Although the city has benefited in recent years from some important new development projects and there have been significant efforts in many neighborhoods to draft plans for development, Mayor Booker recognized the desperate need for a city-wide vision for the future. The City has recently updated the Land Use Element of its Master Plan, but it now needs to update the other elements in anticipation of a new Master Plan and updated Zoning Ordinance. The current Zoning Ordinance is over 40 years old, and has not kept up with a generation of development. Instead, local community groups, state agencies, private developers and others have filled in the void by creating their own plans on a piecemeal basis. While many of these plans are beneficial, they do not fit into a larger, unified picture. More troubling, citizens understand that overall development policy decisions have been made as much on the basis of political connections as merits. Land use decisions in Newark have typically not been made with constructive engagement of the neighborhoods. As a result, residents have felt disenfranchised and public leaders report a “planning fatigue” that must be recognized and addressed to ensure that the best ideas are adopted and implemented.

In June, Mayor Booker enlisted Regional Plan Association (RPA) to create a Draft Vision that would build on the many existing plans for the city and provide the foundation for the revised Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. RPA’s staff of planners began by analyzing more than 100 plans prepared by community groups, previous City administrations, State and Federal agencies and non-profit organizations. The effort focused on 89 of the most current plans, including 9 open space and environmental plans, 29 community-level plans, 36 economic development plans and 15 transportation plans. A full list and map of these plans can be found at the back of this report.

Using this analysis as a starting point, and working closely with the Booker Administration, RPA convened local partners and planning, design and architecture professionals in an intense three-day planning workshop at the New Jersey Institute of Technology School of Architecture, September 13-15, 2006. The planning workshop, or “charrette,” organized participants into teams to discuss economic development, open space and environment, transportation and community development. Sub-groups developed throughout the charrette to brainstorm specific projects, such as utilizing the airport as an economic generator and creating a new district around the Newark Arena currently under construction.

The result is the strategic vision outlined in this report. By building on existing planning efforts, this initiative aims to resolve competing priorities, build consensus, and create a new neighborhood-driven planning paradigm for Newark. This is not a master plan for the city nor a full analysis of the positives and negatives of each of the many plans prepared for Newark. Instead, this vision will form the framework for a city-wide master plan and serve as a guide for infrastructure and other investments. Most importantly, this effort will help rebuild trust and thus addresses a key concern about master planning heard during the most recent public forums throughout the city.

This is only the beginning of the planning process under Mayor Booker. Looking ahead, Regional Plan Association is committed to working with the City of Newark on a robust public dialogue that will help build consensus around the most important initiatives identified here. In this way, we can advance the community-building plans that the citizens of Newark have worked so hard to create. There is a new optimism in Newark, and we hope that this vision helps usher in a new era of prosperity in a city with a storied history and boundless potential.

Newark is at a crossroads in its history. Like so many other former industrial cities, Newark spent the second half of the last century in economic decline, as business and residents left for the suburbs. The city’s woes were compounded by its own unique issues, with the scars of the 1967 riots and a generation of corruption impeding progress. But Newark benefits from tremendous competitive advantages that other older cities around the country lack due to its proximity to New York City, at the center of a rapidly growing region desperate for development sites. Unlike much of the region, the city already has the infrastructure and physical capacity to support the growth that can bring prosperity to all of its residents.

Mayor Cory A. Booker was elected on a platform of change, bringing in a dynamic new City Council. Along with efforts to make the city safer and improve public schools, Mayor Booker has promised to create a vision for Newark during his first 100 days in office that projects where the city needs to move over the course of his administration and beyond. How many people will live and work in Newark? What kind of neighborhoods will the city have? How will people travel around the city, and where will they spend their free time?

2005 Housing Scholars plan for South Orange Avenue
Newark’s future looks more promising than it has in decades. The New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Region is projected to add 4 million people and 3 million jobs by 2030. Yet, a map of the region shows that the area is rapidly running out of developable land. With suburban development pushing up against physical constraints and changing demographic patterns, Newark will succeed by embracing its urban character – its diverse population, its density, its culture and its infrastructure. To support an expanding economy, Newark and the entire metropolitan region is going to have to develop in new and creative ways in both city and suburbs.

If Newark is going to capitalize on its infrastructure systems – transportation, water, sewer and energy – were built to accommodate the city’s population at its peak, which reached 442,000 in 1930. Despite adding more than 7,000 residents over the past five years, the city’s current population remains at approximately 280,000, according to the 2005 Census. With this excess capacity and Newark’s central location, the city is capable of supporting significant employment and residential growth in the next 25 years. If Newark grows at the same pace as the rest of the region, it will add 50,000 residents by 2030. A more aggressive strategy would add 100,000 new residents, a number that can be supported in a resurgent Newark.

Newark’s vitality, however, will be measured by far more than a growing population. A more prosperous and healthier citizenry should emerge from Newark’s existing neighborhoods. Newark should also regain its stature as a hub for workers, visitors, tourists and students. In daytime, the city’s population already swells with workers and college students from the surrounding region. But far too little is captured in retail activity or arts and entertainment venues.

If Newark is going to capitalize on its infrastructure, location, and other assets, much work needs to be done. First and foremost, the city’s crime problem, both real and perceived, must be addressed. Creating a sense of safety in Newark for residents, commuters and shoppers is an essential component of attracting development. The other critical elements are the restoration of a rational process of governance to the City and its culture and its infrastructure. To support an expanding economy, Newark and the entire metropolitan region is going to have to develop in new and creative ways in both city and suburbs.

Any revitalization must start with the city’s current residents, ensuring that they are included in the city’s growing prosperity, with access to good jobs, thriving neighborhoods and exciting cultural events. That is why the recommendations in this report all serve to create a new, community-driven planning process for the City. The residents of Newark must be in control of their future. The vision described in this report is of a growing population that will return Newark to its rightful place of regional prominence, but it is designed with the city’s current residents foremost in mind.

The Newark we envision is Equitable, Accessible, Green, Smart & Prosperous. The vision is equitable first, because any plan for Newark’s future must provide a better quality of life for all Newark residents. The vision closes with prosperity, because each of the strategies outlined here combine to reach Mayor Booker’s goal for a prosperous Newark. In between, the Newark envisioned here is accessible, green and smart, because these are the building blocks of a healthy economy. Taken together, they provide a Draft Vision for Newark’s future.

**Equitable**

The vision described in this report is of a rapidly revitalizing Newark. Any time an urban center like Newark experiences dramatic economic growth, there is a danger that segments of the population will be left behind. The revitalization envisioned for Newark, however, is not limited to Downtown, or to new residents or new commuters. This is a vision of growth that thinks of Newark’s existing residents first, and sees regional prominence as a means to improve their quality of life. This is a five-ward vision, a neighborhood-based vision, a city-wide vision. The first step is to engage the community, building off of local planning efforts and including residents in the planning moving forward. Years of empty prom-
ises and backroom deals have left much of Newark feeling disenfranchised, and action must be taken immediately to show that this administration will not be doing business as usual.

This starts with the way that city government interacts with residents and continues in the development and maintenance of thriving neighborhoods with a high quality of life. Government should be transparent and accountable to the citizens. Planning and land use regulatory processes should be restructured to provide for an open, participatory system beginning at the neighborhood level. All neighborhoods should provide a high quality of life, with access to affordable housing, public transportation, retail and open space.

Provide Newark’s neighborhoods with a formal role in the planning process. No major development decisions should be made in the City of Newark without the formal involvement of the local community. In the short term, convene a working group to identify immediately needed amendments to the city’s Zoning Ordinance.

Ensure affordable housing is available to all Newark residents by preserving existing units and promoting construction of new affordable housing within mixed-use environments. Adopt a city-wide inclusionary Zoning Ordinance to guarantee that all new development includes affordable housing or a contribution to a housing fund.

Raise the bar for neighborhood design and amenity. The fabric of the city’s neighborhoods has been torn by inconsistent policies for development and demolition. Implement a city-wide strategy for developing vacant or abandoned property that blights neighborhoods. Demand alternatives to the “Bayonne Box,” long, narrow 2 and 3 family houses on narrow lots surrounded by parked cars that have proliferated around the city recently. Ensure that amenities like shopping, schools, small parks and libraries are part of each neighborhood. Overhaul parking policies to limit the impact on the urban landscape.

Accessible

One of Newark’s leading competitive advantages is its proximity and accessibility both to New York City and to the world. The transportation system that serves the city is excellent, and includes Amtrak, NJ TRANSIT and PATH rail service, an internal light rail and subway network, local and regional buses, and major highway access from routes 95, 280 and 78. The city is also directly connected to the world through Newark Liberty International Airport and the Port of Newark, through which much of the region’s goods arrive.

