community perception, as well as institutional and legal actions. It recommended that data be collected within a half-mile of the transit station on a regular basis to monitor the impacts.

A subsequent 2005 report, *Transit-Oriented Development: Developing a Strategy to Measure Success* http://nap.edu/23319, referred to the 2003 study recommendations for evaluating the progress of Transit Villages. It noted that initial efforts to implement reporting and monitoring found that the disparity of staff resources among the Transit Villages was a problem. Many towns did not have the staff to gather and provide the required information or did not have the information in an electronic form. This report noted that an annual reporting process was not currently in place, but work had been occurring to refine potential indicators and agree upon indicators for which values could be gathered with reasonable effort.

A 2006 research paper, *Housing Diversity and Affordability in New Jersey's Transit Villages* http://njtod.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Housing-Affordability-and-Diversity-in-New-Jerseys-Transit-Villages-FINAL.pdf, reported on the analysis of the affordable housing stock of 16 Transit Villages. Using Geographic Information Systems Software (GIS), the locations of affordable housing sites were mapped and plotted over existing "pedestrian shed" maps of designated Transit Villages. Evaluations of each Transit Village's efforts to encourage or incorporate inclusionary housing were based on the location and availability of affordable developments, as well as the demographic character of each municipality. Overall, findings showed that the number of affordable housing units remains low among designated villages. The report includes case studies that demonstrate alternatives, incentives, and future recommendations that may improve the quality and quantity of affordable housing within New Jersey's transit-oriented developments.

In September 2006, VTC sponsored a second Transit Village Symposium http://njtod.org/transit-village-symposium-progress-and-future-symposium-proceedings/. More than 150 participants

from the public sector, private industry, and non-governmental organizations attended to review and discuss efforts to support the Transit Village Initiative and transit-oriented development. The presentations highlighted progress in terms of new construction and residential satisfaction in Transit Villages, as well as the numerous challenges to increasing the level of development in station areas.

In 2007, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) published *On Track: Progress Towards Transit-Oriented Development in the Delaware Valley*, http://www.dvrpc.org/Reports/07030.pdf, an evaluation of progress towards TOD at transit stations within the nine-county region. The assessment considered progress to include a completed or in-progress TOD plan, a grant to study or implement TOD, development interest in the station area, and/or a proposed or completed TOD. Subsequently, DRVPC conducted an inventory with station-area profiles, *Linking Transit, Communities and Development: Regional Inventory of Transit-Oriented Sites*, http://www.dvrpc.org/Products/CD009, and it now maintains a Smart Growth Project Database, http://www.dvrpc.org/Products/CD009, and it now maintains a Smart Growth Project Database, http://www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/SGPD. This online database tracks proposed, in progress, and completed development projects near the region's rail stations. New information on existing projects and new developments is added to the database as it becomes available.

In 2011, VTC researchers completed *An Evaluation of Property Values in New Jersey Transit Villages* http://njtod.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/An-Evaluation-of-Property-Values-in-NJ-Transit-Values.pdf. This study assessed whether the Transit Village Initiative has led to increases in property values in municipalities that are designated Transit Villages. The results of the analysis found a likely association between Transit Village designation and higher residential property values, but the authors were unable to determine whether there is a direct cause and effect relationship.

NJ Future, a statewide non-profit planning and advocacy organization, released *Targeting Transit:* Assessing Development Opportunities around New Jersey's Transit Stations in 2012 http://www.nifuture.org/research-publications/research-reports/targeting-transit/. NJ Future has prepared a comprehensive summary of information about the area surrounding each of the state's 243 transit stations. This information includes the unique characteristics of each station, its immediate neighborhood, and its surrounding municipality. NJ Future believes that the wide range of characteristics means that a wide variety of strategies should be brought to bear in order to maximize each location's development potential. This report shows how the data could be used to make decisions on how to target various kinds of transit-oriented development in the station areas.

