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Executive Summary

Overview

NJ TRANSIT has been studying the feasibility of a new Bus Rapid Transit service along the NJ Route 28 corridor in Union County. The route, named the Union County Sustainability Corridor, would run on-street and make stops in Plainfield, Fanwood, Westfield, Garwood and Cranford. The service would then use the out-of-service former main line of the Central Railroad of New Jersey between Cranford and US 1-9 in Elizabeth as an express route to make the service quick and reliable. The introduction of a new transit service – such as BRT - could provide significant economic development opportunities to the communities along the route, both at the local and corridor levels. New growth potential could help build a case for the importance of the service and demonstrate ridership potential. This study was directed by NJTPA and NJ TRANSIT and conducted by Regional Plan Association with guidance from Union County with a Federal Highway Administration Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program grant. The process was driven by a team of stakeholders from each municipality along the corridor. The purpose of the study was to work with each community to identify places within ½ mile of the proposed route that 1) have the capacity for development; 2) could attract uses for which there is market demand; and 3) could attract uses which would support and benefit enhanced transit. The result is an analysis of demographics, economics and land use that illustrates opportunities for economic development within each community and as a greater corridor, supported by and supporting enhanced transit.

Regional Context

The Union County Sustainability Corridor is well-situated in the Northern New Jersey Region, connecting a mix of urban centers, suburban downtowns and local neighborhoods to each other and to the greater Newark and New York City region. The potential for enhanced transit service along this corridor can help to bolster redevelopment efforts in each of the municipalities through which it would pass, while better connecting the communities to each other, to the Northeast Corridor rail line, the Raritan Valley Line, and to such destinations as Newark Liberty International Airport and the Jersey Gardens Mall. The study effectively builds off of prior studies conducted along this corridor and in each of the municipalities.

Corridor Opportunities

An analysis of land use, demographics, education and employment, mobility, and economic development was carried out at the the municipal, corridor and regional levels to better understand what opportunities abound and could support both enhanced transit and development. The following are summaries of those opportunities.

Land Use

Current land uses along the corridor present significant opportunities for transit-supportive redevelopment, including residential, commercial, office and industrial uses.

Demographics

There is a growing, increasingly diverse population with fewer housing choices within their financial means.

Education & Employment

There is a diversely educated workforce, employed in a variety of high-and low-skill jobs, but facing increased unemployment.

Mobility

A higher share of residents are using public transportation and there are more who could benefit from additional enhanced service.

Economic Development

Target sectors that either make up a large share of current employment or are expected to grow and use public transit include:

- Leisure and Hospitality
- Manufacturing
- Trade, Transportation and Utilities
- Education and Health Services
- Professional and Business Services

Municipal Opportunities

To better understand and illustrate the economic development opportunities offered by enhanced transit service, land uses were analyzed for development and redevelopment potential. A summary of the major issues and opportunities at each station area was assembled. A soft site analysis of land uses found that the corridor could support over 20% of the employment growth and 8% of the residential growth for Union County estimated by 2035, though there is very likely capacity in the corridor for about twice the amount of residential development.
calculated. The recommendations are intended to serve as a resource for municipalities as they plan for the future of these critical areas.

Station Area Issues & Opportunities

Newark Liberty International Airport
While there are no redevelopment opportunities around it, Newark Liberty Airport is a critical stop for the enhanced transit service as it is a major origin and destination for riders. Whether comprised of corridor residents on their way to or from the airport or out-of-town visitors looking for an interesting place to stay with easy access to the airport, ridership numbers will be driven in large part by a convenient connection to the airport.

City of Elizabeth - Jersey Gardens Mall
- New buildings should have a clear relationship with neighboring buildings and streets
- Carriageways between parking areas can become more like streets, with sidewalks and pedestrian-scale lighting and landscaping

City of Elizabeth - Magnolia Avenue
- Opportunities to redevelop marginal auto-oriented uses at corner of Route 1-9 and Magnolia Ave ramp, and along Magnolia Ave between Catherine St and Oak St
- Opportunity to redevelop low-density motel site between Route 1-9 and Oak St into a housing site