At the same time, pieces of the network are antiquated and dysfunctional, such as the city’s 500 uncoordinated traffic signals. As robust as the transit network is, many residents are wary of its safety or functionality. Improvements to the transportation system must be driven at the community level to connect neighborhoods to Newark’s existing linkages to the regional, national and global economy. This can be accomplished both through transportation improvements and by concentrating development near transportation facilities to promote transit use and increase accessibility and safety.

Develop a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system for key Newark corridors. Engage the communities along pilot corridors on Bloomfield and Springfield avenues to facilitate this new mass transit technology, which will improve the reliability, speed, safety and image of the city’s buses. Coordinate these efforts with NJ TRANSIT’s plan to examine existing bus service to improve safety and match routes and service to current demand.

Make the road network work for Newark residents. Examine roadway intersections with a focus on pedestrian safety and where possible, accommodate other travel modes such as bicycles and transit. Modernize traffic signals to limit congestion and identify truck routes to take trucks off neighborhood streets. Overhaul parking policies to encourage transit use and limit congestion.

Encourage dense new development around transit nodes and along transit corridors. Focusing development near mass transportation facilities ensures that the city is accessible to the most people. Start with the areas around Penn Station, Broad Street Station and Orange Street Station.

Green

Like many older industrial cities, Newark has a legacy of both grand historic open spaces and environmental degradation. The city is blessed with two magnificent Olmsted parks, but also has the lowest acreage of open space per capita of any major city in the country. The city boasts a once glorious river in the midst of a major cleanup, but public access is scarce and waterfront park space limited. Recent development has helped revive the local economy, but generally fails to follow sustainable, green building standards. The industrial legacy of the City has created hundreds of contaminated sites, from small brownfield properties to superfund sites.

Newark is a city that currently suffers from increasingly high levels of obesity and asthma, but has the potential to be a green, walkable city that promotes public health.

Expand the open space network in Newark, with a focus on waterfront and neighborhood parks. Complete the waterfront park along the Passaic River from the northern edge of the city to the Pulaski Skyway in the Ironbound District. Develop, restore or enhance small parks and community gardens in each of the city’s neighborhoods, in partnership with community groups. Increase open space in
Newark to a level comparable to other big cities. Ensure every resident is within walking distance of a park.

**Provide incentives to developers to use sustainable practices and require all City agencies to do the same.** Low impact development methods – such as green roofs, porous paving, storm water retention, and green building techniques – will improve Newark’s environmental quality and mitigate its heat island effect. Encourage cleanup and development of brownfield sites to eliminate residents’ exposure to toxic chemicals. Reduce or eliminate air, noise and visual pollution through proactive policies and partnerships.

**Promote public and environmental health through physical planning,** policy changes and education. Expand active recreation facilities and promote a more active lifestyle by creating walkable neighborhoods.

Implement beautification projects to restore Newark’s historic streets to their former glory and improve the city’s image. Begin a series of demonstration projects at Broad and Market streets. Improve maintenance of existing parks and open spaces to improve quality of life, show a commitment to beauty and restore pride to the city.

**Smart**

More than ever, education and workforce quality determine success or failure in the global economy. Most indicators of workforce quality in Newark fall far short of the level needed for a competitive economy: 42% of adults lacked a high school diploma in 2000, while 52% of residents who were working were in part-time or low-paying jobs. Newark has the opportunity to change these bleak statistics, particularly by focusing on the more than 40% of the city’s population under the age of 25. New immigrants are also bringing entrepreneurial skills and multiculturalism that are assets in the international economy. And the city can build on one of the region’s most robust higher education networks, with 45,000 college students.

The key to success is capitalizing on these resources. While education policy is largely beyond the scope of this report, learning and workforce development are so connected with the economic and physical development of the city that they cannot be overlooked here. With a public school building boom on the horizon, and Newark’s universities already major landholders with expansion plans, a unique opportunity exists to physically weave education and workforce development into the fabric of the city.

**Integrate learning with neighborhood and Downtown development.** At the neighborhood scale, avoid isolated schools, instead coordinating them with housing, parks, recreation and economic development to use education as a community development tool. Create a “Downtown campus” with an inspiring mix of educational, living, commercial, cultural and business functions that will both help revive the central business district and bring learning Downtown. Capitalize on an expected multi-billion dollar school construction program to overhaul the school system’s building inventory, provide jobs to Newark residents and move toward better integration with surrounding areas.

**Enhance Newark’s status as a College Town. Transform University Heights into a vibrant mixed-use district that is connected to the surrounding communities.** Create a continuous green space connecting the campuses of the city’s major institutions. Develop mixed-income housing, new retail and commercial activity that converts a largely commuter population to a residential one. Make meal plans usable at local restaurants. Expand the intra-campus shuttle to connect to the rest of the city, deploying some of the features of BRT for greater efficiencies.

**Prosperous**

Newark’s 150,000 jobs represent the largest municipal concentration of jobs in New Jersey, but the city’s economy has the potential to provide a much higher quality and quantity of jobs for its residents. In spite of its considerable challenges, Newark has many underappreciated assets, including its strategic location, a diverse and underutilized workforce, a large amount of developable land, concentration of corporate and business service firms, several major universities, and a wealth of arts and cultural assets.

Fully integrate workforce development and economic development programs. Ensure adequate funding and neighborhood outreach for Newark’s One-Stop Center and other programs. Develop industry-targeted programs where opportunities exist for living wage careers without college degrees, like trucking or health care. Target re-entry workers on a scale consistent with the scope of the challenge.
The goal of any economic development strategy for Newark must be both to bring more jobs to the city and to bring Newark’s economy within reach of most of its residents. Newark residents held only 23% of city jobs in 2000 and have one of the highest unemployment rates in the state. Recent and projected trends for growth in global trade and regional employment and population give Newark a window of opportunity to capitalize on its assets and re-energize its economy.

The City must move quickly, though, to improve its image, promote entrepreneurship and upgrade its workforce and technology. Moving toward the other goals outlined in this report – making Newark green, accessible, equitable and smart – will advance these economic development priorities. In addition, several strategies should also be pursued to capitalize on specific economic drivers.

Re-imagine Downtown as a 24/7 mixed-use Central Business District. Business districts throughout the country are thriving by promoting a broader mix of uses, including residential. Capitalize on the construction of the arena and new residential projects to draw new residents, restaurants and nightlife, creating positive activity at all hours of the day and night and attracting more office development. Establish a goal of 10,000 new residents Downtown. Re-develop Broad Street as a high-amenity boulevard that anchors a revitalized Central Business District and connects Newark’s regional hub, Penn Station, to its international hub, Newark Liberty Airport. On key pedestrian corridors, require street-level retail, increase police presence and improve streetscapes. Prohibit any new sky bridges that isolate workers and visitors from Downtown streets.

Leverage the city’s transportation and logistics industry by converting the Airport Support Zone into an International Business Center, featuring conference facilities. Provide better access to the seaport and airport for city residents and establish planning liaisons to the Port Authority to advocate for the city’s interests.

Position Newark as the premier cultural and entertainment center in New Jersey. Develop a robust promotional campaign and focus public space improvements, artist housing and programs in arts and cultural districts to physically link the arts into a destination for Newark.

Transform Newark’s image from an aging industrial city to a high-tech center by making immediate strategic investments in partnership with the private sector. Create a city-wide wireless network to be on the forefront of similar fledgling efforts across the country. Expand and create technology centers at universities and high schools to advance both education and business development.
Overview

Newark is a city of neighborhoods, each with its distinct character and identity. As the city plans its future, those neighborhoods, their residents and institutions, must be at the center of the revitalization process, particularly the lower-income neighborhoods where outside interests have largely determined the shape of housing and development in the past, overriding or ignoring the interests of community stakeholders. Neighborhood-based planning will produce a more comprehensive, sustainable product, which will have the support – and engage the energies – of the neighborhood’s residents.

This must be the basis for a plan of action, but there is much work to be done. The quality of life in many of Newark’s neighborhoods has been in decline for more than fifty years, attacked by an avalanche of external forces: industrial decline, suburbanization, the 1967 riots, inconsistent development and demolition policies, and most recently shoddy construction and design standards.

That these neighborhoods continue to thrive is a testament to their residents and the many community organizations that work tirelessly to improve conditions for their neighbors. But a landscape blighted by vacant lots, strip malls, and drive-through pharmacies, banks limits possibilities. Residents need walkable communities, with quality places to live, shop and recreate.

Goals and Principles

The following goals and principles aim to ensure that Newark’s revitalization is inclusive and creates thriving neighborhoods throughout the city.

Newark should be an equitable city. Newark should be a city where citizens of all racial and ethnic groups, all economic levels and conditions, wherever in the city they live, are treated fairly and have an opportunity for a better life.