A major analysis, *Measuring Benefits of Transit Oriented Development*, was completed in 2014 by VTC with the support of the Mineta National Transit Research Consortium http://transweb.sjsu.edu/PDFs/research/1142-measuring-TOD-benefits.pdf. This study used various methods and measures to evaluate TOD in New Jersey. The study collected some data from respondents residing around eight stations, other data from four focus groups of those living near various train stations with some development, and interviews with stakeholders engaged with the land development process. Three areas (Cranford, Morristown, and Rahway) were also selected for a detailed case study analysis. Qualitative analysis focused on the perceptions of the benefits of TOD and any shortcomings that are seen. Analytical work included an analysis of travel behavior, including frequency of walking, driving and using transit; potential health benefits associated with living in proximity to a train station; social capital or civic engagement in areas proximate to the train station; traffic safety associated with proximity

to the train station and other built environmental measures; residential property valuation associated with train station access and TOD amenities; benefits to users of rail transit for commute access to New York City and other destinations; and an analysis of regional impacts using a regional travel demand model to examine changes in train usage and highway congestion. Overall, the results found beneficial effects of TOD and station-area development.

Most recently, in 2015, NJ Future released a report *Off Track? An Assessment of Mixed-Income Housing around New Jersey's Transit Stations* http://www.njfuture.org/research-publications/research-reports/off-track. This report presents the results of analyzing the incomes of households located near transit stations compared with regional and statewide averages. In an effort to promote equitable TOD – transit-oriented development that makes room for people of all income levels – in future development, the report identifies transit-station neighborhoods currently having income distributions that can be described as "inequitable," because they host either a disproportionate share of higher-income households or a disproportionate share of lower-income households, relative to their respective regions. It also looks at trends in rents and home values in order to highlight transit neighborhoods where emerging demand might pose the threat of displacing lower-income households if preventive steps are not taken.

5 **SUMMARY of METHODOLOGY**

The first step in the process for this study was to establish a framework for identifying the accomplishments of the individual Transit Villages. While the purpose of the current *NJDOT Transit Village Criteria and Scoring Guide* is to evaluate applications for potential Transit Villages, it also provides a good starting point for assessing the accomplishments of designated Transit Villages. The criteria relate to the municipality's commitment to grow in a transit-oriented manner and the presence of transit-oriented plans and projects, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and place-making initiatives. NJDOT obtained other potentially useful available information such as previous studies of the effectiveness of the Transit Village Initiative and reviewed this information in order to identify any relevant concepts to incorporate into the accomplishment framework. Based upon this work, NJDOT prepared a draft accomplishment framework to use for assessing the progress of Transit Villages.

The next step in the process was to interview representatives of the state agencies represented on the Transit Village Task Force. Each agency has a somewhat different perspective on the Transit Village Initiative and its accomplishments, as well as challenges arising in the Transit Villages (see **Appendix C**). Then, NJDOT conducted interviews with Transit Village representatives to obtain current information on Transit Village activities and accomplishments. The discussion guide for the interviews was based upon the accomplishment framework. This guide included a checklist of information items from the accomplishment framework, along with open-ended questions regarding other Transit Village activities (see **Appendix D**). NJDOT worked to arrange interviews with representatives of Transit Villages as of April 2015. The interviews sought to obtain information on past, current, and planned future accomplishments. The interviews helped to identify the successes as well as to identify challenges and potential opportunities for meeting those challenges (see **Appendix E**).

The next step was to review the information received from the interviews and use this information to summarize the Transit Village accomplishments. NJDOT reviewed the interview information as it relates to the accomplishment framework, as well as any additional information on noteworthy accomplishments, activities, and challenges encountered, to produce information on each Transit Village and its accomplishments, along with a draft summary of the major accomplishments of the overall Transit Village Initiative.

The final sub-task was to prepare summary materials and a report for the study. NJDOT has created a section of its Transit Village website on which to post this report, which highlights the key individual and overall initiative accomplishments, along with information on project planning, information gathering, and information processing, as outlined in the preceding tasks. NJDOT also prepared a summary of issues and opportunities for implementing the Transit Village vision (see **Chapter 7**). These issues and opportunities emerged either from the interviews with the Transit Village representatives or with the state agencies represented on the Task Force.

6 TRANSIT VILLAGE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A primary objective of this study was to identify the accomplishments that have occurred in New Jersey's Transit Villages since their respective designations. The purpose is to show how these accomplishments are enhancing the stations and surrounding areas as hubs of multi-modal transportation and mixed-use development.

This work has identified Transit Village accomplishments in several categories, including the following:

- New development and redevelopment, particularly high-density, mixed-use development
- Increased connecting bus and shuttle service to stations
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle access to station areas
- Place-making activities, including design and management elements

The following sections describe the accomplishments of the various Transit Villages in each of these categories.

