Sustainable Development in The New Jersey Highlands
The New Jersey Mayors’ Institute on Community Design
Acknowledgments

Regional Plan Association
Regional Plan Association is an independent, not-for-profit regional planning organization that works to improve the quality of life and the economic competitiveness of the 31-county New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region through research, planning, and advocacy. For over 80 years RPA has been shaping transportation systems, protecting open spaces, and promoting better community design for the region’s continued growth. We anticipate the challenges the region will face in the years to come, and we mobilize the region’s civic, business, and government sectors to take action.

The nation’s most influential independent regional planning organization since its founding in 1922, RPA has a storied history but is more relevant than ever in the 21st century. RPA’s First Plan in 1929 provided the blueprint for the transportation and open space networks that we take for granted today. The Second Plan, completed in 1968, was instrumental in restoring our deteriorated mass transit system, preserving threatened natural resources and revitalizing our urban centers. Released in 1996, RPA’s Third Regional Plan, A Region at Risk, warned that new global trends had fundamentally altered New York’s national and global position. The plan called for building a seamless 21st century mass transit system, creating a three-million acre Greensward network of protected natural resource systems, maintaining half the region’s employment in urban centers, and assisting minority and immigrant communities to fully participate in the economic mainstream. RPA’s current work is aimed largely at implementing the ideas put forth in the Third Regional Plan, with efforts focused in five main project areas: community design, open space, transportation, workforce, and the economy. RPA has been shaping transportation systems, protecting open spaces, and promoting better community design for the region’s continued growth.

The New Jersey Mayors’ Institute on Community Design is a program organized by RPA with the assistance of the N.J. Office of Smart Growth (OSG) to promote and implement better design and planning in communities throughout New Jersey. This Institute received generous funding from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Leavens Foundation, the Kirby Foundation and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. RPA is also grateful for additional funding from the N.J. State League of Municipalities, and the N.J. Chapter of the American Planning Association.

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Modeled on the national Mayors’ Institute on City Design, the New Jersey Institute provides a multi-day retreat for six mayors and a resource team of design and planning professionals. The mayors present planning and design issues that each community is facing, and then participate in a wide-ranging discussion. While addressing the specific concerns raised by the mayors, the resource team members also describe in broader terms how they have approached similar problems. Using examples from other communities, the mayors and resource team members learn from each other.

The Mayors’ Institute offers public officials the rare opportunity to discuss a design issue facing their community with a group of peers and some of the most respected designers and planners in the country. These institutes focus particular attention on the relationship between community planning, design, smart growth and public health, and how better design and development can create more livable, less auto-dependent communities. Experts in urban design, architecture, conservation, ecology, real estate development, transportation planning and other complimentary fields participate in the Institute discussions, providing presentations and analyses of how alternative development patterns impact the future of communities.

This N.J. Mayors’ Institute was held at Princeton University on September 5th- 7th, 2007. It focused on towns in New Jersey’s Highlands region, in the northern portion of the state, as the mayors of these towns seek to plan, develop, preserve, and grow their communities within the guidelines of the draft Highlands Regional Master Plan. Each case study engaged the resource team and the mayors to think broadly about the future of their communities; in all cases, redevelopment played an important role in the mayors’ visions for their towns.

The Mayors
To date, mayors from over fifty municipalities throughout New Jersey have participated in the program. These communities include Asbury Park, Boonton Borough, Bordentown, Buena Vista, Bridgewater, Burlington City, Chester Township, Town of Clinton, Collingswood, Commercial, Denville, Town of Dover, East Brunswick, Edison, East Orange, Eatontown, Ewing Township, Fair Lawn, Greenwich, Hackensack, Hillsborough, Hopewell Borough, Hopewell Township (Mercer County), Highland Park, Hightstown, Hope, Irvington, Lambertville, Lawrence Township, Lindenhurst, Lumberton, Maplewood, Merchantville, Metuchen, Montgomery, Mount Arlington, Mount Holly, New Milford, Oakland Borough, Old Bridge, Oxford Township, Paterson, Plainfield, Pleasantville, Princeton Borough, Princeton Township, Prospect Park, Red Bank, River Vale, Rutherford, Somerville, South Amboy, South Bound Brook, Stafford, Tinton Falls, Vineland, Washington Borough (Warren County), Washington Township (Bergen County), Washington Township (Warren County), West Amwell, West Cape May, and West Windsor.

September 2007 Mayoral Participants
Hon. William A. Cogger,
Mayor, Chester Township
Hon. John A. Horensky, Mayor,
Washington Township (Warren County)
Hon. Arthur R. Ondish, Mayor, Mt. Arlington
Hon. John P. Szabo, Jr.,
Mayor, Oakland Borough
Hon. Cy Wekilsky, Mayor, Boonton Borough
Hon. Christina Woykowski, Councilwoman,
Washington Borough (Warren County)

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Darius Sollohub, Associate Director of Infrastructure Planning and Associate Professor of Architecture, New Jersey Institute of Technology; Gary Toth, Director, Transportation Services, the Bioengineering Group; Kevin Wilkes, Principal and Founder, Princeton Design Guild.
Environmental protection and its regulatory structures should not be seen as distinct from planning. Smart planning and sensitive community design offer the best tools to protect water resources without causing collateral damage and adverse, unintended consequences. The Highlands Act and the Highlands Regional Plan can better achieve their missions through regulations that implement a thoughtful plan.

What is Community Design?
Community design is the art and science of creating places that function well, inspire and energize people and allow us to relate to one another as human beings, suggested Carlos Rodrigues, AICP/PP, VP and NJ Director, RPA. There are many elements that must be combined for community design to be successful; these “building blocks” are physical (streets, buildings), natural (streams, woods, lakes) and human (traditions, values, taste). Community design matters considerably because it has profound implications for the economy, the environment, quality of life and public health.

Community design has been of interest for many centuries; some of the earliest models of community design were developed for military purposes (fortified cities), spiritual reasons (“holy cities”) or social objectives (utopian cities). These early examples are always formal and often exhibit complex geometries. But the majority of our cities built during the 19th and early 20th centuries are utilitarian and rely on a street grid as the organizing framework -- a functional and flexible system, allowing for quick platting and offering high levels of connectivity. There are numerous variations on grid systems in cities throughout the country.

While there are many interesting models of community design, the “Garden City” model first proposed at the beginning of the 20th century stands out as particularly relevant today. The Garden City movement attempted to create a middle ground between cities – which had jobs, schools, hospitals and cultural activities but were crowded and polluted – and the countryside, which was pristine but dull and lacking economic opportunities, education or health care. The notion that natural and urbanized systems can coexist harmoniously, and that we can create more balanced environments through better planning and community design remains the main challenge of our time. While the process of improving a community’s design can be lengthy and difficult – given the multiplicity of stakeholders involved – community engagement is key to any plan’s success. In the end we want to create places that will stand the test of time.

A New Approach to Sustainable Transportation
The New Jersey Department of Transportation used to widen roads, build bypasses, and add lanes in an attempt to solve traffic congestion. But this approach is not working and traffic congestion continues to worsen every year, said Gary Toth, Director of Transportation Services, the Bioengineering Group. Poor land use decisions is the culprit; we have been separating land uses for decades and forcing all trips out onto arterial highways. Additionally, as we sprawl farther and farther away from our centers, trip times increase, and we create barriers to walking and bicycling.

In recent years NJDOT has been trying to remedy this by leveraging private investment, networking

Resource Team Presentations
Each Institute includes presentations by members of the resource team. These presentations introduce the mayors to the concepts of community design, educate them in the tools employed by professional planners, and frame the subsequent discussion.

Sustainable Development: What Does It Mean?
Our flawed development processes often give us things we do not want: homogenous cookie-cutter developments, which respond to zoning but are not responsive to community character or the environment. Sustainable development improves what we have and preserves it for future generations, said Anthony Sblendorio, Principal, Back to Nature Landscape Associates. An excellent example of sustainable development in New Jersey is the Willow School, an environmentally-friendly private school located on 34 acres in Gladstone. The school buildings incorporate many environmentally sensitive design features, guaranteeing the school a high level of certification from the United States Green Building Council in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. In fact, development actually improved the environmental conditions on the site; among other things, new plantings increased the site’s recharge. The building uses solar power, roof water is collected and used to water plants and flush toilets, and wastewater is treated by constructed wetlands. The great lesson of the Willow School and similar projects is that intelligent development can improve the environmental performance, even of undeveloped sites.

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In recent years NJDOT has been trying to remedy this by leveraging private investment, networking
road systems and, most importantly, encouraging better integration of land uses. An example of this new paradigm is NJDOT’s work on the Route 322 corridor. In order to relieve pressure on nearby highways, NJDOT worked extensively with the communities along the corridor, assisted with land use planning, and tried to prevent poor land use decisions before they were implemented. In the Route 31 corridor, NJDOT avoided building a bypass in Flemington by creating a more integrated local street network that reduced the need for local traffic to travel on the highway. This new way of doing business proves that better planning and design can reduce vehicle miles traveled and traffic congestion, without limiting additional development.

The example of Savannah, Georgia – a historic example of a planned city – offers a number of lessons, said Brent Barnes, Director, Transportation Systems Planning & Research, NJ Department of Transportation. A snapshot of the history of planning in the United States can be seen in a cross-section of the city’s neighborhoods. As one moves away from the city’s historic downtown, the street grid disappears in favor of arterial highways and cul-de-sacs and the mixed-use pattern is replaced with a pattern of single purpose land uses. As a result, vehicle miles traveled increase dramatically. Since these decisions are made locally, towns have the ability (and responsibility) to make the link between land use and transportation in their municipal master plans.