City of Elizabeth - Elizabeth Rail Station
- Current plans describe several redevelopment sites adjacent to the station area, with an opportunity to create a TOD district in the designated Transit Village
- Sites nearest the train station can support midrise office buildings over structured parking
- Elizabeth River can become a greater open space amenity, linking various redevelopment sites to each other and linking to the larger urban trail network that the City is implementing
- Morris Ave can be supported as a “University Boulevard”, linking Union County College and Kean University

City of Elizabeth - Elmora Avenue
- At intersection of Elmora Ave and West Grant St and intersection of Elmora Ave and Westfield Ave, soft sites could be redeveloped as three or four-story mixed-use buildings
- At intersection of Elmora Ave and West Grant St, potential to use surface parking (at dry cleaning business and Pathmark) for shared parking; opportunity to redevelop edges of parking lots to create more sense of place
- At intersection of Elmora Ave and West Grand St, small triangular park could be part of redesign as a gateway
- At intersection of Elmora Ave and Westfield Ave, a more complex development program could be considered that includes McDonald’s, but in a mixed-use structure that relates to the sidewalks on the corner

Borough of Roselle & Borough of Roselle Park - Linden Road
- Northwest corner of Linden Rd and Westfield Ave intersection could support a new three or four-story mixed-use building
- Old warehouse on southeast corner of Linden Rd and Westfield Ave intersection, could be redeveloped for mixed-use with residential uses, perhaps a restaurant and farmers market
- Create connections between large golf course housing redevelopment and station area to create a transit-oriented center and generate ridership

Borough of Roselle & Borough of Roselle Park - Locust/Chestnut Street
- Connect parts of town to create a coherent, pedestrian-oriented center with a distinct identity
- If properly designed, a future station at Chestnut Street could provide a connection for pedestrians and bicyclists and provide link to Roselle Park station
- Along Westfield Ave and 1st Ave, there are scattered infill opportunities, although there are water issues at west end of redevelopment area
- At intersection of Locust St and 1st Ave, opportunity for a mixed-use development node
- Along Chestnut St, infill opportunities can reinforce “Main Street” character
- Along Westfield Ave between Locust St and Chestnut St, abandoned properties and surface parking lots present redevelopment opportunities; as per municipal plans, could create a mixed-use building and public space in front of future transit stop
- Potential to support a small-scale boutique hotel

Borough of Roselle & Borough of Roselle Park - Gordon Street
- Station area can become a small manufacturing base
- Industrial properties near corridor, and large open areas behind them, present an opportunity for live-work spaces and more aggressive build-out and transit-oriented development
- Creation of an industry “center of excellence” can support local entrepreneurs or incubate new businesses
- Adaptive reuse of at least part of the Romerovski complex will lend a distinctive identity; a Redevelopment Area around Romerovski complex could be created

Township of Cranford - Cranford Rail Station
- Potential for more small office spaces and boutique hotel
- At North Ave/Route 28 and downtown gateway, could move firehouse and promote mixed uses

Borough of Garwood - Garwood Rail Station
- Scattered infill sites along North Ave and South Ave
• North Ave, at east end of study area, has redevelopment site abutting the tracks; this could be redeveloped to create a downtown gateway
• At intersection of Center St and North Ave, underutilized gas station and surface parking lots could support three or four-story mixed-use buildings
• At intersection of South Ave and Center St, large industrial complex could be redeveloped
• Cluster of buildings along North Ave at east end of study area along could remain industrial

Town of Westfield - Westfield Rail Station
• Intersection of North Ave/Route 28 and Central Ave has surface parking lots that could be redeveloped, but are fully utilized
• Several sites could be redeveloped with three and four-story mixed-use buildings, including: commercial properties and abandoned site at intersection of Central Ave and South Ave West; redevelopment parcels on Central Ave (just south of South Ave); and soft sites along South Ave, at the western end of the study area where the proposed transit corridor turns to go under the tracks

Borough of Fanwood - Fanwood Rail Station
• Along South Ave, there are scattered opportunities for mixed-use, housing or light industrial
• There are some land uses in the immediate station area that may be transit supportive, but overall, there are no significant opportunities for the kinds of employment that would be more transit supportive