6.1 New Development and Redevelopment

Perhaps the most important indicator of Transit Village progress is the extent and nature of development within designated Transit Village districts, generally considered to be ½ mile around the station. New development and redevelopment increases the potential for transit ridership by residents, workers, and other visitors, along with various economic, environmental, and social benefits. All Transit Villages have completed (**Table 2**) or planned or proposed (**Table 3**) development projects. Among the notable Transit Village development areas are New Brunswick, Rahway (**Figure 2**), Cranford, and Morristown. Nearly all projects have included residential development, typically in the form of apartments or condominiums (see **Figure 3**). Many projects also have incorporated retail or other commercial uses and parking. In New Brunswick, Transit Village development also has included university-related uses and health care facilities. In addition to larger projects listed in Table 2, several Transit Villages also have experienced an increase in smaller-scale development such as infill and rehabilitation projects.

Table 2 New Development and Redevelopment

Location	Name	Type / Amount	<u>Year</u>
Belmar	701 Main	6 du, retail	2008
	Seacoast Commons (800 Main)	34 du, retail	2012
	Riverwalk at Belmar	16 du, retail	2015
Bound Brook	Meridia Main Street	240 du	2014
Bloomfield	Bloomfield College	Residential hall	2014
	Glenwood Village	224 du, retail	2015
Collingswood	The Collings at the LumberYard	104 du, retail, office	2008
Cranford	Cranford Crossing	50 du, retail	2006
	Riverfront at Cranford Station	127 du	2013
	Woodmont Station	163 du	2015
East Orange	Aura 240	96 du	2012
	Essence	144 du	2017
Elizabeth	Union Co. College Kellogg Building	Higher education	2009
Jersey City	Kennedy Lofts	56 du	2014
	Journal Squared (Phase I)	538 du	2017
Linden	Parkline Condos	96 du	2014
	South Wood Ave. redevelopment	176 du	UC
Metuchen	The District at Metuchen	Retail center	2017
	Pearl Street Piazza	273 du, retail	UC
Montclair	Commons at Bay Street	11 du	2012
	Pig and Prince	Restaurant	2012
Morristown	Amli	151 du, retail	2002
	Vail Commons	49 du, retail	2006
	Dehart Place	9 du	2007
	Vail Mansion	35 du, retail	2008
	Highlands	217 du, retail	2009
	40 Park	206 du, retail	2010
New Brunswick	One Spring Street	121 du	2007
	Children's Specialized Hospital	Health care	2007
	Heldrich Center	Hotel, conference center	2007
	RWJ Wellness Plaza	Heath care	2012
	The Aspire (Gateway project)	238 du, retail, office	2015

Location	<u>Name</u>	Type / Amount	<u>Year</u>
Orange	Alexander Village	114 du	2012
	50 & 55 South Essex	72 du	2013
	Linc at Orange Station	137 du, retail	2016
Pleasantville	Villages at St. Peter's	73 du	2012
	City Center project	135 du, retail	2015
Rahway	River Place	136 du	2005
•	Riverwalk	86 du	2006
	Carriage City Plaza	Hotel, retail, residential	2008
	Grand Meridia	88 du	2010
	Park Square	159 du, retail	2012
	Brookside	50 du	2012
	Metro Rahway	116 du	2014
Rutherford	Station Square / Rutherford Condos	4 floors mixed use	2005
	Rutherford Station	108 du	2006
Somerville	West Main redevelopment	108 du, grocery store, bank	2013
South Amboy	Lighthouse Bay	194 du	2002
	Harbor Village	80 du	2006
	Beacon Pointe	40 du	2007
	Venetian Care & Rehabilitation Center	Health care / long-term care	2014
South Orange	Church Street Commons	40 du	2000
	Gaslight Commons	200 du	2002
	Performing Arts Center	Civic / cultural	2006
	New Market	Market and restaurant	2008
	The Avenue at South Orange:	79 du, retail	2010
	The Gateway	57 du, retail	2014
Summit	466 Springfield Avenue	Office, retail	2016
W. Windsor Windsor Plaza		Retail center	2013

du = Dwelling Units UC= Under Construction

Figure 2 Transit Village Development in Rahway



Source: Rahway Redevelopment Agency.