All residents should have access to quality education and skill development and job opportunities. All neighborhoods should provide a high quality of life, with access to affordable housing, public transportation, quality education, retail and open space.

Newark should be a democratic city. In its activities City government should uphold the highest values of a democratic society. Government should be transparent and accountable to the citizens, while the planning and land use regulatory process should be restructured to provide for an open, participatory process that begins at the neighborhood level. Planning, development and budgeting decisions must be made with the active involvement of the residents of the areas affected.

Newark should be a sustainable city. The city’s long-term vitality depends on building healthy neighborhoods, which provide for diversity of population and housing, a walkable mix of residential, open space and community facilities, and a high quality of life for its residents. All new development should be of high quality – in planning, design and construction – to add long-term value to the neighborhood and the city. Sustainability is not just about the long-term welfare of the city, but about that of its people. Newark should build the skills and resources of its residents, through greater education and skill development opportunities, enabling them to build their incomes through ownership, job and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Strategies and Actions

Overhaul the Planning Process to Provide Consistency and Community Involvement

Establish a formal structure that engages Newark’s neighborhoods in the planning process, beginning with the review of the Master Plan and the preparation of a new Zoning Ordinance, and continuing by building a formal neighborhood role in review of future developments and capital improvements. This should be seen as a step toward creating a neighborhood-based process for capital budgeting and allocation of discretionary resources. To this end, the City should make the following policy commitments:

→ A neighborhood-based process to review and revise the Master Plan Land Use Element as appropriate, and develop a new Zoning Ordinance to replace the current, outdated ordinance.

→ A partnership with community organizations and neighborhood stakeholders to develop detailed neighborhood plans in all of the city's neighborhoods, and incorporate those – and existing neighborhood plans – into the city’s Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

→ A formal on-going structure through which neighborhoods will be able to participate actively in the process of making decisions about development taking place in their area. As part of this process, the new planning division should assign planning staff to focus on each of the city’s five wards.

→ A process to develop a long-term strategy linked to neighborhood planning to integrate neighborhoods into the city’s process of capital budgeting and resource allocation.

Start by consider amendments to the city’s Zoning Ordinance for potential short-term enactment while the process of creating a new ordinance is under way.

In addition, the City should eliminate the artificial separation between the Office of Boards, which reviews plans for the Planning and Zoning boards, and the Planning Division. All planning activities for the city should be reorganized within a revived, expanded Planning Division.

Preserve and Build Affordable Housing

One of the most critical elements to the growth of thriving neighborhoods is the availability of housing that is affordable to residents of all income levels. The City should actively work to preserve existing affordable housing, particularly public housing and other subsidized housing at risk of loss. An inventory of all subsidized housing should be created, including a strategy to preserve those projects considered at risk.

Homes of lower income homeowners should also be preserved through assistance with home improvement financing and strategies to prevent foreclosures and combat predatory lending. The City should use code enforcement, receivership and other tools to maintain the quality of existing rental housing.

The preservation of existing affordable housing in the context of mixed income development is particularly important in areas where property values are rapidly rising, and lower income households are being priced out of their own neighborhoods. Those areas should be priority areas for both preservation and creation of new affordable housing. Create a targeted code enforcement strategy focusing on maintaining the city's rental stock. Use nuisance abatement and receivership aggressively to maintain and improve rental housing.
Use design standards to promote new housing typologies that are street and pedestrian oriented. These new types should handle parking in a creative way (perhaps with structures) and allow for mixed-use on the commercial corridors.
Community Development

Neighborhood reinvestment can be organized around major streets, existing parks and new parks. Shown here is Clinton Street with new context-sensitive infill development along residential streets, new pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development along major arterials, and new linked open spaces created on some abandoned lots.
An inclusionary ordinance to ensure that all new development either includes affordable housing or contributes to a housing trust fund should be adopted, in conjunction with creation of a city housing trust fund, tying together federal grants, development fees, and other resources to use the City’s housing funds more effectively and efficiently. Priority should be given to projects that are part of comprehensive neighborhood plans. In order to foster and preserve affordable homeownership, the city should encourage development of limited equity condominiums, cooperatives, and the formation of community land trusts. Wherever possible, existing buildings should be preserved for adaptive reuse – particularly buildings of historic character – rather than demolished. The city should not support, either with respect to rezoning or any incentives, any housing development that involves the demolition of valuable older buildings.

Raise the Bar for Neighborhood Design and Amenity

In the city’s many neighborhoods torn apart by incongruous, scattered development and demolition, and still blighted by vacant lots, the bar must be raised for urban design and beauty. The suburban development model that has dominated for decades must be abolished in favor of a more urban, sustainable path. Some neighborhoods in Newark seem stuck in an uncomfortable nether region between the city and suburbia. These areas are characterized by low density housing development, wide streets with limited sidewalk space, and retail development suited to automobiles, such as Home Depot and other big box stores. These features create an unsustainable, unhealthy, and unpleasant urban environment, and are designed to accommodate suburban shoppers rather than Newark residents. Steps should be taken to either eliminate or better integrate these uses into the surrounding neighborhoods.

Design standards, zoning changes and other strategies will be needed to improve the quality of life in the city’s neighborhoods:

Residential

The typical three-family triple-decker housing type – known as the “Bayonne Box” – that has become the default housing type for new construction in Newark presents a number of problems for the neighborhoods in which it is being built. Problems are caused by inadequate lot widths that force parking into the front yard and driveways that remove parking from the street.

Promote alternatives to the “Bayonne Box” including semi-detached and row houses, and – particularly along arterial streets – higher density options including mid-rise (typically 4 and 5 story) multifamily housing.

This can be accomplished by applying a Floor/Area Ratio (FAR) requirement rather than a height limit; balancing parking requirements with quality of design by requiring parking behind the front building wall; and providing incentives to encourage architectural features such as bay windows and semi-private spaces such as front porches and balconies.

Neighborhood Commercial

Encourage or require mixed-use development within transit nodes and along corridors by prohibiting residential use of the street level within designated retail nodes.

Establish design standards to minimize curb cuts on main avenues and encourage use of parallel streets for access to surface parking in the rear of retail establishments.

Large-Scale Commercial

Minimize parking fields or otherwise integrate parking into smaller pockets within a site and distribute so that they are linked to neighboring small business within a pedestrian network.

Extend the street grid wherever possible into larger development sites and place street retail fronting along the major arteries with shared parking between.

Maintain a continuous retail street wall or otherwise minimize large surface parking fields along the primary retail street frontage.

Vacant Lots

Adopt a formal policy for disposition of City-owned vacant land, then lift the injunction against further disposition of City-owned properties.

Adopt an abandoned property ordinance designating an abandoned property officer, and move expeditiously to create an abandoned property list.

Explore opportunities to use abandoned or vacant land for creation of neighborhood parks or community gardens.

Develop a process, in partnership with CDCs and lenders, to use vacant property receivership as a strategy to address high-profile vacant properties.
Accessible Newark

Overview

Newark’s competitive advantage begins with its links to the region and the world. Certainly no other place in the region, and only a handful of places in the world, has Newark’s combination of air, sea, rail and highway access. Newark Liberty International Airport, the region’s second largest and one of the major international hubs in the world, links the city to global sources of tourism, business services and high-value trade. Newark is also one of the most heavily used hubs on Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor, giving the city a central location on the world’s largest concentration of economic activity stretching from Boston to Washington. Interstate highways provide both truck and auto access to locations throughout New Jersey and the larger region. Finally, NJ TRANSIT and PATH provide the city with access to both labor and jobs in New York City and northern New Jersey.

Improvements to Newark’s robust transportation network must be focused at the community level to connect neighborhoods to Newark’s existing linkages to the regional, national and global economy. Rather than starting at the regional level and looking in, this strategy starts at the neighborhood level and looks out to better connect Newark residents to jobs, shopping, and recreational opportunities in the City of Newark and the larger metropolitan region.

Goals and Principles

Connect Neighborhoods. Improvements to the Newark transportation system should be community-driven, enhancing connections from the neighborhood level to the existing regional network.

Share the Roads. Major road corridors should not just accommodate vehicles but also transit, pedestrians, bicycles, trees and infrastructure, dotted with transit nodes that serve as focal points of development and community activities. Where widening, if any, is contemplated, make it part of a broader strategy that includes other modes. Alternatives to auto use, such as transit, bicycling and walking, must be made safe, reliable, frequent and attractive.

Sustainable Transportation. The parking needs of new developments should be balanced with the goal of limiting the growth of unnecessary auto travel, and by so doing create a more hospitable pedestrian environment and encourage alternatives to auto use.

Balance Needs. Goods movement corridors in Newark are important to the economy of the City and must be accommodated in a way that limits negative impact on the quality of life of residents.