City of Plainfield - Netherwood Rail Station
• TODN calls for rezoning industrial properties north and south of the tracks to allow mixed-use buildings around the station
• Redevelopment sites tend to be scattered along north and south sides of tracks
• Where the neighborhoods meet the edges of the corridor, new townhouse or other attached housing formats help complete the residential edge
• Potential for small-scale “urban manufacturing” located in the mixed-use area north of the tracks
• Existing station plaza on the south side of the tracks can serve as the open space focus for some three or four story mixed-use buildings
• On north side of tracks, part of the surface parking lot can be reclaimed for a new public open space oriented towards the station and similarly framed by three and four story mixed-use buildings

City of Plainfield - Plainfield Rail Station
• North of Plainfield station, one opportunity area connects station to core of downtown at East Front St
• In redevelopment areas around the station, the City has identified sites for new construction and sites for adaptive reuse
• Consider attracting innovation-based manufacturing and arts-related uses in inexpensive industrial spaces
• Pursue City’s rezoning strategies

City of Plainfield - Grant Avenue
• At the intersection of South 2nd St and Grant Ave, construction of a small mixed-use development containing a proposed park and ride facility and recreational uses, together with the existing business and the industrial site to the south of Grant Ave, could create a complete commercial node
• At intersection of South 2nd St and Muhlenberg Pl, there is an opportunity to make a distinctive place with a less conventional land use-mix, such as incubator-scale space for local entrepreneurs and or school/training facility
• South of South 2nd St, residential development of an appropriate density could serve as a buffer between the northern side development and existing moderate density neighborhood along West 3rd St

Corridor Tomorrow

Corridor Vision
The Union County Sustainability Corridor is a thriving network of communities – each with their own, unique assets – collaborating to foster economic development within and beyond their borders. The proposed enhanced transit service would effectively connect the corridor to regional destinations including Newark Liberty International Airport and Jersey Gardens Mall, as well as the Northeast Corridor rail line.
Introduction

NJ TRANSIT has been studying the feasibility of a new transit service in the NJ Route 28 corridor in Union County. The review of the corridor, named the Union County Sustainability Corridor, considers a bus rapid transit line (BRT) between Plainfield on the west and Elizabeth on the east, and beyond to Newark Liberty International Airport and Jersey Gardens Mall. The new service would also have an easy connection to the Northeast Corridor rail line in Downtown Elizabeth. The work includes the feasibility of using the out-of-service former main line of the Central Railroad of New Jersey between Cranford and US Route 1-9 in Elizabeth as an express route to make the service quick and reliable.

According to initial findings of the Union County Bus Rapid Transit Sustainable Corridor Study, implementing a new east-west system would both improve overall level of service for county mass transit and would be critical in maintaining the economic viability of the region by linking western population areas to Newark, Elizabeth and other key economic areas to the east.

The introduction of a new transit service – such as BRT - could provide significant economic development opportunities to the communities along the route, both at the local and corridor levels. New growth potential could help build a case for the importance of the service and demonstrate ridership potential. Through this effort, NJ TRANSIT and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) worked closely with the communities in the study area to better understand how their current and future land use planning efforts for redevelopment and transit-oriented development could support an investment in a new bus rapid transit service.

Study Area

The study area involves the entire corridor but will focus generally on a ½ mile radius on either side of NJ Route 28 (Westfield Avenue, North Avenue, South Avenue) and County Route 610 (South Avenue) as it runs through the following municipalities: City of Plainfield, Borough of Fanwood, Town of Westfield, Borough of Garwood, Township of Cranford, Borough of Roselle Park, Borough of Roselle, and City of Elizabeth.
Purpose

The purpose of the study was to work with each community to identify places within ½ mile of the proposed route that 1) have the capacity for development; 2) could attract uses for which there is market demand; and 3) could attract uses which would support and benefit enhanced transit. The project team worked closely with each community to find places that matched these criteria while also supporting their long-term objectives for use, design and activity. Communities will use the results of this analysis to inform current and future zoning for these targeted study areas. The final product is a vision tailored to each community, but within a larger framework of the corridor.

Process

Research

Research and analysis for this study encompassed three general areas: demographics, economics and land use.