- A. Hamilton Stage
- B. Arts District Parking Lot
- C. Arts Guild of NJ
- D. Actors Fund Housing
- E. County Performing Arts Center
- F. 1591
- G. YMCA and Municipal Parking Lot
- H. Park Square
- I. RSI Bank
- J. Train Station and Plaza
- K. Station Place
- L. Carriage City
- M. Parking Garage
- N. Recreation Center
- O. Library
- P. Parking
- Q. Meridia Water's Edge
- R. River Walk
- S. River Place
- T. Meridia Lafayette Village
- U. Luciano's Restaurant

Some of the Transit Villages in Table 2 have additional projects that are planned or proposed. Also, several other Transit Villages, including Matawan, Burlington, Riverside, Dunellen, Metuchen, Plainfield, and Netcong, have planned or proposed projects (see **Table 3**).

Table 3 Additional Transit Villages with Planned or Proposed Development

Location	<u>Description</u>	Type / Amount
Burlington	Pearl Pointe	183 dwelling units (du), retail
Dunellen	Former Art Color site	340 du, retail, office
Matawan	Highview Homes	236 du, retail (in Aberdeen)
Netcong	Former Pocketbook Factory	72 du
Plainfield	13 planned or proposed projects	
Riverside	Camelot at Riverside	200 du
	Former Watchcase tower	64 du

Figure 3 Transit Village Development



South Orange Gaslight Commons



Rutherford Station Square



Cranford Woodmont Station



Rahway Carriage City Plaza



Collingswood
The Collings at the LumberYard



New Brunswick Gateway

Figure 3 (continued)



Belmar Seaport Ventures



Elizabeth Kellogg Building



Morristown Highlands at Morristown



Somerville West Main Street



Orange 50 & 55 South Essex

Figure 3 (continued)



Jersey City Kennedy Lofts



Bound Brook The Meridia



Pleasantville Villages at St. Peter's



Bloomfield Avalon Bloomfield Station



East Orange Aura 240



Summit 466 Springfield

6.2 Connecting Bus or Shuttle Services

Some Transit Villages have initiated or expanded bus or shuttle services that connect their stations with residential trip origins or non-residential trip destinations (see **Table 4** and **Figure 4**). These services improve "first mile, last mile" connections, which can increase the feasibility and desirability of public transit as a travel option. They thus could help to increase the patronage of commuter rail, as well as to bring more persons into the Transit Village, and thereby increase opportunities for local businesses.

New Brunswick may be the Transit Village station best served by connecting local bus and shuttle services, which include Rutgers University bus service, three Middlesex County Area Transit (MCAT) routes, and three Davidson Avenue Shuttle (DASH) routes operated by Somerset County, all of which link the station to surrounding residential and commercial locations.

Also noteworthy is South Orange, which received a Community Shuttle Grant to start local jitney service in 2002. The Village administers the grant funding, and the Parking Authority operates the service, which now includes three routes serving the train station and different sections of the town. In addition, five routes of West Orange's Midtown Direct shuttle serve the South Orange station. Also, the town recently provided two Zipcars located near the station.

A few other Transit Village stations once had connecting service but are no longer served by this service, and at least one Transit Village is interested in starting a new service but has not yet obtained sufficient funding to start this service.

The services in Table 4 do not include NJ TRANSIT bus services; all Transit Villages except one have NJ TRANSIT bus service. Also, the table does not include any senior citizen, social service, or other paratransit services that may serve Transit Village stations.

Table 4	Connecting	Bus or	Shuttle	Services
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Location	<u>Description</u>
Bound Brook	DASH 851, 852; CAT-1R
Montclair	Montclair Shuttle, three Montclair University Shuttle routes
Netcong	Morris on the Move
New Brunswick	DASH 851, 852, 853; MCAT M1, M5; Rutgers bus service
Orange	Five West Orange shuttle routes
Pleasantville	SJTA TransIT Link to Atlantic City International Airport
Rutherford	Rutherford Commuter Shuttle, 559 - Lyndhurst Corporate Shuttle, 578 - Rutherford Shuttle
Somerville	CAT-2R
South Amboy	MCAT M7
South Orange	Four South Orange jitney routes and five West Orange shuttle routes
West Windsor	Tiger Transit Route B