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure includes the entire fabric of public spaces, institutional facilities, services and sites, noted Darius Sollohub, Associate Director of Infrastructure Planning and Associate Professor of Architecture, NJIT. Frederick Law Olmsted is one of the fathers of the concept of green infrastructure – New York City’s Central Park, which he designed, contains the city’s earliest reservoirs and the first depressed roadways, allowing vehicular circulation through the park. Our national park system is another example of green infrastructure – Yosemite still has reservoirs that provide potable water for the city of San Francisco.

In the Highlands, the green infrastructure primarily involves water resources, which are threatened primarily by non-point source pollution. One solution is to minimize impervious surfaces, replacing them with grass channels, dry swales and other retention and filtration measures.

The Plum Orchard neighborhood of New Orleans provides an interesting case study in how to maximize green infrastructure. The neighborhood is below sea level; after Hurricane Katrina, the Urban Land Institute suggested the area should not be re-populated; even during a normal rain storm, pumps are required to keep the neighborhood dry. In this case, however the levee failure was not responsible for the flooding. The soil hardly absorbs runoff, and the neighborhood floods two feet during a 10-year storm and four feet during a 100-year storm. After Katrina the high salt content in the water killed all of the neighborhood’s vegetation, and there are substantial amounts of toxins in the soil from the delta, which has been absorbing arsenic from Midwestern farmland for decades.

In rebuilding the neighborhood, it was critical to define landscape standards that would assist with water containment. The NJIT studio calculated that a layered, well-designed landscape could potentially absorb 300,000 gallons of storm water. To achieve this goal, the neighborhood adopted, among other measures, an appropriate plant list as part of its multi-family zoning ordinance, and added a floor area ratio bonus that rewards quality landscaping. The water retentive plants become part of the neighborhood’s green infrastructure.

Living in the Watershed – Regional Planning & Ecostructure: The Mayors’ Institute Keynote Address

Open to the public, the keynote address is the event’s highlight and traditionally draws a wide audience of elected officials, business leaders, civic activists, the public, experts and the media, in addition to the Institute’s participants and resource team.

The keynote address at the September 2007 Mayors’ Institute was delivered by a distinguished figure in the field of regional planning -- Armando Carbonell, Chair - Department of Planning & Urban Form, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Drawing on his teaching experience and work establishing the Cape Cod Commission in Massachusetts, Mr. Carbonell discussed how smart
planning can be a critical tool in protecting our natural resources while simultaneously accommodating population and economic growth.

Ecostructure, or green infrastructure, provides a natural support system for urbanized areas, supplementing and enhancing conventional engineered infrastructure. Can the natural resources which support our ecostructure accommodate the impacts of an additional 100 million Americans by 2043? Will there be enough land? Not if we continue to grow according to current trends – for example, in the Northeast, land consumption outpaces population growth by a factor of five or six. Our sprawling, land intensive patterns of urbanization threaten to undermine the natural systems on which we rely.

In 1985 Cape Cod faced the prospect of continued uncoordinated population growth among the many local jurisdictions. This made regional planning a high priority, since the underlying aquifer is the sole source of drinking water, and both water quantity and quality were highly vulnerable to the impacts of uncoordinated urbanization. Everyone in Cape Cod is literally “living in the watershed”, that is, living directly over their water supply. Every action taken on the land impacts the quality of this resource. At the time, the lands directly above the largest contiguous water source were available for development. Alarmed policy-makers set a goal of protecting 50% of the remaining undeveloped land. How would this goal be implemented? It would be very expensive to acquire all of this land – the estimated cost at the time was $1.5 billion. A 3% surcharge on the property tax was adopted, to provide funding for acquisition of key parcels. The lesson learned was to look at the system holistically, focusing on the many functions performed by open space -- which have an enormous economic value -- and to manage it through a combination of planning, regulations, and public and private land acquisition.

A similar case study is found in the Southeastern Massachusetts region, which was the subject of a Harvard Graduate School of Design studio directed by Carbonell in 2005. The area is linked to a much larger ecosystem--part of the region drains into the Gulf of Maine--and is threatened by excessive amounts of nitrogen in the water. This has resulted in the elimination of bay scallop populations. Stocks of herring, the most important forage fish in the Gulf of Maine, are severely depleted, at least in part because they have been cut off from access to spawning grounds like Silver Lake. Although there are a number of distressed, formerly industrial cities with considerable capacity for growth in SE Massachusetts, new growth is occurring primarily in sprawling new subdivisions on the fringe, leading to significant fragmentation of the natural landscape. The Harvard studio found serious problems with inappropriate local zoning. For example, many of the suburban towns were entirely zoned for single-family residential on a minimum of two-acre lots; a recipe for producing sprawl. Many local officials are under the misguided perception that larger lot zoning is a good way to protect the environment, when in fact all the evidence suggests that it is generally catastrophic, regardless of the lot size. The Harvard studio found that the region’s build-out could be accommodated in the distressed urbanized areas or in new compact communities, thus significantly reducing the footprint of disturbance. However, there is considerable distrust among local officials with respect to issues of density.

Changing inappropriate local zoning is one of the highest priorities in regional planning in the US, since it has considerable implications not only in terms of environmental resource conservation, but also for housing markets, transportation systems, the economy and virtually every aspect of how regions function. The planning profession has the know how to create attractive communities capable of accepting considerable growth while at the same time protecting, and in many cases enhancing our natural resources. But in order to achieve this, the planning community needs the active cooperation of both the political leadership and the regulators, and this is frequently lacking.

There is a healthy tension in the United States between private property rights and the broader public interest. On the one hand, the nation has a long history of property rights and constitutional safeguards; access to land has been very important historically, as has the emphasis on home ownership. On the other hand we also recognize the police powers of local governments to protect the public interest with respect to land development, and we accept the public trust doctrine. For example, in Kelo vs. New London, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the use of eminent domain for economic development purposes, provided there was a publicly endorsed planning framework underpinning the need for condemnation. Under these circumstances, the broader public interest is allowed to override individual interests.

Similarly, regional planning may require that the broader public interest override individual or specialized considerations. Regions are complex entities with many constituent parts and interests, often with varying priorities. While the impetus and public policy rationale for enacting additional regulations on land development may derive from the need to protect a single natural resource -- drinking water, in the case of Cape Cod, the NJ Pinelands and the NJ Highlands – this over-riding single purpose must be balanced and tempered by other considerations. For example, the price we pay for safeguarding our sources of water need not be to wreck the regional economy or keep it in a permanent state of arrested development; or lead to distortions in the housing market such that only the wealthy can afford to live in the region. In effect smart regional planning recognizes that a balanced and functioning region is our best hope for long term sustainability, including the sustainability of the natural systems which may be driving the planning and regulatory processes. As such, regional planners -- in their haste to protect a single threatened natural resource -- must resist the temptation to over-regulate. Smart regional planning requires comprehensive solutions combining smart planning, a strong but flexible regulatory framework, aggressive and well funded land acquisition and a functioning TDR program.
The New Jersey Highlands Region

In August 2004, the New Jersey Legislature enacted the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act in order to protect and comprehensively plan for a region that supplies drinking water to more than 5.4 million New Jersey residents. The Act defines a region of 860,000 acres in 88 municipalities across seven northern New Jersey counties (Bergen, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, and Warren). The objective of the Act is to protect, restore and enhance the water quality, quantity and other natural and cultural resources of the New Jersey Highlands, provide for development and redevelopment consistent with the Act and promote agriculture within the framework of the Highlands environment. The Act created the Highlands Council, a public agency charged with developing a Regional Master Plan.

The Highlands at a Glance

The Region: The New Jersey Highlands is a 1,250 square mile area in the northwest part of the state noted for its scenic beauty and environmental significance. The region stretches from Phillipsburg in the southwest to Ringwood in the northeast.

Drinking Water: The New Jersey Highlands yields approximately 379 million gallons of water daily. Protecting the state’s drinking water is critically important for maintaining the future economic viability of the entire state.

Natural Resources: The Highlands’ diverse natural communities, including its extensive forests, wetlands, rivers, and streams, are of statewide importance.

Open Space and Recreation: The Highlands provides fresh air, open space, and recreation opportunities for millions of residents of the greater New Jersey metropolitan area.

Economy: The region has a diversified economy going back to colonial times. Recreation, eco-tourism and wildlife activities play a small but important role in the local economy.

Sprawl: Portions of the Highlands were at risk from low density suburban development. Between 1995 and 2000, it is estimated that 17,000 acres of forests and 8,000 acres of farmland were urbanized. Growth pressures were consuming land at a rate of approximately 3,000 acres every year.

Regional Growth: The Highlands Act significantly limits local land use planning authority over lands in the “preservation” area and requires municipalities to conform to the requirements of the Regional Master Plan for lands in the “planning area”.

The New Planning and Regulatory Framework in the New Jersey Highlands

The Highlands Act designated 400,000 acres of the region’s land to a core “preservation area”, where growth is highly restricted; the rest was designated a “planning area”.