Strategies and Actions

The following mobility strategy is designed to improve the connectivity of Newark’s neighborhoods, promote use of public transportation and accommodate additional, sustainable development.

Make the Road Network Work for Newark Residents

Newark’s road network, consisting of over 300 miles of roads with some 500 traffic signals, is not currently aligned to meet the needs of Newark residents. The City should engage its communities in identifying the needs that can be addressed immediately. Initial concerns include the antiquated traffic signal system; excessive truck traffic on local streets; limited space for pedestrians and other non-automobile modes of travel; and the network’s overall disrepair and lack of decoration, such as street trees and plantings. The Draft Vision recommends the following actions:

➜ Modernize traffic signaling. Signal coordination and optimization can go far to address local congestion problems in Newark. This will require coordination with Essex County, which owns and operates the signals along the county routes. Some of the signal issues can be addressed in the mid-term as the City of Newark is in the process of bidding for a computerized signal system. Signal coordination will be a major component of future bus improvements.

➜ Exert control over the large volumes of truck traffic that flow through Newark. Specific truck routes should be identified, with community input as well as input from the trucking industry and regional entities. Clear signage would follow, indicating truck routes as well as ‘no trucks’ streets in proximity to areas of heavy truck traffic. Enforcement of these measures by the City will be critical.

➜ Allow for transit, pedestrians, and bicycles to share the road. Static features, such as street trees and furniture, will enhance the pedestrian environment and make walking a more viable option. Design standards described in the Equitable section should be explored to promote alternative modes of travel.

Parking

Vehicular parking is an integral component of the city’s transportation system. Currently, the city’s development ordinances and redevelopment plans require minimum parking for new development, in order to ensure adequate supply. In addition, the State’s Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) establish minimum parking requirements for new residential development. Furthermore, it is common practice for major Downtown employers to provide free parking to their employees. The outcome in Downtown is a substantial amount of parking and a commensurate amount of commuting by automobile, both acting as disincentives to use transit.

Newark should move immediately to eliminate minimum parking requirements and replace them with maximum parking standards, particularly for non-residential development. As a standard, 1 space per 1000 square feet (approximately the same standard that Jersey City uses, as compared to 4 spaces per 1000 square feet currently used in Newark) should be a goal. The City should consider several additional factors including transit availability, marketability of commercial space, parking inventory, sharing of parking facilities, and roadway capacity analysis.

Overhaul and Modernize the Bus System

Newark’s bus system is a vital lifeline for the many residents who do not have access to the city’s subway or light rail lines. While the system reaches every corner of the city, it is viewed by some as unreliable and unsafe. Some of its routes are also considered outdated and out of touch with the current ridership demands. A community-based mobility strategy has to start with bus upgrades – the introduction of express Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and improvements to the existing system.

Bus Rapid Transit

BRT is distinguished from local bus service by providing express service, stopping only every ½ mile, and by receiving signal preemption, which allows the vehicles to move more quickly than...
Promote mixed-use nodes of “transit-oriented development” at station stops for the subway, light rail and proposed bus rapid transit (BRT).

Create a major mixed-use development node at the Broad Street station.

Re-design and re-zone the proposed BRT corridors.

Re-make the station plaza in front of Newark Penn Station so that it can be a true pedestrian-oriented gateway to all of Newark.
Corridor Development

New Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes along major arterials will be part of a comprehensive strategy for greening and otherwise improving important corridors. Shown here is Bloomfield Avenue, where BRT stops will be complemented by more intensive mixed-use development, designed in a way that integrates with the surrounding context.
auto traffic. BRT vehicles look different than normal buses, with lower floors that ease entry and exit. Vehicles typically stop at stations with raised platforms, fare machines and shelters. BRT operates much like light rail but without the high cost of laying rail and hanging overhead wires, and can therefore be deployed relatively quickly. BRT service has been employed in Curitiba, Brazil and Oakland, California with dramatically successful results. Overall, it provides a preferred service on vehicles that shed the stigma traditionally associated with buses. The stations create a sense of permanence that would form the basis for nodes of activity and the creation of transit-oriented corridors.

NJ TRANSIT has provided a firm commitment to the City of Newark to partner on two pilot projects, on Springfield and Bloomfield avenues. Both arteries are appropriate for BRT because they are wide streets that can easily accommodate the extra capacity needed for a dedicated lane. Springfield Avenue is especially appropriate for several reasons: It is the corridor with the highest volume of bus services in the city (about 14,000 daily trips), with at least 16 bus services that cross or feed into it. Moreover, Springfield Avenue is symbolically important to the City of Newark as the scene of the 1967 riots and an area of considerable destruction and loss. Finally, recent investment in the Irvington bus terminal makes it a logical focal point at which to initiate the BRT service that would travel into Downtown Newark.

The implementation of BRT will roll out over a period of three years, during which the two pilot programs will be fully realized. The City’s role will be to foster “Transit Improvement Districts” that engage the communities along the corridors to help locate stops and develop land-use plans around them, keep the stops clean and well lit, and coordinate with law enforcement to keep the stations safe.

Over the long term, BRT can be expanded to other parts of the city. Developing BRT along Broad Street, from Broad Street Station south to Lincoln Park, will connect the other two BRT corridors and enable passengers to speed their way into the heart of the city. Moreover, it will become an integral part of the greening of Broad Street described in the Sustainable section. Other BRT extensions would follow avenues that radiate from Downtown.

**Local Bus Service**

At the same time that NJ TRANSIT is developing BRT, they are also beginning a Newark/Elizabeth Bus Restructuring project that will examine Newark’s 41 current bus services in light of the needs of today’s residents, workers and visitors. NJ TRANSIT should be held to their commitments to hold public hearings about this project and to create a rider stakeholder group.

In the interim, simple measures can be taken to improve the usability and safety of existing local bus service. Newark bus service should include clear signage with bus routes, schedules and maps at every stop in Newark. This is a short term measure that can be implemented by NJ TRANSIT with the urging of the City administration. Attention must also be paid to the maintenance of the signage and timely updates of service changes. The City should advocate that additional bus shelters, containing the same important information, be installed under the recent contract signed by the City and a private company.

**Encourage Development at Transit Nodes and Corridors**

Perhaps the single most effective way to make Newark greener, more accessible, more equitable and more prosperous – several of the key goals of this Draft Vision – is to facilitate intense, mixed-use development near the transit system’s key nodes and along its highly-traveled corridors.

If designed properly, development situated near major transit stations and hubs allows for the creation of walkable neighborhoods that can be reached without needing a car. This eliminates pollution, the need for parking and an expense that many lower income residents cannot afford. In turn, transit-friendly communities can accommodate denser development, which will attract private investments. Finally, many of the design issues currently marring neighborhoods will be remedied by creation of a more urban landscape.

Newark’s robust transportation infrastructure lends itself easily to this type of development. There are three transportation facilities that are logical starting points for transit-oriented development: Newark Penn Station, the Broad Street Station and the Orange Street Station. Penn Sta-

**Broad Street Station Transit Oriented Development (TOD)**

The area surrounding Broad Street Station has enormous potential for residential and commercial development. This is due to its rail network to the Newark suburbs to the west and to Manhattan to the east, and the newly opened Newark Subway extension connecting the area to the Newark Penn Station area. Extensive surface parking and some isolated buildings characterize the area today. These are surrounded by office development, a thriving historic district on James Street and some Rutgers and NJIT facilities. The Westinghouse property, a major barrier between the community and the station, remains a significant hurdle due to severe contamination. According to several studies by NJ TRANSIT and community groups, office space, retail and residential development could form a vibrant community around the station. The initiative begun by La Casa de Don Pedro to develop a retail node on the opposite side of the rail viaduct would only increase vibrancy. Development at Broad Street would also provide a compelling image of change to the thousands that pass the site by car or bus daily.

Immediate actions should include coordinating with all potential stakeholders to develop a redevelopment plan. If the Westinghouse owner is reluctant to develop the property, the City should be prepared to use its redevelopment powers.

**Orange Street Station**

Orange Street Station may provide an additional opportunity for transit oriented development around the Newark Subway system or as a park and ride to intercept auto commuters from the west using I-280. These possibilities should be explored promptly, building upon a recent study by NJ TRANSIT. This station could serve as a future hub, connecting the Newark Subway with potential BRT running along a widened First Street/Irvine Turner Boulevard, with excellent connections to UMDNJ.
Historically, Newark was framed by its environmental resources: the Passaic River, First River, Second River, Newark Meadows (tidal wetlands) and scattered freshwater wetlands associated with its rivers. The city’s two major parks, Weequahic Park and Branch Brook Park, were created as part of the Essex County Park System, America’s first county park system. Designed by the Olmsted firm in the early 20th century, these parks promised the beginnings of a citywide network of grand open spaces. Throughout the city, Newark’s natural resources influenced its development and enhanced its economy.