A demographics analysis was completed on the regional, county and municipal levels. Data was derived primarily from the 2000 U.S. Census, 2010 U.S. Census and American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, and NJTPA 2035 forecasts. Analysis was conducted across a range of topics, including: population, race/ethnicity, households, household size, housing, units in structure, home values, household income, housing cost burden, poverty, education level, employment, industry, occupation, means of transportation to work, and vehicle ownership. The analysis was summarized into several key findings on population, housing, and mobility that were deemed most pertinent to the study. The project team also compiled and distributed comprehensive demographic profiles for each municipality. The demographics analysis provided insight into current and future residents of the study area communities.

An economics analysis was completed on the regional, county and municipal levels. Dun and Bradstreet 2010 served as the primary data source, with data from the NJTPA's 2035 forecasts and the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development supporting additional analysis. The economics analysis examined employment forecasts, employment by industry, industry growth rates, real estate by industry, and industry commuting trends. Results from the economics research provided insight on opportunities in target industries, such as leisure and hospitality, and manufacturing.

The land use analysis was conducted on the municipal and station area levels. Project team members reviewed existing plans and reports for the study area communities, focusing on the station areas, to extract information on redevelopment areas and potential opportunities. Using MOD-IV tax assessment data and GIS capabilities, the project team assessed the breakdown of existing land uses in the municipalities and station areas. A “soft sites” analysis revealed places where land value exceeded value of the use or structure on the land, providing further insight into potential opportunity areas. The land use analysis (along with the demographics and economics analyses) was vetted by local stakeholders to provide a more accurate sense of on-the-ground conditions.

Municipal Stakeholder Outreach

For any community’s planning efforts to be successful, it should reflect the wishes and desires of those who know the community the best: its local stakeholders. In addition to the research efforts conducted for this study, the project team convened a group of local stakeholders – including mayors, economic development officers and planners – to describe economic and land use opportunities along the proposed transit corridor. This municipal advisory group was brought together for formal meetings at key project milestones. During these meetings, stakeholders offered insights on municipal opportunities, participated in group activities, and were briefed on project progress. Each stakeholder meeting is summarized below:

Stakeholder Meeting #1: August 16, 2012

The August kickoff meeting, attended by fourteen stakeholders, eight project team members and two county representatives, served primarily as an introductory session for municipal representatives. During the session, NJ TRANSIT and NJTPA provided updates on the transit feasibility study and introduced the project team to the stakeholders. The project team described the purpose of the study, introduced the methodology and approach, and provided their initial impressions of the study area based on site visits. Municipal stakeholders asked questions and provided valuable insights to the project team about this study and the NJ TRANSIT corridor study, including:

- Desire for a one-seat ride on the Raritan Valley Line to New York Penn Station
- Potential benefits of a new transit service, including increased job access at Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) and Jersey Gardens Mall
- Emerging opportunities for inter-municipal collaboration
- Potential for manufacturing micro-trends and options for aging industrial districts
- Interest not only in the quantity of potential jobs, but also the quality of such jobs
- Potential alignment of the route
- The need to examine and market opportunities at destinations to the west
- Importance of timing and frequent dialogue to ensure redevelopment opportunities are realized
- Enhanced pedestrian connectivity within each community and across the abandoned rail right-of-way that was being studied as part of the transit enhancement feasibility study

**Stakeholder Meeting #2: December 12, 2012**

Originally scheduled as a late October meeting, the second stakeholder meeting was postponed to mid-December due to Superstorm Sandy. This second round of outreach was attended by eleven stakeholders, ten project team members and two county representatives. Fanwood and Roselle Park representatives were not present, but were subsequently briefed in early January 2013.

The project team shared results from regional, county and corridor demographic and economic analyses as well as introduced a large poster activity to examine potential “soft site” and redevelopment opportunities at station areas. The day was split into two workshop sessions – presentations detailing opportunities surrounding potential on-road rapid transit stations, and off-road rapid transit stations, along the proposed transit corridor. Participants not only identified opportunities that pertained to their own municipality, but were able to review opportunities in neighboring communities. Specific site-related recommendations were produced that serve as the core of this report. Other points of discussion included:
• Possibility of circulation and congestion along Route 28 presenting challenges to development and redevelopment
• Potential for new transit service to complement existing service on NJ TRANSIT’s Raritan Valley Line and Northeast Corridor
• Municipalities working together cooperatively (shared policy, advocacy, etc.)
• NJ Route 28 as a “commuter’s corridor”
• Concerns about zoning for TOD and provision of a new service as a “chicken-or-the-egg” issue (i.e. which comes first and when?)
• Importance of making bus service a first-class service, akin to rail service
• Branding and marketing of each of the communities and the corridor as a whole
• An emerging corridor vision: Plainfield and Elizabeth as the manufacturing/industrial/urban bookends of the corridor; towns in between as service-oriented employment bases and town centers; the enhanced transit service connecting employees to job centers, riders to destinations, communities to each other