Land in the “preservation area” is subject to NJDEP rules under N.J.A.C 7-38. Activities defined as “major Highland development” require a Highlands Preservation Area Approval (HPAA). The definition of major Highland development is as follows:

1. Any non-residential development in the “preservation area”;
2. Any residential development in the “preservation area” that requires an environmental land use or water permit from NJDEP or that results in the ultimate disturbance of one acre or more of land or a cumulative increase in impervious surface by one-quarter acre or more;
3. Any activity undertaken or engaged in the “preservation area” that is not a development but results in the ultimate disturbance of one-quarter acre or more of forested area or that results in a cumulative increase in impervious surface by one-quarter acre or more on a lot;
4. Any capital or other project of a State entity or local government unit in the “preservation area” that requires an environmental land use or water permit or that results in the ultimate disturbance of one acre or more of land or a cumulative increase in impervious surface by one-quarter acre or more.
5. Agricultural or horticultural development or agricultural or horticultural uses are not considered “major Highlands development”. 
The threshold for project review in the preservation area is clearly very strict, and the review criteria very discretionary. There are some provisions for exemptions, for example, places of worship, public or private schools and hospitals that existed as of August 10, 2004 are exempted. However, new community facilities are not exempted. Other restrictions – such as a maximum impervious coverage of 3% of any lot, 300-foot buffers from Highlands open waters and prohibition against public sewer – suggest a draconian regulatory environment. Sadly, this regulatory lock-down virtually guarantees that the distortions in the land use pattern the Highlands Act was meant in part to prevent – the low density, single-use sprawl development that consumes land and destroys the environment – are now grandfathered and protected by state regulation and attempts to retro-fit these dysfunctional patterns will be thwarted by regulation.

The Highlands Council is legislatively charged with reviewing proposed projects in both the “preservation area” and the “planning area”, for consistency with the goals, requirements, and provisions of the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP). However, decisions regarding projects in the preservation area are ultimately within NJDEP’s jurisdiction.

Municipalities and counties with land in the “preservation area” must bring their local plans and development regulations into conformance with the “goals, requirements, and provisions of the RMP.” Municipal and county plans are required to undergo a “plan conformance” process. Municipalities must adopt the elements of the RMP related to critical natural resources, housing, the Highlands build-out analysis, water availability and water quality, water conservation measures and septic system density standards. Counties must adopt the elements of the RMP related to water availability and conservation.

Strangely, the regulations that one would expect would implement the RMP have actually preceded it, such that without rule amendments the RMP is locked into a regulatory framework defined in N.J.A.C 7-38. The Highlands Council released a first draft of the RMP in November of 2006, which elicited more than 1,000 comments from stakeholders and the public. The first draft plan was deliberately vague as to a future vision for the region. It did not contain population or employment projections, nor did it contain an analysis of how the region currently functions in terms of its economy, housing markets, transportation systems or community facilities. As such it was not possible to discern which distortions affect the region and how they might be addressed through the RMP. Similarly, the draft plan did not provide place-specific measures designed to protect and in many cases to restore the region’s threatened natural resources -- the stream corridors and watershed areas. A second draft of the RMP was released November 30, 2007.

The Highlands Act provides for voluntary conformance with the RMP for municipalities and counties with land in the “planning area”. Towns and counties that conform may accrue certain benefits.

In summary, the major challenge for both the Highlands communities and the Highlands Council is to find ways for these communities to address their needs, redevelop and grow without degrading the region’s water quality.

**Case Studies: Summary of Findings**

The six communities studied at this Institute all shared the potential for improving the quality of life for their residents, businesses, and visitors through strategic land use and infrastructure decisions. Because water is an omnipresent issue for all communities in the Highlands, the overarching themes that came out of the six case studies were water related, including water’s potential use as a scenic, cultural and recreational resource, the importance of public access (both visual and physical) to waterfronts and the enormous potential – through redevelopment -- for improving and restoring local waterways and enhancing water quality.

A fundamental lesson for each mayor is to think beyond the confines of his or her challenge – beyond the boundaries of the individual (re)development sites or case study areas – and establish connections to the larger neighborhood or community planning framework. The Institute’s recommendations seek to implement a vision of a comprehensive approach to revitalizing communities and creating a higher quality of life.

**Washington Township** discussed ways to maintain rural character, channel new fiscally beneficial growth and development by way of a new planning framework with better place making characteristics, and reduce public expenses by exploring opportunities for sharing services -- and perhaps even consolidation -- with Washington Borough.

**Washington Borough** examined redevelopment opportunities behind Washington Avenue -- its traditional but struggling Main Street -- including construction of structured parking and redevelopment of a large, dilapidated Department of Public Works parcel located between Washington Avenue and the Shabbecong Creek.

**Oakland Borough** explored redevelopment options for a downtown strip that includes three outdated suburban-style shopping centers and their immediate surroundings, located at the center of town and at the nexus of two major highways and a freight rail line.

**Chester Township** investigated how redevelopment of an abandoned brownfield site on the banks of the scenic Black River poses a unique opportunity to add new uses and further environmental remediation in a largely residential, built-out community.

**Boonton Town** explored redevelopment options for a site adjacent to the town’s Main Street, fronting on the scenic Rockaway River.

**Mt. Arlington Borough** examined the land use and transportation opportunities created by construction of a new commuter rail station on the edge of town.
case studies
discussion, conclusions and recommendations

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PROBLEM STATEMENT A small, privately owned parcel surrounded by substantial public lands is the subject of a rezoning request, from industrial to residential. The site is strategically located between downtown and a scenic river and within walking distance of several parks and a train station with service to Manhattan. The proposed concept plan is seriously hampered by the private parcel’s very odd configuration and would little to transform its surroundings. The objective is to explore both design concepts and institutional frameworks that will permit the town and the developer to plan beyond the boundaries of the small private site and affect transformative change on the entire Hollows as well as on the neglected Plane Street streetscape.

BACKGROUND The town of Boonton was formed in 1866 within portions of Hanover Township and Pequannock Township as a result of the construction of the Morris Canal and the development of the New Jersey Iron Company. The original location of the town is now largely under the Jersey City Reservoir, completed in 1904. The waters from this reservoir were the first in the United States to be chlorinated in 1908. For most of the 1800s, Boonton was an iron works town, home to the New Jersey Iron Company, whose business dominated the town until 1876 when it closed. Although several attempts were made to re-establish iron works on a smaller scale, none endured. Only vestiges of foundations and structures remain in the “Hollow” between Plane Street and the river to remind Boonton of its own Iron Age. The town was also home to a silk factory, a knife factory, a paper mill, a nail factory, a brass and iron foundry, and a carriage factory. The largest local industry in the 20th Century had its beginnings in 1917, when E.A. Stevenson & Company established the “Butter Works” on the site of the old Knox Hat factory, and started processing coconut and vegetable oils into margarine. Under the name E.F. Drew & Company it grew to be one of the largest in the country for the processing of edible oils. The plant closed in the early 1990s and the site is now occupied by Walmart.

Boonton has an interchange on Route 287. The Boonton train station is on NJ Transit’s Montclair-Boonton Line, with service to New York’s Penn Station and to Hoboken Terminal. The town’s Main Street is unique in that it is pitched against a cliff overlooking the “Hollows” between Plane Street and the Rockaway River. This was said to follow an old Native American Trail, which followed the original deer path. Like many New Jersey communities, Boonton’s historic downtown fell on hard times starting in the 1960s and continued to lag behind economically compared to nearby malls and shopping centers. In 2002 the town was designated a Main Street New Jersey community. Since then, Boonton has been working comprehensively to revitalize and manage its historic downtown. The study area is located on the Hollows site off of Plane Street, between Main Street and the Rockaway River. A steep slope lies between Main Street and Plane Street (which runs parallel to Main Street). The study area includes privately owned property, as well as public lands, including a large (34 acre) parcel, a significant portion of which is paved and currently used by the municipality’s Department of Public Works to store salt, gravel and equipment. Mysteriously, and no doubt erroneously, this whole parcel was added at some point in the past to the NJDEP Green Acres list of public parks. While the parcel is clearly not a park, the Green Acres listing creates huge bureaucratic hurdles for this parcel to be used in any way other than a park.

The town has been evaluating a redevelopment proposal by Warren-based Elite Properties for block 34, lots 1.01 and 1.02, which comprise 3.5 acres of privately-owned land in the Hollow. The current proposal, named Riverwalk Residences at Historic Boonton Ironworks, calls for 148 condominium units in two buildings with a direct connection to Main Street. This site is the location of a former retention basin that was part of the Rockaway canal system that ran along the Rockaway River and served the New Jersey Iron Company. It is several steps down from Plane Street and several more steps down from Main Street. A large portion of the basin’s wall is intact, and the town would like to see it preserved. The town would also like to find a way to preserve both the historic pump house (which needs considerable repairs) as well as the historic “pump keeper’s” house.

An earlier plan for 264 units in two larger buildings was rejected by the board of aldermen as too intense. The town has been reviewing the proposal for some time, and there have been numerous changes to the developer’s proposal. The town’s combined zoning/planning board recently voted to recommend a zone change for the area, from industrial to residential. The town council is now
SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS - Town of Boonton

1/2 mile radius from the train station

Link existing and future open space along Rockaway River on both sides

A comprehensive redevelopment plan for the entire “hollows” area would have both public and private benefits

in the process of deciding whether or not to change the zoning.