Newark’s environmental resources today are markedly different. The Passaic River still defines the eastern boundary of Newark but the First River has been culverted. The Second River defines the northern boundary of the city but it is still partially inaccessible. And the Newark Meadows have been filled to create Newark Liberty International Airport, Port Newark, and industrial facilities. Weequahic and Branch Brook parks are still marvels, and provide Newark’s major open space and recreation opportunities today. But they do not provide nearly enough open space for a city of Newark’s size and youthful population. Newark has only 2.9 acres of open space per 1,000 residents, ranking it at the bottom of major American cities.

These factors contribute to a concerning health and environmental situation in Newark. The health of Newark residents is being seriously affected by exposure to environmental hazards in their homes and neighborhoods. The economic costs of environmental diseases and disabilities are very significant and largely preventable. The city’s residents, especially children, suffer from high rates of asthma and obesity, with limited access to recreation opportunities or even safe walkable streetscapes. Only healthy children will grow into healthy adults, contributing to the economic development and prosperity of Newark. The health of the children and adults in Newark is intrinsically linked to the health of the environment. Policies and initiatives such as those proposed in this report will contribute to improving Newark’s environment and, as a direct result, the health and wellbeing of the current and future residents of the city.

**Goals and Principles**

**Grow Sustainably.** Environmental protection, public health, and quality of life should be the basis for future development and redevelopment decisions. The city should focus efforts on building, enhancing, and maintaining its green infrastructure through street tree planting, urban reforestation, stormwater management, and water quality improvements, among other initiatives.

**Preserve the Historic Fabric.** Preserve and protect historic, cultural, recreational, and other existing resources to strengthen the city’s assets.

**Plan at the Neighborhood Level.** Encourage planning efforts at the neighborhood level, capitalizing on local enthusiasm to ensure project implementation and policy change. Utilize local knowledge to assess neighborhood open space needs and identify priority projects.

**Expand Open Space.** Increase open space in Newark from its current 2.9 acres per thousand people to 3.2 acres per thousand people (equivalent to Miami) by 2010, and to 4 acres per thousand people by 2020 (equivalent to Chicago), increasing the amount of parkland currently in existence by 40%. This goal is aimed at increasing neighborhood parks and outdoor recreation facilities – usable open space, as opposed to traffic triangles or other unusable green spaces.

**Focus on Health.** Promote public and environmental health through physical planning, policy changes, and education. Address key health issues such as air, noise and water pollution and soil contamination.

** Beautify the City.** Every intervention must be an upgrade to visual quality and perceived quality of life in the city. Creating a more beautiful Newark will improve the city’s image and instill a greater sense of pride in residents.

**Strategies and Actions**

Each of these goals produces short and long-term recommendations aimed at making Newark a greener, healthier, more walkable and more beautiful place.

**Sustainable Growth**

- **Implement the waterfront park along the Passaic River from the northern edge of the city to the Pulaski Skyway in the Ironbound District, and utilize the riverfront as one of the city’s major gateways. The waterfront park can help improve Newark’s image as a more sustainable city. The City should begin by focusing on three strategic sites: Downtown, Ironbound District, and the North Ward. Work can also be initiated quickly on the waterfront by partnering with Essex County to acquire 5.5 acres near Minish Park.**

- **Provide incentives to developers who install green roofs, porous paving, storm water retention, recycled materials, and other low-impact**
Create small parks throughout the city using vacant land and, where appropriate, brownfields.

Green the important corridors.

Create green gateways into the city.

Complete the waterfront parks and develop up-land connections.

Preserve and protect historic landscapes.
Green Linkages

Newark has extraordinary open space resources that can be linked to raise quality of life as well as add value to new development sites. Linking the waterfront to the upland parks and newly-landscaped corridors, as shown here, is one of the essential aspects of this strategy.
development methods. Require City agencies to use these methods on new projects and retrofits. Encourage public utilities to do the same. Explore funding through the Urban Enterprise Fund and Environmental Opportunity Zones. Start by creating a green roof on a prominent publicly-owned building to demonstrate the practice and the City’s commitment to green building.

**Neighborhood Planning**

- Encourage neighborhood-based open space planning by establishing a program for developing, restoring, or enhancing neighborhood-based small parks, community gardens, and playgrounds. Local neighborhood groups should identify key sites and projects that can have a maximum impact on the community, such as community gardens, street trees, park improvements, street lighting, fields or playgrounds. Ensure that every Newark resident is within walking distance of a park, no more than ½ mile.

- Establish green gateways into the city to create more pleasant, visually pleasing, and environmentally friendly entranceways for residents, visitors, and regional workers. These gateways serve as major features along green corridors.

- Develop active recreation facilities and playgrounds at each of the city’s public schools to serve as a resource for surrounding communities. This initiative will help to increase neighborhood access to open space by allowing residents to use school grounds even when schools are not in session.

- Utilize select vacant land for conversion into parks, community gardens, and playgrounds, particularly in neighborhoods in need of open space. Start by completing the Conservation Element of the Master Plan, including an inventory of vacant lots for preservation as open space and park development.

**Open Space**

- Expand the open space system in Newark. Develop a city-wide open space plan and a management plan for the interim uses of vacant lands. Then strategically acquire and develop open space in coordination with development and transportation initiatives. (Especially give consideration to “saving” or land-banking existing city-owned vacant lands near existing or proposed school sites).

- Develop beautiful green boulevards using low impact development techniques. Greening corridors can create more comfortable pedestrian environments while increasing the legibility of the city’s open space network. Use low impact development techniques along corridors as a model for other developments throughout the city.

- Create a major trails program that links neighborhoods to schools and parks. Such programs include the Newark Greenway (linking Weequahic Park to Branch Brook Park), the East Coast Greenway, and the Liberty Trail. These linkages will help to establish a more coherent green network that will have a regional draw and provide recreation opportunities for Newark residents.

**Preservation**

- Preserve and protect historic landscapes and cultural resources, such as Branch Brook Park, West Side Park, the Newark Museum, and historic Downtown parks for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. Partner with Essex County to improve city edges of county parks to create integrated urban open spaces.

- Program the Open Space District Downtown and encourage stewardship of three historic parks, Lincoln Park, Military Park, and Washington Park. Emphasize and celebrate Lincoln Park’s location in the Jazz District, Military Park’s centrality among corporate employment centers and NJPAC, and Washington Park’s proximity to the city’s key institutions like the Newark Public Library and the Newark Museum.

- Establish an Open Space Stewardship Program. Stewardship can include park clean-ups, environmental education, open space improvements, a trash can campaign, management training, and community programs. Start by establishing Stewardship Programs for Lincoln, Military and Washington parks through public-private partnerships.

**Public and Environmental Health**

- Adopt a strategic plan to address public and environmental health. Initiatives may involve developing trails, health education, farmers’ markets, safe routes to school, measures to prevent air and water pollution (such as no bus idling), reforestation, gardening, enhanced access-ways to parks, greater recreational opportunities, understanding air quality factors on hot days, and a green roof demonstration project.

- Establish and implement an environmental clean-up / health initiative citywide. Environmental clean-ups can range from a simple trash pick-up to a brownfield remediation. The health initiative should focus on combating some of the city’s most serious health problems, including asthma, lead poisoning and other respiratory-related illnesses.

- Implement a brownfields-to-greenfields program citywide to eliminate residents’ exposure to toxic chemicals from old industrial sites. Start by partnering with local communities and the Port Authority to establish a Brownfield Action Initiative to help prioritize brownfield sites and begin work on remediation even where end uses have not been determined.

**Beautification**

- Develop and implement a series of strategic projects to demonstrate a commitment to beauty in the city. These projects should be easy to implement while maximizing potential impact and
Overview

Education and workforce quality have become the primary competitive advantage in a global economy, as well as the main determinant of individual economic success. While Newark has a number of advantages, including a diverse, multi-lingual workforce and universities serving 45,000 higher education students, most indicators of workforce quality badly trail what is needed for a competitive, inclusive economy. Nearly 42% of adults lacked a high school diploma in 2000. Over half were either unemployed or not in the labor force and, according to calculations by the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, roughly 52% of Newark residents who were working were in part-time or low-paying jobs.

Newark also has a young population that is coming of age in a period of rapid change. Over 40% of the city's population is under 25. As the city transitions from a period of stagnation to one of hope and growth, this new generation is an incredible resource. Include a continued influx of immigrants eager for economic success, and there is ample reason for making the investments necessary to educate, train and develop this potential workforce.