Figure 4 Connecting Bus or Shuttle Services





New Brunswick

Rutherford





Orange, South Orange

Montclair





South Amboy

West Windsor

6.3 Multi-Modal Circulation

Circulation in Transit Village districts is essential to connecting riders to transit services. Many Transit Villages have completed improvements for bicycle or pedestrian mobility and access to their stations (see **Table 5** and **Figure 5**). These improvements are important for increasing safety and, as with bus and shuttle services, enhancing "first mile, last mile" connections to increase the feasibility of commuters using non-vehicular modes of transportation for their entire trip. Many of these improvements have been funded by NJDOT grants, including through the Transit Village program, and other available sources. A few of the most notable improvements include the following:

- Cranford received a NJDOT Transit Village grant for pedestrian and landscape improvements along North Avenue near the station, and the town provided additional funding for pedestrian and other improvements at the station and other locations.
- Linden received a NJDOT Transit Village grant for a new sidewalk and landscaping along South Wood Avenue between Pennsylvania Railroad Avenue and Morris Avenue.
- Burlington received several grants, including NJDOT Transit Village grants, for various improvements including new sidewalks and curb ramps, high visibility crosswalks, bus stop improvements, and pedestrian enhancements at its light rail stations.

Some Transit Village representatives expressed difficulty in building consensus support and obtaining funding for possible bicycle and pedestrian improvements. One general barrier is the view that roads are just for cars. It is believed that some engineers still have an "auto-centric" perspective and that some officials view bicycle and pedestrian accommodations as non-essential. Further, the physical parameters of some older streets make it difficult to implement bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The Transit Village initiative provides an opportunity for towns to work to address these constraints through technical and financial assistance.

 Table 5
 Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

Location	<u>Description</u>
Belmar	New sidewalks, curbs, detectible warning surface, lighting
Burlington	Sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks, station and bus stop improvements
Collingswood	Bike share, increased signage and enforcement, re-stripe crosswalks, add new crosswalks
Cranford	Pedestrian and landscape improvements along North Ave. near station and other locations
Elizabeth	Station plaza improvements, Broad Street sidewalk and crosswalk improvements
Jersey City	Minimum sidewalk widths, bike parking requirement, bike route plan, bike lanes
Linden	New sidewalk and landscaping along Wood Avenue
Metuchen	Crosswalk signals, traffic calming, bicycle lanes, reconstruct crosswalk near station
Montclair	Bicycle depot, sidewalk improvements, pedestrian lighting, pedestrian wayfinding
Morristown	Station area pedestrian improvements, Complete Streets, bike racks, signage and striping
Netcong	Improved sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals near station
New Brunswick	Enhanced crosswalks, bicycle racks / corrals, bicycle lockers
Pleasantville	Completed section of bicycle trail, new sidewalk, curbs, and street lights
Rahway	Sidewalk and crosswalk improvements, bike racks and lockers, extended bike path
Rutherford	Improved sidewalks, pedestrian islands, crosswalks, traffic calming
Somerville	New sidewalks / plaza at station, bicycle lockers at station, bicycle racks
South Amboy	Pedestrian overpass at renovated station
Summit	Bicycle racks and lockers at station, new paths and lighting on Village Green
South Orange	Pedestrian safety initiative, crosswalk audit
West Windsor	Added bicycle lockers and bike racks, sidewalk and pedestrian beacons near station

Note: Boldface indicates NJDOT Transit Village grants supported these improvements.

Figure 5 Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements



West Windsor Bicycle Parking



New Brunswick Pedestrian Bridge



Montclair Bicycle Depot



Rutherford Roundabout / Crosswalks



Rahway Crosswalks / Streetscaping



Elizabeth Crosswalks / Streetscaping

Another element of Transit Village circulation is vehicular traffic and parking. Increasing commuter rail ridership may be expected to increase vehicular traffic near stations, as well as to increase the demand for parking. This situation requires good planning to balance possibly competing needs, as existing and potential parking areas near stations often present good opportunities for transit-oriented development and redevelopment. Ideally, towns will be able to mitigate some parking demand by encouraging multi-modal connections, particularly local bus, shuttle, and pedestrian and bicycle. A good parking management program includes enforcing regulations to limit on-street parking to short-term use and providing adequate, but not excessive, off-street parking for longer-term uses, including park-and-ride for transit users.