The privately-owned site is an odd-shaped parcel surrounded by a much larger amount of public land, for which there are no redevelopment plans. Indeed, most of the lands along the Rockaway River in this area are publicly owned. Grace Lord Park runs along the eastern bank; Helen Boesche Park occupies a portion of the northern bank. The study area constitutes a critical missing link of publicly accessible riverfront on the northern bank. The vastly underutilized historic and environmental resources suggest that a broader redevelopment plan, encompassing both public and private properties might be appropriate.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The resource team agreed that housing is likely the right use for the site, given its proximity to the downtown and to the train station. When the second rail tunnel under the Hudson River is completed, Boonton may benefit from one-seat ride service to New York Penn Station. This will be a tremendous asset to the community -- when NJ Transit first established Midtown Direct service, residential property values within walking distance of the new service increased in value by an average of $100,000 relative to comparable properties located further away. It is in everyone’s interest to strengthen the links and improve access between this site and the rail station, which in turn will require better linking the site to Plane and Main Streets and improving the streetscape along Plane Street.

However, the resource team expressed reservations about the
site design as currently proposed, for a number of reasons: the current plan does not maximize the site’s unique layout or take full advantage of the river views, which will add significant value to the real estate; the proposed street system is awkward and would not create pedestrian friendly streetscapes; it is poorly connected to the town’s Main Street; the buildings do not define meaningful public spaces; the project seems over-parked; and the project would have little positive impact on the much larger area around it, including the 34-acres of public lands and the Plane Street streetscape.

Many of these concerns result from the very awkward configuration of the development parcel itself. Because it is surrounded by publicly owned land, it would appear that both the developer and the town could achieve a far better project if the town took the lead in planning for the entire area, a process which can best be accomplished under New Jersey’s redevelopment statutes. This would allow the town and the developer to jointly plan for both public and private lands and re-draw property lines, if necessary. Indeed it appears the town has taken some steps in this direction, and may have declared the area “in need of redevelopment”. However, this route appears to have been abandoned, and an outright rezoning is currently being contemplated. The resource team expressed concern about a rezoning not directly supported by specific master plan findings. The town could conceivably use an overlay zone or conditional use provisions, if appropriately designed, but none of these options will give the town the level of control available under the redevelopment process. Boonton does not have to start from scratch with a redevelopment body – the governing body can designate itself as the redevelopment agency. The interested developer could be designated as the “master redeveloper” of an expanded redevelopment area which also included the adjacent public lands. This would give both the town and the redeveloper maximum flexibility in planning for the entire area, and would facilitate a redevelopment project that is truly advantageous for the community on multiple fronts. There was, on the other hand, concern among the resource team that the town will lose considerable leverage over the planning process if, as requested by the developer, the site is rezoned from industrial to residential, without putting in place a series of safeguards that will ensure maximum public benefit from the redevelopment. That piece meal approach will not yield the broader benefits available under the redevelopment scenario.

In addition, Boonton should be more proactive in moving the DPW facilities to another location and having the site removed from the Green Acres list. There is no functional reason for the DPW to occupy such prime real estate, and the untreated runoff flowing directly into the river suggests the DPW’s current location is not an environmentally responsible one. Ideally, the town would arrange a joint DPW facility with the adjoining municipality, in another location, far from the downtown; but at a minimum, the town should seek to reduce the DPW footprint by 50% to allow proper public access to the waterfront. NJDEP’s requirement for a 300-foot setback from the stream is counter productive. OSG can help Boonton present its case to NJDEP.

As in many former industrial towns, the image of the river in the minds of older Boonton residents is still tainted by memories of the industrial activities that formerly occupied those lands; many residents are unaware that there is public access to the river. A comprehensive redevelopment planning process for the Hollows, engaging the residents and showing new uses, new public spaces, a new interconnected trail system leading to the waterfront and new links to existing and new parks would significantly change this perception. Once the local residents have adopted the reclamation of the riverfront as a local priority, the town can tap into their good will in terms of volunteerism and fund raising for future projects.

A comprehensive redevelopment plan for the entire area would also create a vision for its long term greening and place the redeveloper’s contributions in terms of landscaping, historic preservation and open space into a broader context of a greenway along the river. The redevelopment plan should require the use of storm water retention landscaping throughout, and place an emphasis on reducing impervious surfaces and contamination of the Rockaway River.

Looking away from the river, it is also critical to better connect the new residential neighborhood with Main Street. This could provide the needed incentive for Main Street businesses to develop a Plane Street address. One thought is to provide access from the upper floors of the proposed buildings directly to Plane Street via a pedestrian bridge. This would make the surface parking on Plane Street available for the new housing. A new set of stairs would provide access from Plane Street to Main Street.

The abandoned freight right-of-way should be converted into a bicycle / pedestrian path connecting the neighborhoods further to the south with the riverfront parks and the downtown. This would also allow the public to enjoy the views from the historic trestle bridge that crosses the river valley.

In summary, redevelopment of the Hollows has the potential to bring renewed vitality to Boonton’s Main Street, link the downtown to the river, and dramatically improve the environmental impacts of the DPW facility. To ensure that Boonton is able to make the most of this opportunity it should consider pursuing a redevelopment planning process for the entire Hollows.
**KEY ISSUES**

- Evaluate the potential for the adaptive reuse of a site containing a former lace factory building and explore redevelopment option(s) that will both expedite site clean-up and benefit the community.
- Discuss ways to mitigate the current environmental impacts of the former industrial facility without compromising the property’s redevelopment potential.
- Discuss opportunities for improved public access to the Black River.
- Discuss broader place-making opportunities taking advantage of the river and an adjacent tavern.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Explore redevelopment options for a former lace factory site that take advantage of its location near the scenic Black River and capitalize on the abandoned railroad right-of-way and its potential connections to the many state and local trail systems that provide potential off-road links. Redevelopment options should also consider the proximity to an existing tavern, recognize the absence of public water and sewer, be financially sound and capitalize on the site’s assets while addressing broader township needs. Additional objectives include minimizing the environmental impacts of the existing industrial facilities, including mitigation of the vast amount of impervious surfaces currently on the site; using sustainable storm water management techniques to create new wildlife habitat; and providing public access to the Black River.

**BACKGROUND**

Chester Township, established in 1640 and later incorporated in 1799, was originally named Black River. In Chester Township’s early years, it was known as a resort area with good public schools, the Black River, the Central and DL&W railroads, clean air (it is one of the highest and coolest spots in the county) and picturesque beauty. Chester Township completely surrounds Chester Borough, the area’s traditional center of gravity. While separate communities, Chester Borough and Township enjoy a close relationship and share schools, fire protection, a first aid squad, athletic programs, a community pool and service clubs. The township has developed primarily as a residential community, benefiting from the strong Morris County housing market. The average house price in Chester Township is $835,000. The town has no public water or sewer. It is bisected by Route 206, which runs north/south, and Route 24, which runs east/west. Land preservation has been a long-standing priority, and between state-owned land, county-owned land and municipally-owned land, 42 percent of the town has been preserved to date. A few active farms attract local residents and visitors to purchase their locally-grown food. The town is approaching conventional build-out, and local officials are bracing for what they believe will be a wave of teardowns of older, more modest homes and subsequent replacement with much larger homes. There is concern that this will change the character of the town and make it even less affordable.

A 15-acre parcel located on Oakdale Road near the banks of the Black River presents a unique redevelopment opportunity. The property – originally a lace factory – has a long history of industrial activity, including aircraft engine manufacturing. It is currently abandoned. Hercules Corporation – the current owner – has been pursuing site cleanup at a leisurely pace, in part because there is no incentive to proceed more expeditiously. There is no re-use plan for the site, which is currently zoned Professional Office/Residential. Like countless other brownfield sites in New Jersey, unless the municipality, an experienced developer, or another interested party take the initiative to develop a financially realistic reuse plan, this site may remain unproductive and in its current condition for decades.

The study area includes an abandoned railroad right-of-way, an area along the Black River and a few single-family houses adjacent to the former lace factory buildings. The tract comprises two tax parcels, on either side of Oakdale Road and contains the original lace factory building – a handsome two-story brick structure with distinct, oversized vertical windows – as well as a large, non-descript single-story 1960’s industrial building and a series of smaller auxiliary structures and sheds, generally in poor condition. The site was served by a railroad siding, and the right-of-way still exists. In addition, a rail turntable is reportedly still on the site as well. The Black River, while close, is not visible through the dense vegetation. The water table is reportedly very high, due to the proximity to the river. The study area extends to the end of Oakdale Road, where there is a local tavern.

The municipality believes it can buy the site for approximately two million dollars, but first it would need to understand the true cost of remediation -- NJDEP is currently studying the site and will be providing an overview of the contamination and recommendations for cleanup. The Mayor believes that public pressure would force the owners to pay for the site’s remediation, even though the company only pays $50,000 annually in taxes.
RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

With agro-tourism already blossoming in the area, it seems natural to leverage the Township’s inherent strengths when redeveloping this site. To that end, the abandoned rail tracks near the old lace factory should be converted into a trail suitable for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. Creating visual linkages, such as tree-lined walkways, from Oakdale Road and the old lace factory building to the Black River and trail network would show visitors that they have arrived in a distinct place where outdoor recreation is valued. Locating a bike rental and repair shop onsite could encourage biking both on the trails and around town. The site should be integrated with other agro-tourism sites around town -- through an integrated map and signage system for bikers, cars, pedestrians, and horseback riders, Chester can create a “full day’s” experience for the tourist while generating additional revenue for the town’s farmers and cementing its identity as a rural community.

The site’s frontage on the Black River should be selectively cleared and enhanced to provide human access to the water and become part of the extensive network of environmentally valuable places around town. Habitat enhancements like those seen on the Raritan River frontage of Duke Farms in Somerset County would be appropriate here to recapture the vitality of the stream and attract tourists to its natural beauty and diversity. A kayak or small boat launch would be appropriate.