Stakeholder Meeting #3: March 26, 2013
The third meeting was attended by nine stakeholders, nine project team members and two county representatives. Project team members presented summaries of station area opportunities along with a corridor vision. Overall, community representatives expressed agreement with their corridor vision designations. While the meeting allowed stakeholders and project team members to refine final strategies and recommendations, meeting proceedings and takeaways were primarily technical and administrative in nature. Discussion revolved around:

• How to reformat the corridor vision diagram
• Final report structure
• Next steps, including interest in continuing inter-municipal collaboration as the potential for a new transit service moves forward

Stakeholder Meeting #4: April 4, 2013
The final meeting was a special lunchtime meeting of all of Union County’s mayors, hosted by Mayor Accardi of Roselle Park. It was attended by mayors of each of the eight corridor municipalities, mayors of municipalities outside the study area but within the county, and six project team members. NJ TRANSIT presented an overview of Bus Rapid Transit and provided updates on the findings of their draft study. The project team presented the salient points of this study, including the corridor vision and recommendations. The mayors in attendance were supportive of BRT and the opportunities it could afford locally. The idea of a continued Mayors’ Forum to discuss the issues and opportunities around BRT was strongly endorsed.
Regional Context

Role of the Corridor in the Regional Transit Landscape

The NJ Route 28 corridor serves as a local thoroughfare and connector between communities in Union County and beyond. The study area along the corridor – stretching from Plainfield on the west to Elizabeth on the east – is important from a transit perspective for:

- Its alignment with the NJ TRANSIT Raritan Valley Line, including six station stops in five of the communities in the study area
- Connection to the Northeast Corridor line at Elizabeth
- Local service between Plainfield and Newark on the No. 59 bus line that connects each of the communities in the study area to each other and to destinations outside of the study area

Other bus lines connecting communities in the study area include:

- No. 112 Clark–New York, which provides service to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York stopping in Roselle and Elizabeth
- No. 113 Dunellen-New York which provides connections to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York through study area communities including Plainfield, Fanwood, Westfield, Garwood, Cranford and Elizabeth

Currently, NJ TRANSIT’s Raritan Valley rail line does not allow for a one-seat ride into New York Penn Station – requiring passengers to transfer at Newark Penn Station, extending the commute time for Union County residents, while also limiting economic development opportunities for transit oriented development in the municipalities (Plainfield, Fanwood, Westfield, Garwood and Cranford) that it serves. Regardless, many good planning and redevelopment efforts have taken place that have built on historical development patterns to implement transit oriented development in towns like Cranford and Fanwood, amongst others. The potential for enhanced transit along this route, such as Bus Rapid Transit, could further the efforts in those towns where redevelopment has already taken place, while bolstering new efforts in places like Plainfield, Roselle, Roselle Park and Elizabeth - places that would benefit from the improved service and new connections that it could afford.

Further, proximity to Jersey Gardens Mall and Newark Liberty International Airport give this corridor greater significance in the regional transit landscape. As the Northern New Jersey region and Union County become increasingly populated, travel demand along NJ Route 28 will likely increase. Implementing new transit service in this corridor presents the opportunity to connect an increasingly growing population to regional employment opportunities in places like the Airport and the Mall, improving service to the global job market in New York City and better connecting the corridor communities to each other.

Jersey Gardens Mall
Photo: The Outlet Collection | Jersey Gardens
Summary of Past Studies for the Corridor

A number of studies have been conducted to explore the potential for new transit service along the corridor. The 2002 Union County Cross-County Rail Link Study examined alternatives for transit between Midtown Elizabeth and Plainfield, as well as potential for an improved rail link system between Midtown Elizabeth and Newark Liberty International Airport. A reevaluation study completed in 2008 considered potential rail transit options that could make use of the former CNJ rail corridor between Cranford and Elizabeth. The 2011 Elizabeth Midtown Multi-Modal Integration Study provided strategies for enhanced multi-modal access and transit transfer in Elizabeth Midtown as well as recommendations for station area improvements and redevelopment.