Principles and Goals

Giving Newark residents the knowledge and skills that are needed to succeed in the 21st century clearly begins with reform of the public school system, a challenge largely beyond the scope of this planning exercise. However, learning and workforce development are so fundamentally intertwined with the economic and physical development of the city that any strategic vision would be remiss if it did not incorporate objectives and actions that address this challenge. A skilled and educated workforce is the most important foundation for a prosperous economy. Education and skill enhancement for poor and working-class residents are also essential for creating greater economic and social equity. Finally, the physical presence of schools and universities is arguably the largest institutional force shaping the city’s development, from neighborhood schools that are often the most important community facility to the University Heights district that is a locus of daytime activity and potential development.

In articulating this vision for Newark, several goals and principles emerged that cut across the themes of economic and community development, transportation and open space:

Integrate Learning with Neighborhood and Downtown Development. As Newark rebuilds, it can become a City of Learning®, providing a seamless educational environment for its children and adolescents by integrating their schools in the city’s development. Schools become more effective as they draw on community resources and the location and design of schools can encourage walking and support park, recreation and retail development.

Enhance Newark’s Status as a College Town. Colleges and universities must become more physically and economically integrated with Downtown and the residential neighborhoods of the city, enhancing their already substantial value to Newark. The University Heights district should be the focal point for these efforts, with housing, open space, health care clinics and retail that serve the surrounding community as well as enhancing the appeal of the universities.

Fully Coordinate Comprehensive Workforce and Economic Development Programs. Newark’s many high-quality training programs and strong educational institutions can be the foundation for a comprehensive workforce development program that is capable of systemic change. This will require an institutional infrastructure capable of coordinating the city’s disparate programs, and aligning these programs with private industry needs and public economic development strategies.

Strategies and Actions

Integrate Learning with Neighborhood and Downtown Development

Three coordinated strategies can be combined with education reform to make Newark a recognized City of Learning®. All are designed to correct the current school model that separates students from their environment. Whether built in the middle of neighborhoods or on peripheral sites, the model tends to place boundaries between children and adolescents and their surroundings, diluting the interaction between learners and resources that educators from John Dewey to Howard Gardner identify as critical to learning.

Building Strategy: The City of Newark has submitted a request to the State of New Jersey for $3 billion in school construction funding to build 40 new schools and renovate 30-40 existing facilities. The City must capitalize on whatever allocation of funds it receives to dramatically overhaul the school system’s building inventory. This is also a tremendous opportunity to provide jobs to Newark residents and to kickstart a new focus on integrating schools into the surrounding communities.

Neighborhood-scale Strategy: At the neighborhood scale, Newark must not build schools on isolated blocks requiring demolition and displacement. Newark has the opportunity to coordinate construction of new schools with housing, parks, recreation, and economic development initiatives within existing neighborhood streets and blocks, on currently vacant lots, and in empty buildings that can be converted to educational uses. These schools can be built on parts of blocks, sharing sites and buildings with housing and commercial development, to put learning in the heart of communities, while coordinating programming with local resources such as public libraries, YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs. By integrating schools with neighborhoods, Newark’s students can increase interaction with their communities and be encouraged to “own” their environments.

Downtown Strategy: As Newark integrates the building of schools and neighborhoods, it can do so in the Downtown, providing increased educational opportunities for students and creating a “Downtown campus” consisting of a mix of educational, living, commercial, cultural, and business functions that will help revive the CBD. By introducing school space adjacent to or in existing and future facilities for sports, cultural, government, university, transportation, health, hotel, and other activities, Newark students can extend their classroom learning into the real world through internships, mentoring, and work-study programs while they engage positive adult role models in their learning and socialization.

Enhance Newark’s Status as a College Town

To expand the role of higher education institutions as both a focal point for economic development and as a resource to communities,
Consider alternative locations for new schools that can connect curriculum and the student experience to the local economy, culture and environment. Shown here is a concept for making a school part of a new mixed-use project, perhaps as part of the redevelopment of an underutilized building in the Downtown.
College Town

A vision for University Heights includes a comprehensive network of well-defined open spaces with linkages to the surrounding neighborhoods and Downtown. Surface parking lots become opportunities for new academic buildings and new student residences that can add life to the Heights and Downtown.
two complementary strategies should be pursued. The first is to redevelop University Heights as a mixed-use district that connects it to surrounding communities and makes it a recognizable destination that attracts students, faculty, businesses and visitors from around the world. The second will create additional synergies among Newark’s higher education institutions and other city stakeholders.

**Transform University Heights:** Several coordinated actions would create a more attractive mixed-use district that would better connect the institutions to each other and the city. An early action item would be the “greening of University Heights” that would create a continuous greenway connecting the different campuses, largely on property already owned by the institutions. Other actions would include creating mixed-income, student, and employer-assisted housing throughout the district; developing a transit village around the Orange Street station; building a fiber optic line along a major corridor; and encouraging retail at key locations. All these recommendations would be implemented through a vigorous dialogue between the institutions and the community.

**Strengthen Institutional Connections:** A phased plan to establish stronger ties between universities and other city stakeholders could begin with a summit focused on the links between higher education and public education, as well as the training needs of local residents. Other actions could include proceeding with the Digital Century Center at Science Park, making university meal plans usable at local restaurants, and expanding the shuttles that connect the universities to Downtown and other parts of Newark.

**Fully Integrate Comprehensive Workforce and Economic Development Programs**

A combination of comprehensive and industry-specific workforce strategies are needed to address the needs of Newark’s underemployed adult population. The primary thrust should be to provide the institutional infrastructure to create and maintain a system that is coherent to both job seekers and employers, and that can adapt to changing labor market needs and conditions.

**Coordinate and market existing programs:** Newark’s Workforce Investment Board and One-Stop Center provide the basis for a more coordinated and strategic approach to career training and placement. However, these need to be sustained with adequate funding and their services need to be aggressively communicated to both job seekers and employers. Neighborhood-based outreach is particularly important.

**Fully develop industry-targeted programs for trucking, health care and other clusters:** Several growing industries in Newark have opportunities to provide living wage careers without college degrees. Trucking, with its links to the rapidly growing logistics and distribution industry, is a prime target for concerted efforts to break down barriers to entry, including training and insurance. In health care, the career lattice model being promoted by the Newark Alliance links providers, intermediaries and workers and gives participants a chance to “earn while they learn.”

**Target special needs populations, such as re-entry workers:** As in cities across the country, large numbers of unemployed re-enter Newark’s neighborhoods from correctional facilities with few prospects for employment. While good programs for these and other special needs populations exist, they need to be brought up to a scale that is consistent with the scope of the challenge.
Prosperous Newark

Overview

In spite of Newark’s long decline as one of the Northeast’s leading manufacturing centers, the city’s 150,000 jobs still represents the largest municipal concentration of jobs in New Jersey. Its economy includes a growing transportation and distribution sector, a substantial office market concentrated in financial and business services, and strong institutions anchoring the higher education, health care and arts and entertainment industries.

Still, Newark’s job base and population are far smaller than they were in the city’s heyday in the 1950s and 1960s. Even more importantly, much of Newark’s economy remains out of reach for most residents of the city. They are significantly under-represented in transportation and high-value service industries, sectors with high wages and growth potential. Newark residents held 23% of city jobs in 2000 and have one of the highest unemployment rates in the state.

Prior studies and existing plans have consistently identified several key, if often unappreciated, assets for positioning Newark as a successful, competitive urban economy. These include its strategic location as both a global and regional transportation hub, a diverse and under-utilized workforce, a large amount of developable land, an agglomeration of corporate and business service firms, a concentration of major large universities, and a wealth of arts and cultural assets.

Recent and projected trends for growth in global trade and regional employment and population give Newark a window of opportunity to capitalize on these assets and re-energize its economy. Cargo at Port Newark, for example, has grown substantially in recent years and is forecast to continue its expansion. However, this opportunity will be lost without a frank assessment of the barriers and constraints that have kept Newark from realizing its potential for decades. Low educational attainment and a negative image lead the list of constraints, which also include aging infrastructure, poor quality housing stock, regulatory barriers and a limited tax base.

Principles and Goals

Principles: Competitive, Inclusive, and Sustainable

Creating a successful urban economy requires the synthesis of multiple objectives. First and foremost, a Prosperous Newark needs to provide a decent standard of living for residents across class, race and ethnic boundaries. It needs to do this while competing with other locations for jobs and business opportunities, and it needs to insure that it protects assets, prosperity and quality of life for future generations as well as current residents. This is a complex balancing act that can often involve difficult trade-offs, but it is also essential to devise complementary strategies that fulfill three broad principles.

A Competitive Economy will see Newark strengthen its global and regional position in key industries, including transportation and logistics, business services, retail and entertainment, education and health services. Success will be evidenced by job and income growth and a growing share of global trade, regional office markets and industry employment.