The buildings also present exciting redevelopment opportunities. The main lace factory building lends itself in terms of footprint, fenestration and architectural character to an adaptive reuse as a bed & breakfast, a nature center, an auction house or any number of other activities. The less interesting 1960s style buildings across the street can be subdivided into smaller less expensive space for rent and reused for “back of house” support activities and specialized retail (ie stores selling seeds, farming and gardening equipment and supplies, and other agricultural/gardening items). They can also be used for small workshop space (ie furniture repair, bicycle repair, artist studio), small educational initiatives (music school, pottery studio, etc) or a combination thereof. Finally, they can also be used to house trades people or small professional offices. (Yellowsprings, PA is a small artist community with about 10 buildings and a hamlet feel that may offer a precedent). The selective demolition and skilled retrofitting of these buildings can create new view corridors to the river (if coupled with selective plant clearing) and a charming, small-scale atmosphere. New access points to the site can be created from the rear, in order to further pull development away from the river. The adaptive reuse of both the buildings and the site should observe environmental best practices wherever applicable, such as permeable pavement in parking areas and driveways, green roofs where applicable and so forth.

There may even be opportunities for new construction close to the intersection at the end of Oakdale. This “T” intersection -- anchored by the existing tavern, a new public space and additional activities -- could form the core of a new hamlet that would stretch along Oakdale to incorporate the existing buildings. Skilled design can combine the site’s existing features with striking new uses and features and create a memorable place that will be a source of pride for Chester. As a matter of principle, new buildings should be close to the intersection and further from the river.

The resource team sees the town’s active involvement in the redevelopment and its ability to bring Hercules into the process as the keys to the successful redevelopment of the site. Chester needs to play a proactive role in planning for the area’s transformation. Given the financial risk and uncertainty associated with the cleanup, private developers are unlikely to make significant commitments without a good understanding of the site’s future planning framework in terms of the types of uses allowed, densities and intensities. The town needs to be actively involved in defining that planning framework and setting the ground rules. Naming the site is a critical step in defining identity and the town should be involved.

Both Montgomery Township and Willingboro constitute precedents of NJ towns that have used the redevelopment process to take control of a property, define a planning framework and actively find a redeveloper. In Chester, bringing Hercules into the redevelopment process through a public-private partnership will help ensure that remediation takes place in a timely manner and that the taxpayers do not become responsible for the costs of remediation. Once the town has a better understanding of the scope of the remediation effort it can begin to realize the vision of an integrated and environmentally sound agro-tourism destination.
SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS - Chester Township

New hamlet of mixed use development

Habitat restoration and enhancement along the Black River

New trail system links to existing trails and provides access to riverfront

Potential new buildings around a new public space

Link the Lace Factory to tavern and create a special new place in Chester

Linear shared parking along new driveway access to the rear of the properties
**PROBLEM STATEMENT** Develop a strategy for retrofitting several older suburban shopping centers into a reinvented, more diversified pedestrian oriented town center, incorporating affordable housing, retail, services and civic spaces and buildings.

**BACKGROUND** Oakland has a population of 12,466 over 15 square miles. Approximately half of Oakland is in the Highlands preservation area; the other half is in the planning area. Throughout the 18th century, Oakland was a farming and lumbering community with mills powered by the Ramapo River and numerous streams. In 1869, the arrival of the railroad connected it to surrounding towns, which spurred commerce. By the late 1800s, Oakland saw the arrival of tourists, vacationers, hunters, fishermen and hikers who came to take advantage of its river, beaches, ponds, woods, hotels, boarding houses and restaurants. In 1902 Oakland was incorporated and elected its first Mayor and Council. Electricity came in 1916, resulting in the slow loss of the town’s water-powered industries. By 1927 only three roads had been paved, but in 1929 Bergen County took over Route 202 and its surfacing. Before World War II most of Oakland’s 932 residents were located along the three paved roads and around the present Potash Lake. After the war, Oakland began its rapid growth thanks to the automobile, and in the 1950s, it earned the title “Valley of Homes” due to its non-farming community. The first scheduled bus service to New York City began in April of 1961. Route 202 was completed in November of 1962 and Route 287 shortly thereafter.

The Borough’s center of commercial activity is at the intersection of Route 202 (Ramapo Valley Road) and Oak Street. I-287 is a few blocks to the north. The physical identity of the central business district lacks thematic unity. Development is scattered and low intensity -- buildings range from 1 to 2.5 stories and lack architectural quality. Small and narrow existing lot configurations create limited space for building expansion and parking lot improvements. Inconsistent building setbacks create disruptions in the streetscape. Many properties along the corridor lack landscaping; large parking areas with no perimeter landscaping or shade trees create a negative image. The area has been largely developed for the automobile with minimal accommodations for pedestrians. The pedestrian environment along Ramapo Valley Road and within the individual properties is poor and fragmented. Crosswalks at intersections and mid-block areas are absent or inadequate. The regional road network (Routes 202, 208, and I-287) offer significant opportunities but also have major drawbacks -- the regional roads provide benefits to businesses for access to goods and services but also carry substantial through-traffic. Peak hour traffic substantially impacts the operation of the intersections of Franklin, Oakland, and Yawpo Avenues and Oak Street. Circulation is hampered by the pattern of super-blocks and few streets, due in part to the influence of the rail line and also to the large parcels occupied by the shopping centers. The resulting sparse street network places undue strain on the few streets and intersections, thereby concentrating traffic at a few stress points.

The study area consists of the three strip mall properties -- Copper Tree Center, Ramapo Plaza, and Oakland Shopping Center -- located along Ramapo Valley Road between Maple Avenue/Terhune Street and Oak Street, and the area immediately around this nexus. This is the commercial heart of Oakland Borough, and this is where the town would like to see a more traditional town center. Behind the shopping centers are mostly single-family neighborhoods.

There is an existing plan, with community and political consensus, to guide redevelopment in the larger downtown area -- a significantly larger area than the study area mentioned above. But the mayor feels this plan does not provide specific design ideas for how to update the area of the three strip malls, and would like to see more specific design guidelines. There is also interest in how to best handle the parking and circulation issues in the study area, as well as affordable housing.

The lack of a central sewer system poses limitations on development. All properties located within the study area are serviced by individual septic systems some of which are failing. This has been a significant impediment to redevelopment. The town is trying to obtain sewer service from a neighboring town.

Behind the Oakland Shopping Center (on the north side of Route 202) and backing up to the rail line is a vacant triangular parcel (approximately 3 acres). The parcel is virtually land-locked, between a row of single-family homes and the back of the shopping center. The town has been discussing redevelopment of this area, with affordable housing as a major component -- the town has an unmet COAH obligation. The affordable housing would consist of 60 units in 2 and 3 story buildings. The town is looking for a private developer, but is also will-
SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS - Oakland Borough

New streets help disperse traffic

New traffic circles improve circulation

Mixed income neighborhood satisfies affordable housing obligation and brings consumers downtown

New streets through shopping centers can maintain existing building footprints

Infill buildings front on new streets to create a traditional downtown
ing to manage the project if no interested private partners emerge.

The Copper Tree Mall’s enclosed section is mostly vacant and there has been talk of redeveloping it as well.

The business district contains or is adjacent to several key civic uses such as the municipal building, library and post office, which bring a significant community focus to the area. The three shopping malls that comprise the study area account for a significant amount of retail space.

The only residential uses in the general area are single-family and two-family homes on Oak Street, a side street. Offices uses are interspersed between retail and are predominantly situated along side streets and in second floors of buildings ancillary to the retail uses.

The Susquehanna and Western railroad is located at the edge of the downtown, a few blocks north. The line (freight only) is operated by a joint venture of CSX and Norfolk Southern and runs 2-3 trains a day (connecting up to the southern tier line). The grade crossing at Ramapo Valley Road is awkward and severely complicates circulation. In the mid 1990s passenger service was investigated for this line, and the town would welcome it, but no action has been taken to date.

RESOURCES TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS
To revitalize and upgrade its suburban downtown, Oakland should consider creating a more pedestrian friendly environment, calming traffic, and using the new affordable housing as a catalyst to add life to the area. To accomplish this, the town needs to create a more pedestrian-friendly framework of streets and blocks. The key action is to subdivide the existing super-blocks and introduce a finer grain network of streets and blocks, that will allow for more efficient car and pedestrian circulation and take some of the pressure off of Ramapo Valley Road. The struggling Copper Tree Mall is a good candidate for this approach. One option is to create a new L-shaped road through the mall parking lot following the footprint of the existing building. What is now a driveway would become a real street. Some of the excess parking on the other side of the new street can be replaced with infill buildings, therefore creating new street frontage. Unused segments of the block of older commercial structures located on the corner of Ramapo Valley Road and Yawpo Avenue would also be re-connected through the existing parking lot. This would create additional commercial opportunities at the rear of the parcels.

Every redevelopment / infill action should be held to a high design standard to improve the pedestrian experience. This includes creating an environment with zero setbacks, shared parking, pedestrian streetscapes, pocket parks and courtyards and incorporating wherever practicable improved storm water management techniques, such as rain gardens and bio-swales.

The resource team recommends a new street parallel to the existing rail line connecting Ramapo Valley to Oak Street. This new street (Yawpo Avenue extension) will provide a new entryway into the municipality and further improve circulation. It will also create new street frontage for infill development, set back from the railroad tracks. The new street should be extended south to Oak Street, which passes underneath the railroad tracks. Another element of this master street network is a connection to I-287 from Oak Street, by way of a bridge across the river to connect with Skyline Drive.