Finally, the ongoing Union County Bus Rapid Transit Sustainable Corridor Study being conducted by NJ TRANSIT is investigating the feasibility of expanding transportation options along the corridor through enhanced transit, such as Bus Rapid Transit. The study analyzes route options and potential ridership for the length of the corridor between Plainfield through to Elizabeth and then out to Jersey Gardens Mall and Newark Liberty International Airport. The proposed route includes both on-street segments – between Plainfield and Cranford and then again between Elizabeth and Jersey Gardens Mall and Newark Liberty Airport – and an off-street segment that utilizes the vacant CNJ railroad right-of-way from the Cranford/Roselle border to Elizabeth. The economic and land use analysis completed in this project study utilizes the proposed route of this Sustainable Corridor study.
Corridor Opportunities

Land Use

Existing Conditions

Using MOD-IV data, an analysis of existing land uses was conducted at the municipal (boundaries of each municipality) and corridor (sum of land uses within ½ mile-radius of all proposed station areas) levels.

Land use in study area municipalities
Source: MOD-IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Density Residential</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Property</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Density Residential</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other or Unknown</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The primary land use within the eight municipalities in the study area is low density residential (48%), followed by public property (22%) which includes many public buildings in the County Seat of Elizabeth. However, only two percent of the land is considered high density residential, meaning that these municipalities serve as bedroom communities for nearby urban centers. Nine percent of the land is considered commercial, four percent of land is considered vacant, and smaller percentages of land are used for institutional and industrial purposes.

Land use along corridor, excluding Jersey Gardens Mall
Source: MOD-IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Density Residential</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Property</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Density Residential</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other or Unknown</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corridor-wide (excluding Jersey Gardens Mall), the nature of the land use differs somewhat, with greater percentages of both low and high density residential, more commercial, and significantly less public property. This indicates that there is slightly more variety of housing options along the corridor and greater commercial activity.

Corridor Development Potential

The type of land use alone does not always indicate whether or not there is development potential. By comparing the assessed improvement value of a parcel to its assessed land value using MOD-IV data, a “soft sites” analysis was conducted that identified which parcels have the greatest redevelopment potential. At the corridor level, it was found that about 22% of the parcels analyzed could be considered to have redevelopment potential. Individually per station area, this ranged from a low of 8% around Linden Road in Roselle to more than 75% around Jersey Gardens Mall. These soft sites can be redeveloped in ways that support ridership – in particular residential – and provide jobs and services to those using the proposed service.

Corridor development potential
Source: MOD-IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utilization Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Less than 50% Utilization) All Land Uses</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(50-79% Utilization) Commercial and Industrial Uses</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(80-99% Utilization)</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Density Residential</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current land uses along the corridor present significant opportunities for transit-supportive redevelopment, including residential, commercial, office and industrial uses.

Opportunity

1 MOD-IV contains property tax assessment data collected by the State of New Jersey.

2 For any land uses, if the assessed improvement value is less than 50% of the land value, the parcel is considered soft. For commercial and industrial uses, parcels with improvement values less than the land values are soft.
**Demographics**

**Population**

On a regional level, population growth has been generally constant over time, with a period of stagnation in the 1970s and 1980s. Since the 1990s through 2010, regional population has been growing at a rate of 23%. Taken individually, municipalities in the study area have followed a similar trend, but with slower rates for most of them over the same time period. Elizabeth is the fastest growing municipality with 14% growth from 1990 to 2010. However, most municipalities are projected to grow on par with the region between 2010 and 2035.

**Race & Ethnicity**

The racial composition of the municipalities varies widely across the study area. Some communities have majority populations of White residents, including Cranford, Fanwood, Garwood and Westfield. Other communities have a majority of Non-White residents, including Elizabeth which has over 50% Hispanic or Latino residents; Plainfield, which has both large Hispanic or Latino and Black or African American populations; and Roselle which has a higher concentration of Black or African American residents. Although racial composition varies in individual municipalities, overall there is clear trend of increasing diversity in all communities.