Many Transit Villages have implemented or begun to consider various parking management strategies, including studies of parking supply and demand, as well as efforts to better enforce and manage, such as through pricing, on-street parking. A few towns reported ongoing parking supply constraints, while for others, parking supply is not an issue. One town observed that transit ridership has increased but parking demand has not increased, as multi-modal access to the station has improved. A few towns indicated interest in using existing parking lots for development and suggested the potential for parking decks to accommodate future parking demand. The following are some of the comments in this respect:

- Rahway constructed a new parking deck, redeveloped a surface parking lot with underground parking, and is eyeing the potential for redevelopment on other surface lots.
- A new mixed-use development project adjacent to the Orange station has provided additional parking capacity for commuters.
- East Orange expressed the need for a parking deck at the Brick Church station.
- Several private surface lots surround the Matawan station, but the lot owners apparently have preferred to maintain the properties as parking.
- In Dunellen, a developer had considered redeveloping a surface lot with structured parking, but project financing could not be arranged.

6.4 Place-Making

Place-making activities are evident in many Transit Villages (see **Table 6** and **Figure 6**). Place-making aims to improve the public realm through various elements of design and management. These elements include beautification and maintenance, arts facilities and activities, and other activities and events such as farmers' markets and street fairs. Place-making is important because it helps to make an area more vibrant and attractive for commuters, residents, employees, and visitors. Agencies such as downtown management organizations and special improvement districts (SIDs) often sponsor and plan these types of activities and events as part of their work.

Rahway is one good example of a Transit Village with several place-making efforts. The station has a plaza on which events occur, including a farmers' market and Zumba classes, the Union County Performing Arts Center has two nearby venues, and the Rahway Arts and Business Partnership SID sponsors other activities and programs.

Table 6 Place-Making Activities

Location	Description
Belmar	New mural at station, special events, sidewalk maintenance, façade improvements, et al.
Bloomfield	Special Improvement District: promotion and events
Bound Brook	Hamilton Street Gallery, Brook Arts Center, seasonal farmers' market in station lot
Burlington	Wayfinding, community events, arts / cultural programs and activities
Collingswood	Farmers' market, 2 nd Saturday, cruise nights, and other events, parklet
Cranford	SID: promotion and events, business grants for aesthetic improvements, public art
Dunellen	Downtown management organization: various activities and events, including HarvestFest
East Orange	Farmers' market, music and other events
Elizabeth	Station plaza with community events, Broad Street streetscaping, wayfinding project
Jersey City	Plaza, farmers' market, special improvement district
Linden	Special improvement district, farmers' market, street festival / car show
Montclair	Business Improvement District: wayfinding and directories, events, arts activities
Morristown	Farmers' market, other events
Netcong	SID: promotion and events, façade grants
New Brunswick	Special improvement district, farmers' market, music along the streets
Orange	Wayfinding, HANDS / ValleyArts neighborhood preservation and cultural activities, murals program
Plainfield	SID: promotion and events, maintenance, gateway signs
Pleasantville	Decorative sidewalks, lighting, street trees
Rahway	Arts district / SID, farmers' market, Zumba lessons on plaza, nearby arts venues
Rutherford	Downtown Partnership, farmers market, street fair
Somerville	Division Street pedestrian mall / Arts District, farmers' market, various special events
South Orange	SID promotion and events, New Performing Arts Center, street fair / craft show
Summit	Summit Downtown SID: farmers' market, promotion and events
West Windsor	Farmers' market, arts center events and activities, new village park

Figure 6 Place-Making Activities



Bound Brook Farmers' Market



Somerville Division Street Plaza



Cranford Yoga Class



New Brunswick Farmers' Market



Orange Mural



Dunellen HarvestFest

Fig 6 (cont.)



Rutherford Street Fair



South Orange Performing Arts Center



Collingswood Cruise Night



Montclair Wayfinding Information



Plainfield Block Party / Parade



Jersey City Farmers' Market

7 MOVING FORWARD

Based upon the interviews with local and state agency representatives, **Table 7** presents a summary of issues and opportunities along with potential strategies and actions for continuing and improving the progress of the Transit Village Initiative.