The resource team recommends traffic calming techniques to reduce speed on the new and retrofitted streets. Another recommended circulation improvement is a traffic circle at Route 202 and Yawpo Avenue, a prominent gateway location into the new downtown.

The resource team cautioned that the current plan to build the affordable housing in a cluster behind the shopping center and next to the train tracks will not create a dignified address but rather a low-income enclave. To prevent this unintended consequence and help leverage the affordable housing as a catalyst for further revitalization, the resource team recommended two possible scenarios. The first would create a new downtown neighborhood with both affordable and market rate housing fronting on the new Yawpo Avenue extension, perhaps with a mid-block street connection to Ramapo Valley Road. Placing the housing on a new street that is well integrated with the downtown will give it a dignified address, increase its desirability and ensure it remains an integral part of the community. Caution should be taken to find a suitable design solution to address the rear yards of the homes facing Oak Street.

A second option is to up-zone the entire downtown for housing with a mandatory 20% inclusionary set-aside and reduced parking requirements. This might create incentives to disperse the affordable housing in new infill locations – such as at the Copper Tree mall -- throughout the downtown. The two options are not mutually exclusive and can be combined creating more downtown housing which would be beneficial for its revitalization. Of course any residential up-zoning is contingent upon the provision of sewer access to the downtown.

Lastly, space should be set aside for a new train station in anticipation of possible future passenger rail service. When this happens, Oakland should make sure the pedestrian network provides a safe connection between the neighborhoods, the downtown and the train station to encourage people to leave their cars at home, reducing the need for extensive commuter parking. Generally, downtown parking should be shared, reduced in scale, and metered.

To help this project move forward, Oakland should enlist the support of NJDCA and NJDOT.
KEY ISSUES

Evaluate the potential for safe pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout the study area and particularly at the Howard Boulevard/Route 80 underpass and NJ Transit underpass adjacent to the train station. Discuss options for making the underpasses more friendly and useable by people, wildlife, and the environment.

Discuss commuter parking options at the NJ Transit train station, on both sides of the tracks and assess the redevelopment potential of the Mt Arlington portion of the Hercules tract.

Discuss traffic calming options for Howard Boulevard, on either side of I-80 and access to the portion of the Hercules tract, south of the NJ Transit train station.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Create a land use and transportation framework that provides safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to the new Mount Arlington train station and knits together a diverse mix of uses recently developed along both sides of Howard Boulevard. This planning framework should encompass the undeveloped parcel south of the railroad right-of-way, and enhance the Howard Boulevard commercial corridor and its side streets by providing safe pedestrian links and crossings, and continuous and uninterrupted sidewalks.

BACKGROUND

Mount Arlington, population 4,663, is located on the southeast shore of Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey's largest natural lake and a major recreational resource. While Mount Arlington is now mostly a suburban residential community, it was once a thriving resort town. Prior to World War II it was a vacation spot for the residents of New York City and Newark; every summer thousands would arrive by train at Landing Station, then travel by water taxi across Lake Hopatcong to the area's many large resort hotels to escape the city heat and enjoy the famous "Mount Arlington Breeze." There was also a major amusement park, Bertrand Island, which featured a world famous carousel and roller coaster. The island is now home to residential neighborhood.

Mount Arlington's center of gravity has traditionally been in this older area near scenic Lake Hopatcong. However, with the opening of Route 80 and the interchange at Howard Boulevard, development pressures gravitated to the south. The area north of the interchange, on both sides of Howard Boulevard, has developed according to a "planned unit development" model, with a variety of land uses – including hotels, office parks, retail, restaurants, banks and a considerable amount of housing, some age-restricted – but in a super-block format. (Much of the east side of Howard Boulevard is in the adjacent town of Roxbury.) There are many driveways and internal circulation aisles though parking lots, but few connecting streets. NJDOT has a large district office in this area. There is a large park & ride for bus passengers to New York City, on the NJDOT parking lot. This parking lot will be shared with a new NJ Transit train station.

This new train station, which is currently under construction, will provide service to New York Penn Station via both the Montclair/Boonton line and the Morristown line. The new station includes an underpass providing pedestrian – but not vehicular -- access to the area south of the tracks, where there is a large paved area immediately adjacent to the station. However, access to this area is currently available only from Howard Boulevard, and is somewhat difficult given the high speed of traffic descending the hill towards the I-80 interchange. There are currently no sidewalks along either the I-80 or NJ Transit underpasses, and consequently the new train station is inaccessible to pedestrians. The new station will include 500 parking spaces.

Howard Boulevard is a fast moving, heavily traveled regional connector. It is a county road. Traffic in the vicinity of the I-80 interchange is fast-moving and aggressive. The approach to I-80 is downhill, on both sides, which further encourages speeding. Pedestrian and bicycle crossings of Howard Boulevard are risky. Although some sidewalks exist, other pieces of the sidewalk system are missing. Streets are wide and offer few, if any, pedestrian amenities. Pedestrian and bicycle circulation around this recently developed area has been clearly an afterthought. However, uphill and further north, Howard Boulevard narrows considerably as it goes through the Mount Arlington village area and to Lake Hopatcong beyond, and in these areas traffic moves more slowly. To what extent would some form of traffic calming in the area around the interchange be desirable?

There is local concern about whether the parking currently provided will be sufficient, as well as whether peak hour commuter traffic entering and exiting the station area may cause Howard Boulevard to back up. On the other hand, it is unclear whether the public investment in a parking structure on the site can be justified, considering parking is currently free and the market is unlikely to sustain significant parking fees. Once the station is operational the trip to Manhattan will take commuters approximately one hour and forty minutes (with a transfer in Hoboken). Future plans to add dual-mode locomotives to the line might provide a one-seat ride for commuters using this station, but are unlikely to significantly reduce trip duration.

The study area comprises both sides of Route 80 and of the NJ Transit right-of-way, and both sides of Howard Boulevard. Route 80 and the NJ Transit line run parallel to each other and only a few hundred feet apart. The majority of the study area is north of Route 80. The area to the south of the railroad is part of a
Instead of the insipid lawns and ornamental shrubbery, the deep front yard building setbacks prevalent throughout the study area create opportunities for additional landscaping, with both place-making qualities and water quality potential. The resource team suggested that the first step towards accomplishing this goal would be to install up to four roundabouts at key locations to slow traffic, facilitate turning movements and improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the new station. There are successful precedents for this type of intervention from around the nation, including Malta and Colony in upstate New York. Roundabouts are also an accepted design strategy for successfully identifying a gateway into the community. There is sufficient right-of-way under the two overpasses to add a sidewalk connection, preferably in both directions, but at a minimum on the east side. In addition to the sidewalk, the underpass itself should be animated and improved with public art, perhaps created by students in the local school system. There are numerous examples -- such as Providence, RI and Seattle, WA -- of how to beautify highway underpasses. Additional pedestrian infrastructure, such as clearly marked cross-walks and pedestrian activated crossing lights should be installed as part of a comprehensive package of pedestrian infrastructure safety improvements. NJDOT has funding for these types of improvements.

To facilitate pedestrian activity, Mount Arlington should find ways to encourage the development of additional walking and bicycle paths throughout the community, knitting the various uses and connecting residents and jobs with retail outlets and the train station. This expanded bike/ped network can include both conventional sidewalks on the public street right-of-way and off-road paths on easements through private property. Over the very long term, through changes to its zoning, Mount Arlington can also encourage new buildings with ground floor retail activities to locate closer to the street, eventually creating a more “Main Street” environment.

The deep front yard building setbacks prevalent throughout the study area create opportunities for additional landscaping, with both place-making qualities and water quality potential. Instead of the insipid lawns and ornamental shrubbery, the town should encourage private property owners to install rain gardens, bio-swales and additional tree plantings. If properly executed, as part of a comprehensive plan, these landscaping interventions would improve water quality, reduce run-off and begin to define a unique personality for an area that is mostly generic. The lush landscaping will change the image of Howard Boulevard and announce to pedestrians and drivers that they are in a unique place. Since water has been a defining feature of Mount Arlington, it would be appropriate to place fountains and other water features in the roundabouts or along the street as another way to enhance community identity. The resource team notes that the community itself can be a great resource for ideas on how to accomplish this. Lake Placid, New York provides an example of a community that “announces” itself to drivers.

Another way to provide residents with access to the train station while reducing parking requirements is through a feeder or jitney service, such as exists in Maplewood, NJ and elsewhere. Typically, NJ Transit provides the van and the municipality is responsible for the annual operating costs. It is not clear whether Mount Arlington has the density to support this approach -- the town and NJ Transit should evaluate the feasibility of this option. There are other strategies which the town can adopt. For example, to encourage people to walk, the mayor of Metuchen, NJ started a very successful weekly “walk with the mayor” event, providing constituents with a unique opportunity to talk directly with the mayor, become more familiar with the downtown and get exercise at the same time. The same program placed signs throughout the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods with maps identifying several itineraries (“red, yellow, blue”) and their length. Mount Arlington can develop its own program with comparable objectives.

Future redevelopment of the Hercules property is unclear. A joint planning effort involving both Mount Arlington and Roxbury Township would best tackle this. In the absence of this planning mechanism, the resource team discouraged Mount Arlington from making plans for the site independently. A temporary parking lot can be placed on the 10-acre Hercules parcel closest to the station, providing additional station parking. This might evolve over time into structured parking if demand at the station continues to grow, if there is a financial mechanism to underwrite the infrastructure costs and if this makes sense in terms of the broader, yet-to-be-determined redevelopment scenarios for the Hercules tract.
SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS - Borough of Mount Arlington

- Sequence of traffic circles to calm traffic and improve circulation
- Supplemental commuter parking at station
- On street and off road bike/pedestrian network
Develop a conceptual design framework for the study area that balances the potentially competing public objectives of new growth, additional public space, additional parking, improved circulation and environmental remediation, taking into account the likely regulatory restrictions deriving from the proximity of the stream.