**Housing Cost**

The cost of housing in the study area has increased dramatically in recent years. In 2000, 80% of owner occupied units in the Northern New Jersey region were valued at $300,000 or less.\(^3\) By 2010, that percentage dropped to 27%,\(^4\) indicating a shrinking pool of lower-priced homes. Within the study area, median home values dramatically increased for every municipality by a range of 54% (Fanwood) to as high as 82% (Elizabeth) between 2000 and 2010.\(^5\)

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\(^3\) U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 3
\(^4\) American Community Survey 2010 5-year estimates
\(^5\) U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 3; American Community Survey 2010 5-year estimates
At the same time, income has fluctuated and has not kept pace with the soaring home values. Adjusted for inflation, a few municipalities have seen increases in income (+18% in Fanwood and +10% in Cranford) but the majority of municipalities have seen median household income decline (-12% in Plainfield, -11% in Roselle, -9% in Roselle Park and -2% in Elizabeth). Regionally, there are now more households with low or moderate incomes than in 2000. As a result of increasing home values and stagnant or reduced income, households in all of the municipalities have higher housing cost burdens than they did in 2000. Regionally, data shows that the share of households considered severely cost burdened has increased from 14% in 2000 to 21% in 2010. Renters in the region suffer more than owners, with even higher percentages of housing cost burdens.

**Housing Choice**

Housing choice for residents in the study area has largely become more limited over time. The percentage of renter occupied housing units dropped or remained the same in each of the municipalities except for Elizabeth and Garwood. At the same time, the regional trend for new construction shows more single family than multifamily units being built across Northern New Jersey, including in each of the municipalities except for Elizabeth.

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**Opportunity**

There is a growing, increasingly diverse population with fewer housing choices within their financial means.

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6 Housing cost burden is defined as expenditure of 30% or greater of household income toward housing costs. Severe housing cost burden is defined as expenditure of 50% or greater of household income toward housing costs.

7 U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 3; American Community Survey 2010 5-year estimates
Education & Employment

Education

Workers living in the eight municipalities of the study area have a diverse range of educational attainment. Three communities – Cranford, Fanwood and Westfield – have more than 50% of residents aged 25 and over with Bachelor's degrees or higher, well above the average for Union County (31%) and Northern New Jersey (37%). The other five municipalities have less than 30% of residents aged 25 and over with Bachelor’s degrees or higher. Elizabeth (88%) has the greatest share of residents age 25 and over without a Bachelor’s degree or higher. Such a range of educational attainment presents opportunities for a variety of employment along the corridor. All of the communities, except Elizabeth, have experienced an increase in the percentage of residents aged 25 and over with post-secondary degrees from 2000 to 2010.

Occupation

At the municipal level, workers aged 16 and over are fairly evenly distributed in high- and low-skill industries, with 52% of residents working in high-skill jobs and 48% working low-skill jobs. Educational services and health care is the industry with the highest percentage of workers (19%), followed by manufacturing (12%), professional (11%) and retail (11%). Such a diverse workforce would be expected given the range of educational attainment described above.

Unemployment

Unemployment rates in 2010 range from 4% in Fanwood to nearly 12% in Plainfield. Reflecting regional and national trends, unemployment increased from 2000 to 2010 in every municipality except Fanwood. Some municipalities were impacted more severely than others; Plainfield, Roselle, Roselle Park and Garwood experienced increases of 4 to 6%. Generally, the unemployment rate across Northern New Jersey, in Union County, and in the majority of the corridor municipalities, is lower for people with higher educational attainment.

Opportunity

There is a diversely educated workforce, employed in a variety of high-and low-skill jobs, but facing increased unemployment.
**Mobility**

### Commute to Work

How residents in the study area commute to work, both now and in the past, may indicate their likelihood of using a new, enhanced transit service. Overall, the majority of resident workers commute by car, ranging from 67% in Elizabeth to 85% in Cranford. The share of resident workers commuting via public transit (including bus, railroad, subway and ferry) is modest when compared to the share of those commuting via car, with public transit use ranging from 7% in Garwood to 16% in Westfield. The greatest percentage of resident workers commuting by train is by Westfield and Fanwood residents (9% each), while the greatest share of resident workers commuting via bus is by Elizabeth residents (8%).