For Newark, an Inclusive Economy means that its residents will fully share in the benefits of economic growth. This will result in substantial increases in both the number and share of city jobs held by city residents, significantly lower poverty levels, and improved wages, benefits and job stability at all income levels.

Finally, a Sustainable Economy will insure that future generations are not burdened with additional environmental damage, unreasonable public debt, or the erosion of infrastructure and other physical assets. Progress will be measured through a broad array of environmental, health and fiscal indicators.

Goals for Economic Drivers

To implement these principles, an economic development strategy can be formulated around goals for key sectors that will drive the economy. Existing plans provide the basis for this strategy, including the cluster and business development action plans recently developed through the Opportunity Newark initiative. Goals for each economic driver can be articulated by applying the three principles to its particular assets and opportunities.

➔ Newark will leverage its arts and cultural assets to define the city as the premier Cultural and Entertainment Center of New Jersey to attract audiences, residents and businesses, create new retail sectors and improve both citywide image and neighborhood quality of life.

➔ Newark will strengthen its status as a Regional Knowledge Center by building a more closely integrated academic and research cluster that more closely integrates these institutions with Newark’s neighborhoods.

➔ Newark will leverage its port and airport access as well as its regional office market to create workforce development programs to enhance resident career opportunities, and concentrate development near transit nodes.

➔ Newark’s status as a Regional Office Center will be promoted and enhanced by making its higher education institutions a focal point for the expansion of academic and research activities, the development of new industries and housing opportunities that more closely integrate these institutions with Newark’s neighborhoods.

➔ Newark will strengthen its status as a Global Transportation and Logistics Center by building on growing trade at Port Newark, improving its competitiveness in the growing logistics industry, creating greater access to port and airport opportunities for city residents, and using environmentally sound development practices at port, airport and rail hubs.

➔ Newark will be known as a Healthy City that protects the health of its residents while expanding economic opportunity through an enhanced healthcare delivery system, a health services career lattice to address workforce challenges, and an increase in “green” industries, buildings and practices.

Strategies and Actions

In the broadest sense, all of the goals and actions in this report need to be part of the strategy for a Prosperous Newark. A Green and Accessible city will attract new residents and business as well as make the city more functional for the existing firms and workforce. Neighborhood strategies to create a more livable and equitable place should also make the economy more inclusive and sustainable. And no economic development strategy is more important to future prosperity than the education and workforce strategies outlined in the section on a Smart Newark.

In addition to these, three cross-cutting strategies and several sector and place-specific strategies should be priorities:

Cross-Cutting Strategies

Image: Improving Newark’s image involves both sustained and effective marketing of the city’s underappreciated assets and tangible improvements in the facilities, services and public spaces that are most visible to businesses and visitors. Although there have been many notable efforts...
The Draft Vision calls for maximizing the economic development potential of the seaport and airport.

Provide zoning protection for the airport support area to prevent further encroachment of incompatible uses. Develop the airport support zone for high-value-added manufacturing, research and assembly jobs.

Develop conference facilities at the airport rail station.

Use the new conference facility development and associated roadway investments to link Broad Street and the Downtown to the airport.

Develop new bus links to the support area to connect Newark residents with port and airport jobs.

Provide zoning protection for the airport support area to prevent further encroachment of incompatible uses. Develop the airport support zone for high-value-added manufacturing, research and assembly jobs.
24/7 Downtown

Downtown is a key to the prosperity of Newark and the region. A revitalized Downtown, as shown here, will include major new commercial buildings, context-sensitive mixed-use buildings and linkages to the surrounding neighborhoods, including new greenway and corridor connections south to the Ironbound District.
to improve the city’s image over the years, these have often petered out without the infrastructure and commitment to sustain them. A comprehensive strategy should include the following:

- Create a Destination Marketing Organization or Convention and Visitors Bureau with dedicated, sustainable funding to coordinate and unify public and private efforts to brand Newark as an attractive place to live and work.
- Improve basic maintenance and services for facilities and public spaces, particularly transportation gateways, public buildings, parks, key intersections and nodes.

**Entrepreneurship:** Grass-roots efforts to create and expand small business opportunities are often given too little emphasis, yet Newark’s diverse and energetic population are already exhibiting entrepreneurial drive and generating economic activity in both neighborhoods and Downtown. Supporting these efforts, helping to turn informal activity into legitimate businesses and start-up firms into on-going concerns, requires a multi-faceted approach including actions such as the following:

- Develop a network of neighborhood-based business support centers, in addition to the One Stop Business Resource Center, to market and tailor services to specific communities.
- Leverage public funding, such as Governor Corzine’s proposed New Jersey Urban Fund, to provide a source of patient capital that can help start-ups and existing small firms to expand.
- Create an Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness initiative to capture as much as $8 million in federal EITC payments that Newark residents are entitled to, but currently do not apply for. The initiative would include an outreach campaign and a center that would provide greater access for eligible residents.

**Technology:** Newark’s dense office and institutional network give an opportunity to transform its image from that of an aging industrial city to a high-tech center, supporting industry as well as place specific strategies. Priorities should include:

- Creation of a citywide wireless network to compete with a growing number of similar efforts across the United States.
- Expansion and creation of technology centers at universities and high schools to advance both education and business development.

**Sector and Place-Specific Strategies**

In addition to strategies for universities, health services and transit-oriented development outlined in other sections of the report, comprehensive strategies specific to other economic drivers need to be articulated and implemented.

**24/7 Central Business District:** Newark’s future as an office center requires careful study to determine its competitive advantages in industries that require high amenity, a central location and a highly skilled workforce. Any chance of attracting new office and retail jobs to the Downtown area, however, requires actions to follow the path of almost every other successful CBD in the country and move toward a 24/7, mixed-use future. Employers, residents and workers are all drawn to districts that combine office space with housing, restaurants, bars and nightlife. With an aggressive development strategy, office development could be supplemented by up to 10,000 new Downtown residents over the next ten years. This strategy must confront the reality that most Downtown streets are currently empty, foreboding and unpleasant, and that past strategies have focused on avoiding these streets rather than making them safer, more pedestrian-friendly and attractive. Actions should include:

- Adaptive reuse of major properties, such as the Hahne’s Building, and reuse of vacant upper floors in smaller mixed use buildings, for residential development.
- Creation of a new Arena District, illustrated here, which would capitalize on the new arena to draw robust mixed-use development to the area. The district would aim to bring people and life back to Downtown streets, and would seamlessly connect the entire Penn Station area to the Ironbound District. Design guidelines would be adopted to set a high standard and create a consistent identity for the entire district, while maintaining the special character of the adjacent Ironbound.
- Undertake a long-term effort, including redevelopment, traffic engineering and streetscaping, to remake Broad Street as a vibrant, attractive boulevard that highlights Newark’s commercial, cultural and neighborhood assets. Redevelopment should also link Newark’s regional hub, Newark Penn Station, to its international hub, Newark Liberty International Airport.
- Designate pedestrian corridors that connect key destinations, such as the arena and Penn Station, and require retail at street level, increase police presence and lighting, improve streetscapes and prohibit new and future sky bridges.
- Reduce minimum parking requirements for new development to enhance pedestrian and transit use.
- Leverage new state resources to create a comprehensive set of financial and tax incentives to retain and attract office tenants.

**Transportation and Logistics:** Since this industry is focused heavily around Newark Liberty International Airport and Port Newark, both a focused place-based strategy and industry support services are needed. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey’s Strategic Plan outlines major investments in both facilities, which the City of Newark should leverage through a comprehensive strategy that would include the following:

- Appoint planning liaisons to the Port Authority for both the Port and Airport to serve as the City’s advocates for PA investments and operations.
- Prepare an access and circulation plan with short, medium and long-term actions to improve resident access and efficiency.
- Undertake a comprehensive market analysis to convert the Airport Support Zone into an International Business Center, exploring the feasibility of a convention center or conference facilities, logistics functions and other potential uses.

**Arts, Entertainment and Retail:** A strategy for this sector would combine physically linking arts, cultural and entertainment facilities, actively promoting these assets, and improving programmatic supports. Specific actions would include the following:

- Hold biennial arts festivals to create synergies among Newark’s artists and institutions and highlight the quality, breadth and depth of Newark’s resources.
- Focus artist housing, public space improvements and active programming in cultural districts, such as the Ironbound, Lincoln Park, and the neighborhoods around NJPAC, the Newark Museum and other cultural institutions.
- Create Business Improvement Districts in commercial and retail nodes throughout Newark to supplement existing BIDS Downtown and in the Ironbound.
First and foremost, this document will be posted online at both the RPA website (www.rpa.org) and the City of Newark’s site (www.ci.newark.nj.us) to allow all residents an opportunity to immediately weigh in on the plan. Following the release of the Draft Vision, the City and RPA will co-host stakeholder forums in each of the five wards to ensure that community, civic, educational and business leaders can help shape the City’s vision, which will contribute to the re-examination of the Master Plan.