Table 7 Issues and Opportunities

Issues	Opportunities (Strategies and Actions)	Agency Partners
<u>Financial</u>		
Real estate market conditions not favorable for	Focus on planning for TOD and improving the public realm to be ready to	NJDOT, MPOs, Transit
development	respond to improved market conditions.	Villages
Need for adequate levels of public and private	Provide funding and financial incentives for improvements to public realm.	NJDOT, NJEDA, NJRA,
investment	Educate developers and investors about the value of TOD.	NJHMFA
Infrastructure		
Decreased transit service quality and frequency	Maintain communications with NJ TRANSIT and other service providers.	NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT
Inadequate, outdated infrastructure, e.g., sewer and	Participate in multi-agency stakeholder efforts to identify means of providing	NJDOT, NJDEP, and
water systems	necessary infrastructure upgrades.	other state agencies
Local Administration		
Lack of long-term local political support and leadership	Provide information and education on the program and its benefits.	NJDOT
Lack of commitment / resources from municipal	Establish organizational structure, staffing, and funding necessary for	NJDCA, Transit Villages
governing body and administration	program.	
Lack of support from general public	Engage and educate community stakeholders.	Transit Villages
Technical / Planning		
Feasibility of transit-oriented development dependent	Conduct necessary planning studies to identify the appropriate type and size	NJDOT, MPOs, Transit
upon various issues, such as property acquisition needs,	of potential development projects.	Villages
infrastructure availability, and environmental factors		
Limited local capacity to identify and seize funding and	Use case studies for peer education; document the approaches of successful	NJDOT
development opportunities	Transit Villages according to community context and stage of development.	
Outdated master plans and development ordinances	Devote resources and staff to long term redevelopment efforts.	Transit Villages
Lack of a vibrant arts / cultural community	Engage various community, civic, and arts groups; recognize and elevate the	NJDCA, State Council
	importance of institutional mechanisms, e.g., Development Corporations, Art	on the Arts, Transit
	Councils, Main Street Associations, SIDs, and BIDs.	Villages

Potential Program Enhancements

In addition to the above opportunities, some respondents suggested possible refinements to NJDOT's administration of the Transit Village Initiative. One general suggestion was for a "critical self-examination" about the program coupled with "reasonable and actionable suggestions." Some ideas included the following:

- Review current application criteria to determine if they are adequate or need adjustment;
- Prepare an educational document for the Transit Village Task Force that explains Task Force roles and the connection of each agency to the Initiative.

Finally, in terms of the relationship between NJDOT and the Transit Villages, a general observation from the state agency and local interviews is the need to improve communications. Possible types of actions include the following:

- Establish peer information exchanges;
- Develop reporting mechanism for Transit Villages to provide to the Task Force; and
- Conduct a forum/summit for all Transit Villages on a biennial basis.

In sum, the responses from the interviews validate the Transit Village Initiative's overall goals and objectives while also indicating the potential benefits of some "fine tuning" to program administration, on both local and state levels, which ideally will result in continued and increased accomplishments of Transit Villages in New Jersey.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

References

The work on this study compiled information from various sources to supplement the information received from the interviews with the state agency and Transit Village representatives. Among the main sources of information were the following:

- NJDOT: background information on Transit Village Initiative, lists of grants
- NJ TRANSIT: summaries of projects (particularly station projects), bus schedules
- NJTOD.org: details on station-area development and other improvements

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APPENDIX B

Resources

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APPENDIX C

Interviews with State Agency Task Force Members (2015)

Agency	<u>Date</u>	Representatives
NJ Department of Transportation	February 24	Andrew Swords, Director of Statewide Planning
		Jim Lewis, Manager, Statewide Strategies
		LeRoy Gould, Transit Village Coordinator
		Susan Weber, Supervising Transportation Analyst
NJ TRANSIT	January 26	Vivian Baker, Asst. Director, Transit Friendly Land Use and Development
Office for Planning Advocacy	February 10	Barry Ableman, Principal Planner
Economic Development Authority	February 13	Paul Ceppi, Program Manager, and Justin Kenyon, Business
		Development Officer
Department of Environmental Protection	February 10	Timothy Bartle, Office of Brownfields Reuse
Department of Community Affairs (DCA)	February 12	Joyce Paul, Chief of Staff
DCA, Local Planning Services	February 12	Jef Buehler
Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency	February 19	Danielle Esser, Policy Research Administrator
State Council on the Arts	February 23	Paula Stephens, Program Officer
NJ Redevelopment Authority	April 8	Kim Avant-Babb, Director of Strategic Partnerships