BACKGROUND Washington Borough grew considerably during the 19th century due to its location relative to major transportation facilities: the Morris Canal ran along the north end of the town, while the Morris & Essex Railroad ran along the southern end. Two major roadways -- currently Route 31 and Route 57 – intersect at the center of town, making it a classic crossroads community.

The borough once served as a bustling rural center providing goods and services to farmers from the surrounding communities. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the borough was also an important center for the manufacturing of musical instruments, pianos and organs in particular. The borough has many stately Victorian-style homes built during this period, along with a traditional American “Main Street” (Washington Avenue - Route 57) of classic proportions. For decades the downtown has struggled economically, a victim of suburban dispersion and competition. However, there are signs of hope. A core portion of Washington Avenue is presently undergoing extensive streetscape improvements. The first significant new construction on Washington Avenue in decades is also underway, in the form of a large, mixed use retail and residential building. A Business Improvement District has been created to help coordinate downtown revitalization, tenant recruitment and retention, events, marketing and both public and private improvements. The Borough has worked on redevelopment plans for several areas, including portions of the downtown, and the planning framework is in the process of being clarified. The population of Warren County has been steadily increasing, as high real estate prices and property taxes in New Jersey’s northeastern counties push buyers further west. The Borough can benefit from this growth.

Growth in Washington Borough will continue to occur primarily through redevelopment of both former industrial properties as well as non-descript commercial / retail properties. There are a number of underutilized properties, some of which are publicly owned – such as the Public Works lot – which offer opportunities for additional growth as well as environmental remediation and additional public space. The Borough has focused its recent efforts in the downtown core. A Downtown Plan has been prepared by the Borough’s planning consultant.

The Borough is facing some uncertainty from NJDEP with respect to its ability to handle wastewater from new construction. The Borough has recently upgraded its wastewater treatment facility, which is capable of treating 1.5 million gallons of effluent daily. However, the 100-year old collection system shows evidence of serious “I+I”, and therefore the sewer plant’s full capacity is not available. The plant discharges into the Shabbecong Creek. It is unclear how much additional effluent can be handled by the plant and this creates uncertainty relative to the amount of additional growth the Borough can accommodate.

The Shabbecong Creek, which runs through the southern half of the Borough, is a tributary of the Pohatcong Creek – a stream classified by NJDEP as Category 1 (C-1) and as such, subject to the 300-foot disturbance setback requirements except where already disturbed. Since the public works site is heavily disturbed and contains a considerable amount of impervious coverage this regulation should have a less significant impact on redevelopment. However, there is clearly the potential to improve sheet run-off conditions into the creek. Portions of the site are also subject to the 100-floodplain. It should be noted that the Borough’s wastewater treatment facility discharges into the creek, downstream from the study area site.

The study area comprises a portion of a block south of Washington Avenue (block 93.01). It is bounded by Broad Street to the West, Vanatta Street to the East and the Shabbecong Creek to the South. (Block 93.01 actually straddles both sides of the creek.) Much of the rear of this block is public land occupied by the Borough’s Public Works complex. The Borough has found an alternative location for these uses, outside of the downtown, and so this site is expected to become available for redevelopment. The site -- which slopes down from Washington Avenue to the Creek – has been declared an “area in need of redevelopment”, but no redevelopment plan has yet been adopted. There is a conceptual plan developed by the Borough’s planning consultant.

Block 93.01 is really a super-block -- it is unusually long (1,250 feet) and deep (750 feet). (The average
block in the borough is 200 by 450 feet). Alleger Street penetrates a portion of the block, but dead ends. Circulation and access within the block are provided by a number of driveways, and as such, is very awkward. Since this block backs up to the creek this further complicates circulation in this part of the downtown. Redevelopment of the DPW site can help address these issues.

**RESOURCES TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS**

With the new streetscape improvements, infill development and downtown management entity, Washington Avenue is on its way to becoming a more vibrant downtown environment. Borough officials are gaining confidence in the future of the area and are beginning to look at longer term projects. To further reinforce this positive trend, the borough should develop a holistic parking strategy for the downtown. The borough should consider creating a parking authority, and conduct a parking audit to better understand the current parking capacity. It should encourage shared parking in the downtown to manage existing parking more efficiently and reduce the total number of parking spaces needed. This can be achieved by updating the zoning code’s parking requirements to recognize mixed-use and shared parking concepts, but also by encouraging property owners to pool parking resources. If the audit indicates a parking deficit, either current or projected, the borough can intervene to supply more public parking and fill the gap. Recognizing that parking is a supportive use, and that structured parking is very expensive, the borough needs to carefully consider the economics of a public parking solution. The borough should consider, for example, whether to charge property owners for use of publicly owned parking (which is currently free). This charge could come in the form of a lease, instead of a one time fee, which would begin to generate revenue for a potential parking deck that the borough may need to build in the future. Establishing metered parking in the downtown would also generate revenue. In addition, the borough should consider using Payment in Lieu of Parking for new uses that are not able (or willing) to otherwise satisfy their parking requirements.

With an eye to the future, Washington Borough could consider land banking the DPW site – once it becomes available – as surface parking until the funding and increased demand warrant building structured parking. If a parking deck is considered, it should be sensitively sited such that the parking is hidden from the public view by liner uses, such as housing or retail. The new public parking deck next to Princeton’s public library provides a good model. An excellent resource on these issues is the OSG publication “Parking Matters: Designing, Operating and Financing Structured Parking in Smart Growth Communities” (http://www.nj.gov/dca/osg/resources/publications.shtml).

The resource team considered the circulation issues associated with the super-sized block and recommended extending Alleger Street through the site such that it can eventually provide a direct link from Broad Street to Route 31. The extension of Alleger Street will create new street frontage north of the creek. This street frontage should be infilled with new construction, thereby completing the block and creating a hard edge. The possible parking structure could front on Alleger, with liner retail and residential facing the creek. The area south of the Alleger Street extension should be left as open space and treated appropriately to filter runoff into the creek. The borough should also investigate opportunities for a new mid-block street connecting Washington and Alleger, to open up the middle of this super-block. At a minimum, one or more appropriately landscaped pedestrian connections should be created linking Washington to Alleger Street and to the creek. New infill buildings could face on these pedestrian connections, with vehicular access from the Alleger extension. The Alleger extension would also create the opportunity to redevelop property fronting on Route 31 and as such create an impetus to clean up and dignify the southern gateway into the downtown which is currently very unattractive.

The borough also has a unique opportunity to enhance and further utilize the Shabbecong Creek. Moving the DPW is of course key to any stream remediation efforts. In redeveloping the site, the borough should make sure to replace the impervious surface immediately adjacent to the stream with effective biofiltering systems, without compromising public access. Runoff that is flowing into the stream from further away may need to be treated in underground chambers, which can be installed during site redevelopment. New buildings, such as the possible parking garage, should have green roofs.

Looking beyond the DPW site, the borough should consider engaging the broader public and in particular all the property owners whose properties back up to the creek in a conversation about how best to protect it and how much to convert to public use. The borough should also engage NJDEP in a discussion about how best to treat the buffers. There is greater flexibility regarding buffer width and setbacks from streams in a redevelopment scenario. And the borough may wish to approach NJDEP with a strategy for upgrading the stream that goes beyond the limits of the site. For instance, an aggressive backyard maintenance ordinance regulating the use of pesticides and fertilizers, encouraging certain plantings along the entire downtown portion of the stream and engaging in stream bank restoration would have much more significant and lasting impacts than the rigid application of a setback requirement to the site. This can conceivably help the borough gain good will with the regulators. In its discussions with NJDEP the borough will benefit greatly from the support of OSG and Highlands Council and should make sure these agencies are part of the meetings with NJDEP. However, public support for stream bank enhancements on private property is crucial. The bor-
SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS - Washington Borough

Breaking down this superblock is the key to revitalization of the downtown area.

The borough's downtown revitalization strategy seeks to increase security in the area, in part by attracting restaurants and other activities that bring in more people and add eyes to the street. The resource team supports this approach and would take it one step further, suggesting the borough work to create a restaurant row leading to the theater, which is immediately east of the Route 31 / Washington Street intersection and should naturally function as an anchor for this end of the downtown. Benches, tables and chairs on the sidewalk create more opportunities for people to linger in the public realm and this will encourage people to linger before and after a show, patronize shops and walk around, thereby increasing the overall safety of the area. However, the hugely over-engineered intersection of Route 31 and Washington Street creates a very serious divide between the theater and the rest of the downtown. NJDOT did the borough a tremendous disservice when it replaced the beautiful and highly functional historic traffic circle with the current intersection design. The borough should vigorously engage NJDOT and demand it revert back to the historic design, which is now widely recognized by the traffic engineering profession as a superior solution.

Finally, and for the benefit of the general public, the borough should make sure the redevelopment planning process is explained and placed within the broader framework of the Master Plan. Redevelopment planning is often done in a vacuum, without reference to how the specific project under discussion will contribute to the broader public objectives. Engaging the public in a forum to discuss the full complement of public objectives and proposed improvements for the downtown will help residents see the linkages and synergies and, in turn help the community work together as a whole to achieve common goals.