In the future, a more complete public input program will be created to guide and inform the comprehensive overhaul of Newark’s Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

The goals and ideas that emerge from this process need to be codified into a Master Plan and implemented in a series of short-, medium- and long-term actions.

The first step toward a new Master Plan must be the creation of the planning infrastructure needed to conduct and implement comprehensive, neighborhood-based planning. The first step, which has already begun, is the development of planning, housing and economic development divisions in City Hall, staffed by teams of professionals capable of implementing ambitious strategic plans.

A neighborhood-based planning structure must then be built, beginning with a working group to identify amendments to the city’s Zoning Ordinance for enactment in the short-term, while the process of creating a new Zoning Ordinance is under way.

Several milestones should then be reached over the course of the next 1 – 2 years:

- Consider interim Zoning Ordinance amendments
- Complete and adopt the Housing Element to the Master Plan
- Establish local advisory groups
- Work with the advisory groups to review the Master Plan and identify appropriate Zoning Ordinance provisions
- Draft and adopt a new Land Use Ordinance
- Draft and adopt design guidelines
- Establish an ongoing framework for neighborhood participation in the planning and development process.

Immediate Actions

Implementation of the long-term vision should begin immediately with a series of tangible improvements that will elevate confidence in the city, create a climate for action and address some of the roadblocks to systemic change. The Draft Vision contains many initiatives that could be implemented quickly to achieve a high impact, including:

- Target key transportation gateways, public spaces and access points to the city for improved maintenance, appearance and security. With the construction of the Newark Arena, the area around Penn Station is an obvious choice for short-term changes that could include reconfiguring several intersections for safer pedestrian crossing, tree planting, and hosting public events.
- Capture and leverage additional revenue from federal, state and local sources through measures such as working with the Governor to utilize the New Jersey Urban Fund, maximize Abbott funds for school construction, increase receipts of Earned Income Tax Credits, and allowing university students to use their meal plans at local restaurants.
- Fully implement and market employment services of Newark’s One Stop Center and Workforce Investment Board.
- Create a green roof on a prominent publicly-owned building to demonstrate the practice and the City’s commitment to green building.
- Initiate work on the waterfront by partnering with Essex County to acquire 5.5 acres near Minish Park.
- Partner with local communities and the Port Authority to establish a Brownfield Action Initiative to help prioritize brownfield sites and begin work on remediation even where end uses have not been determined
- Urge NJ TRANSIT to make interim improvements to bus service, including clear signage that includes bus routes, schedules and maps at every bus stop in Newark.
- Work with NJ TRANSIT to begin implementation of the two pilot Bus Rapid Transit corridors.
- Pursue a partnership with a local university to open a storefront planning studio Downtown to begin to integrate education into the city and allow residents access to planning materials.

The Draft Vision described on the preceding pages builds on the many excellent but unrealized plans for Newark that have been proposed over the past decade. By creating a framework for evaluating development proposals, the Draft Vision aims to remove at least one of the barriers that kept these plans from becoming reality to this point. Many other obstacles have been removed with the ascension of the Booker administration, and the stars look to be aligning for real progress in Newark. This document will be just another report, however, unless immediate, decisive action is taken toward implementation. This concluding section proposes a series of next steps to gain public input into the Draft Vision, codify its major elements and make immediate on-the-ground progress toward realizing its objectives.

Validating the Draft

While every effort was made to include as many constituencies and ideas into the workshop and this resulting report as possible, it remains the vision of Regional Plan Association and not necessarily that of the people of Newark. This report recommends a formal structure for incorporating local input into the planning process, and the Draft Vision is no exception – it must be vetted through a robust public process.
With the publication of this Draft Vision, the Booker administration is nearing its 100th day in office. There remains a feeling of hope and optimism on the streets of Newark that is palpable and extremely exciting to anyone who cares about the future of this city and the region. The administration must move quickly to retain this optimism by beginning to implement elements of this vision even as a full vetting of its recommendations is underway. There has been much talk over the years about an urban renaissance in Newark, but for the first time there is both a vision for the City’s future and the leadership in place to make it a reality. Regional Plan Association shares Mayor Booker’s optimism for Newark’s future and stands ready to help implement this Draft Vision.
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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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Plans for Newark
## Community Development

| C.1. | A Vision of Our Future: Examples of Neighborhood Planning Projects |
| C.2. | Federal Enterprise Community North Plan Workshop |
| C.3. | North Ward Community Planning Workshop |
| C.3.5 | Branch Brook Park Cultural Landscape Report, Treatment and Management Plan |
| C.4. | Strategic Revitalization Plan for the West Side Park Community of the Central Ward, Volume I |
| C.5. | East Ferry Street Neighborhood Improvement Plan |
| C.6. | Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan |
| C.7. | Ironbound Community Master Plan |
| C.8. | Expanding Recreation Opportunities: The Ironbound Community Recreation and Open Space Plan, Phase I |
| C.11. | Strategic Revitalization Plan for the West Side Park Community of the Central Ward |
| C.11.5 | West Side Community Plan |
| C.12. | Strategic Revitalization Plan for the West Side Park Community of the Central Ward, Newark New Jersey, Volume III |
| C.13. | Strategic Revitalization Plan for the West Side Park Community of the Central Ward, Newark New Jersey, Volume IV |
| C.13.5 | West Side Park Master Plan: West Side Park Conservancy |
| C.14. | Roseville, Newark: Revitalizing a Community |
| C.17. | Commercial Revitalization Plan for Springfield and South Orange Avenues. Part III |
| C.19. | NJ Smart Growth Grant to Formulate a Neighborhood-Based Strategy to Rebuild and Redevelop Newark’s Clinton Hill Area |
| C.20. | West Side Park Comprehensive Community Action Plan |
| C.21. | Stella Wright Homes 1999 HOPE VI Application |
| C.22. | University Heights Center for Community Revitalization |
| C.23. | Newark Beth Israel Medical Center Neighborhood Study |
| C.24. | 2005 Housing Scholars Presentation of Existing Conditions and Preliminary Concepts |
| C.25. | Upper Clinton Hill Community Plan |
| C.26. | The Vailsburg Neighborhood Plan 2005-2010 |

## Economic Development

| D.1. | Land Use Element of the Master Plan for the City of Newark |
| D.2. | Newark Economic Development, Land Use and Transportation Plan |
| D.3. | Newark Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy |
| D.5. | Opportunity Newark: Jobs and Community Development for the 21st Century |
| D.6. | Lincoln Park Coast Cultural District |
| D.7. | RFEI. Two Center Street A Mixed-Use Development Opportunity |
| D.8. | UMDNJ Master Development Plan Phase II |
| D.9. | The Newark Public Library Master Plan & Feasibility Study for the Main Library |
| D.10. | Newark Arena District Redevelopment Plan |
| D.11. | Five Year Zone Development Plan 2006-2010 |
| D.12. | Edison Pl. East Redev. Plan (Block 182) |
| D.13. | The Residences at Springfield Avenue A Condominium and Co-Op Community in Newark, NJ |
| D.14. | Amendment to the Newark Downtown Core District Redevelopment Plans and Amendment to the Newark Plaza Urban Renewal Plan |
| D.15. | Symphony Hall West Redevelopment Plan |
| D.16. | University Heights Science Park Master Plan |
| D.17. | New Newark Conceptual Development Plan |
| D.18. | Redevelopment Plan for the Mulberry Street Redevelopment Area |
| D.19. | Newark Planning for a Better Tomorrow |
| D.20. | City of Newark Executive Briefing |
| D.22. | Kent/Brenner/Springfield redevelopment Area |
| D.23. | Newark Streetscape Project Phase I (Broad St.) |
| D.24. | West Ward Streetscape Project, Phase I |
| D.26. | Citywide Retail Façade Improvement Program, Phase I |
| D.27. | Newark Downtown District Capital Improvement Project |
| D.29. | South Ward Streetscape Project, Phase I (Bergen Street and Lyons Avenue) |
| D.30. | North Ward Streetscape Project, Phase I (Roseville & Bloomfield Avenue) |
| D.31. | Central Ward Streetscape Project, Phase I (Bloomfield Avenue and Broadway) |
| D.32. | Formation of Newark Central, South, and West Ward Special Improvement Districts |
| D.34. | Newark Downtown Core District Redevelopment Plan & Amendment to the Newark Plaza Urban Renewal Plan |
| D.35. | James Street Historic District. Concept Master Plan |