APPENDIX D

Transit Village Interview Guide

- 1. Does the following accurately reflect the transit that currently serves the community? (Insert transit service summary from accomplishment framework)
 - a. Has service increased or decreased? How?
 - b. Have you had any efforts to integrate transit modes in your community since achieving TV designation? If so, what were they?
- 2. Have you instituted any parking management strategies within the transit village district?
 - a. What changes have you seen with parking supply and demand over time within the transit village district?
- 3. Have there been subsequent visioning/redevelopment plans developed since TV designation?
- 4. What growth (jobs, housing, and population) has occurred within your transit village district? Has the district bounds changed since TV designation?
- 5. Have any new guidelines/plans been developed to manage/advance the growth and development of/within the TV district?
- 6. Please list the TV development projects and the characteristics that made them TV projects since getting the TV designation.
- 7. Please list any future sites/projects where TV development is anticipated
- 8. Has affordable housing been a component of TV development? If so, where? How many units?
- 9. What bicycle and pedestrian improvements have you implemented within the TV district?
 - a. Are there future projects scoped?
 - b. Are/were there barriers to B/P improvements? If so, what were they and how were they overcome?
 - c. Are there amenities for B/P near your transit facility(s)?
- 10. Have you had any "placemaking" efforts near transit? (park/plaza, civic building, sculpture, art, wayfinding, etc.)
 - a. If so, what members of the community were involved? What was its management structure?
- 11. Have you carried out community events in the TV district? (farmers' market, cultural events, etc.)
 - a. Do you have any programmed?
- 12. Have you developed any new programs or facilities for the arts since getting TV designation?
- 13. Has TV designation helped you secure funding for TV projects? If so, what were the sources and what were the projects?
- 14. Has TV designation helped you secure technical assistance for TV projects/development? If so, what were the sources of technical assistance and what was the service provided?
- 15. What do you think has been most beneficial about TV designation?
- 16. Are there any suggestions or recommendations you would offer to another municipality as they seek Transit Village designation?
- 17. If there was one thing you would change about the Transit Village Initiative to improve it, what would it be?

APPENDIX E

Interviews with Transit Village Representatives (2015)

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Contacts</u>	
Belmar			
Bloomfield			
Bound Brook	July 16	Bev Pranzatelli and Tony Pranzatelli, Council Members	
Burlington	May 13	Dave Ballard, Administrator, and Kevin Reese, consulting engineer	
Collingswood	Aug 11	Keith Hastings, Administrator, and Cass Duffey, Director of Community Development	
Cranford	June 30	Kathleen Prunty, Director of Business and Economic Development	
Dunellen	May 5	William Robins, Administrator, and Ken Baudendistel, Council President	
East Orange	Aug 12	Valerie Jackson, Director of Planning and Development	
Elizabeth	June 10	Eduardo Rodriguez, Director of Planning and Community Development, and Phyllis Reich, Project Coordinator	
Jersey City	May 6	Naomi Hsu, Senior Transportation Planner, and Jeff Wenger, Principal Planner	
Linden	Aug 17	Julian Muller, Adam Zellner, Carol Mendez, and Tiffany Bohlin, consulting planners	
Matawan	May 28	Louis Ferrara, Administrator	
Metuchen	July 15	Jim Constantine, consulting planner	
Montclair	May 13	Janice Talley, Director of Planning and Community Development, and Luther Flurry, Executive Director of Montclair Center BID	
Morristown	June 9	Michael Rogers, Administrator, and Phil Abramson, Planner	
Netcong			
New Brunswick	May 19	Glenn Patterson, Director of Planning and Community and Economic Development	
Orange	June 5	Don Meisel, Principal Planner	
Plainfield			
Pleasantville			
Rahway	June 11	Cindy Solomon, Director of Planning and Economic Development	
Riverside			
Rutherford			
Somerville	June 3	Colin Driver, Director of Economic Development	
South Amboy			
South Orange			
Summit			
West Windsor	July 8	Pat Ward, Director of Community Development, and Dan Dobromilsky, Landscape Architect	