Three Parking Scenarios

1. Parking deck on DPW site with access from Alleger and Washington
2. Parking deck with direct connection to gym
3. Parking deck on DPW site with Alleger St. extension to Washington and Route 31

600 ft. BMP waterfront overlay district should include:
- Bioswales
- Fewer impervious surfaces
- Sand filters
- Fertilizer/herbicide reduction
- Public access trail
- Lawn reduction

Breaking down this superblock is the key to revitalization of the downtown area.

Recreate historic traffic circle
KEY ISSUES

Define a growth strategy for a municipality undergoing development pressures that accommodates market pressures and recognizes fiscal realities while creating a planning framework that fosters center-based development.

Define a framework for growth along the Route 31 corridor southbound, including its hinterlands.

Consider options for a larger circulation network that increases east/west connections and provides alternatives to Route 31 as the main north/south connector.

Explore whether Hawk Pointe may perform a larger role in centering this area.

Define the appropriate spatial relationship between the more urbanized Borough and the emerging auto-oriented, predominantly commercial strip that has evolved along Route 31 to the south.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Should Washington Township be satisfied with a linear “center,” an auto-oriented strip that extends from the Borough line outward and – while providing a variety of commercial functions and enhancing the municipal fiscal base -- never rises to the level of a true civic center? Are there alternative forms, either on Route 31 or removed from it that can house these more complex and sophisticated functions, where civic uses – such as the municipal library or a local arts center – can closely intermingle with conventional retail functions and other employment centers?

BACKGROUND

Washington Township was incorporated in 1849; the Township and the Borough separated in 1868, leaving the Township with its current size of 17.9 square miles and a population of 6,981 in 2000. For most of its history, Washington Township has relied heavily on agriculture, although some business and industry have also been a part of the local economy. The construction of Route I-80 to the north and I-78 to the south brought significant suburban growth to the town; today, the Township has a suburban feel and acts as the donut around the Borough and its central business district.

Washington Township is a growing municipality in search of a strategy to help define its identity. The dynamics of real estate development, local politics and spatial configuration have oriented recent growth away from Washington Borough, the region’s traditional and historic center. However, the Township is linked to the Borough spatially and functionally by the area’s historic infrastructure, in particular the major transportation corridors, such as Route 31, and still relies on the Borough for some goods and services.

Growth has followed this path of least resistance, and strip commercial development along the Route 31 corridor south has been significant in recent years.

One significant challenge has been the absence of public sewer and water to service higher-density development in the Township. Public sewer is available in the Borough but not in the Township. The Borough and a portion of the Township received joint Center Designation from the State Planning Commission in 1999, but little has been done to make the concept of a joint center a reality and that concept itself is now being questioned by the Borough, which faces NJDEP imposed constraints on the capacity of its wastewater treatment system.

The area along Route 31 to the South of the Borough is zoned primarily for HC-Highway Commercial, with portions of the highway frontage zoned Office Research – OR. The other designation affecting one large area is Planned Village District – PVD, which is the area occupied by Hawk Pointe, a multi-use development currently under construction with housing, a golf course and club house, and highway-oriented retail. This development is served by its own wastewater plant, which discharges to groundwater by way of spray irrigation of the gold course. The entire southern half of the township, including the areas behind these parcels with highwqay frontage, is zoned Valley Residential – VR, a low density designation.

The township wants to preserve its rural character, and to that end has acquired some farmland, but this is an expensive strategy that is not sustainable in the long run, since the town’s commercial and industrial tax base is limited, which increases pressure on residential property taxes.

The broader study area is a 3-mile stretch of Route 31, going south from the Washington borough line, and the areas behind it, on either side. This corridor is a medley of strip commercial development – retail centers, including a recent one with a substantial grocery store; car dealers; office buildings; and open space. Most development is strip in nature (one block deep, with farmland behind), but some existing projects – such as Hawke Pointe – are substantial in size and could become centers of activity on their own, although the land use configuration and the limited density are not conducive to pedestrian activity. Bicycling, on the other hand, could provide a viable transportation alternative, but no infrastructure has been developed to encourage it.

The unfolding land use pattern holds serious implications for the local circulation system, which offers limited opportunities, beyond Route 31, for north/south movements; and only one option – Asbury Anderson Road – for east/west movements. As the southern half of the township develops primarily along the Route 31 axis, how will the vastly increased number of vehicular trips be handled by a such a sparse system?

It should be noted that the stretch of Route 31 northbound between the town of Clinton (a historic center) and Washington Borough (another historic center) is not pristine and undeveloped, but rather
contains several smaller communities of lesser dimensions, such as Hampton and Glen Gardner, which either straddle Route 31 or developed historically to one side. These small settlements are not self-sufficient, but have a long history and constitute unique places.

**RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS**

Washington Township wants to maintain its rural character, but also needs economic development to counter the fiscal pressures associates with the demographics generated by continued low density residential growth. The town has been pursuing two contradictory – and costly -- policies: investing in farmland acquisition, while at the same time zoning for strip commercial development along the Route 31 corridor and for low density residential virtually everywhere else, thus ruining the rural character. These two land use policies are directly in contradiction with each other and need to be reconciled. In addition, the town’s planning in the past has ignored the presence of the Borough, which continues to function as area’s the center of gravity. This too needs to be remedied.

This Mayor’s Institute brought together representatives of both Washington Township and Washington Borough, which made it possible to have a conversation about the advantages – both financial and in terms of better planning -- to both communities of exploring joint services and possible future consolidation. The resource team began by recommending the two towns begin a dialogue over planning issues. This dialogue would be aided by a joint “build-out analysis”, showing what will happen if all lands are developed according to current zoning. Once the communities fully visualize and understand the implications of “staying the course,” the resource team believes there will be support for alternatives, such as center-like planning that might, for example, locate one or more new hamlet developments off of Route 31 in the township.

Fortuitously, there is funding available through NJDOT to model different development scenarios illustrating how different zoning strategies will actually look like on the ground. And OSG has funded several county-wide build-out analyses. At a minimum, the resource team believes it is important that this analysis be conducted for the township and the borough, as it would provide both communities with the bigger picture in terms of planning. Sharing services can be a first step in exploring a possible future consolidation. And since the township surrounds the borough, the two municipalities would do well to work together in creating a greenbelt around the borough, or a circular system of parks and open space that would limit sprawl and orient development towards the already denser center.

It should be noted that “One Washington” planning does not imply focusing all growth in the borough – indeed the township could host multiple focal points, and carefully planned new hamlet(s) off of Route 31 need not compromise the viability of the borough’s downtown. It is however clear that this development cannot continue to occur in a linear fashion along Route 31. Indeed, the resource team recommends that the township and NJDOT jointly plan the progressive transformation of the image of Route 31, from strip highway to rural road. This image adjustment can be accomplished by planting allees of trees along the road, adding landscaping, requiring minimal setbacks and eliminating front yard parking. Other features might include bike paths, architectural design guidelines and better sign controls.

It is also clear that the town cannot continue to rely on Route 31 as the primary north-south arterial. In the absence of a circulation network offering alternative routes, any future growth will only exacerbate traffic congestion on the state highway. As such, the town should carefully coordinate its land use planning with a macro-level street plan that both creates opportunities for new center-based development and takes local trips off the state highway system. The town should also better coordinate its open space and farmland preservation actions such that it does not preserve lands in the wrong locations.

Lincoln Avenue runs parallel to Route 31, roughly 300 feet to the west, for almost a mile, heading south from the borough. This road could handle a limited amount of compact development. Existing uses fronting on Route 31 should be encouraged, over time, to reorient their access to Lincoln Avenue. The intersection of Route 31 and Lincoln Avenue might be a good location to cluster development around, in a hamlet-like fashion. The resource team recommends using Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to simultaneously preserve existing farmland and cluster development where it is appropriate. Chesterfield Township in Burlington County provides a precedent for how a town can effectively use TDR.

Instead of continuing to accept car dealers and other generic, low-value added activities, the town should focus its economic development strategy. The resource team suggested the town try to attract two industry sectors. First, leveraging its rich farming history, Washington could encourage growth in farming-related and farming supportive retail and services – equipment supply and repair, seeds, service centers and markets. Alternatively, or in addition, the town can try to attract a new industry cluster. The NJ Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) has a program called “Ready for Growth” that is looking for places to cluster high value, high growth industries like pharmaceuticals.

All in all, Washington Township has a real opportunity to take control of its planning destiny and chart a new course with aggressive new planning policies and active collaboration with the borough.
SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS - Washington Township

Close curb cuts on Route 2 and create reverse access.

New macro-scale circulation reroutes local trips from highway and offers new development opportunities.

Preserved farmland maintains rural character.

Plant crops to demonstrate urban agriculture.

New mixed use village off Route 31 creates employment center.

Create buffer to enhance rural identity.
Regional Plan Association (RPA) is an independent regional planning organization that improves the quality of life and the economic competitiveness of the 31-county, New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region through research, planning, and advocacy. Since 1922, RPA has been shaping transportation systems, protecting open spaces, and promoting better community design for the region’s continued growth. We anticipate the challenges the region will face in the years to come, and we mobilize the region’s civic, business, and government sectors to take action.

RPA’s current work is aimed largely at implementing the ideas put forth in the Third Regional Plan, with efforts focused in five project areas: community design, open space, transportation, workforce and the economy, and housing. For more information about Regional Plan Association, please visit our website, www.rpa.org.

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