While commuters’ transit use is considerably less than by car, there is a downward trend in car as a means of transportation to work for each municipality between 2000 and 2010, with reductions ranging from 1% to 13%. Plainfield (13%) and Elizabeth (11%) have seen the greatest reduction in share of resident workers commuting via car. At the same time, the share of resident workers commuting by bus has increased in five of the eight municipalities by 1% to 3%, with the greatest increases in Fanwood, Roselle Park and Westfield. The share of resident workers commuting via train has declined in all municipalities except Garwood. In general, the share of residents commuting via car has decreased overall while the share of resident workers commuting via transit has increased over time.

### Vehicle Ownership

As described above, the vast majority of corridor residents use cars to travel to work. The number of cars per household may influence residents’ decision to use transit now and in the future. Residents living in households with one car or less could be considered more likely to be transit riders, provided there is adequate service to where they work. Vehicle ownership data from 2010 indicate that about half of all Union County households own one car or less. Elizabeth (73%), Plainfield (60%), Roselle (59%) and Roselle Park (48%) have the highest percentages of households with one car or less and offer the greatest potential for riders on an enhanced transit service.

### Opportunity

A higher share of residents are using public transportation and there are more who could benefit from additional enhanced service.
Economic Development

**Current Employment**

Understanding the employment opportunities in the corridor – both by share and by square footage of facilities per sector – offers a sense of which sectors are performing best, which are likely to be successful in the coming years, and what amount of real estate is dedicated to these uses. At the regional and county levels, employment is concentrated in Trade, Transportation and Utilities, Education and Health Services, and Professional and Business Services, with the same three sectors using the greatest amount of square footage. These same three sectors are at the top of the list for most municipalities in terms of share of employment and amount of square footage, but there is greater variation at the second and third tiers. Manufacturing is one of the top industries in Cranford, Elizabeth, Garwood, Roselle and Roselle Park. Garwood is the only community where Leisure & Hospitality is one of the top industries. Overall, Cranford, Elizabeth, Fanwood, Garwood, Plainfield and Westfield have approximately one-third of their employment base in one sector alone (one of either Professional and Business Services; Trade, Transportation and Utilities; or Education and Health), while Roselle and Roselle Park have a more diverse employment base.

### Employment Trends

Between 2010 and 2035, employment is expected to grow by 20% in Northern New Jersey, by 12% in Union County, and by 18% in the study area municipalities.

At the industry sector level, Union County is forecast to experience growth in Construction, Other Services, Leisure and Hospitality, and Professional and Business Services; declines are forecast in Information, Manufacturing and Government from 2010 to 2020.

#### Top industries in the municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Top Industries (Employment)</th>
<th>Top Industries (Square Footage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cranford</td>
<td>1. Professional &amp; Business (26%)</td>
<td>1. Education &amp; Health (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Education &amp; Health (18%)</td>
<td>2. Professional &amp; Business (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Manufacturing (12%)</td>
<td>3. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Construction (12%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>1. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (34%)</td>
<td>1. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Public Administration (13%)</td>
<td>2. Manufacturing (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Manufacturing (11%)</td>
<td>3. Financial Services (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fanwood</td>
<td>1. Professional &amp; Business (31%)</td>
<td>1. Professional &amp; Business (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (14%)</td>
<td>2. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Education &amp; Health (13%)</td>
<td>3. Education &amp; Health (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garwood</td>
<td>1. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (44%)</td>
<td>1. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Manufacturing (15%)</td>
<td>2. Manufacturing (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Leisure &amp; Hospitality (12%)</td>
<td>3. Other Services (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plainfield</td>
<td>1. Education &amp; Health (37%)</td>
<td>1. Education &amp; Health (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (16%)</td>
<td>2. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Professional &amp; Business (9%)</td>
<td>3. Manufacturing (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roselle</td>
<td>1. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (19%)</td>
<td>1. Manufacturing (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Education &amp; Health (19%)</td>
<td>2. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Manufacturing (18%)</td>
<td>3. Education &amp; Health (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Professional &amp; Business (15%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roselle Park</td>
<td>1. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (20%)</td>
<td>1. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Education &amp; Health (18%)</td>
<td>2. Education &amp; Health (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Manufacturing (16%)</td>
<td>3. Manufacturing (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westfield</td>
<td>1. Education &amp; Health (35%)</td>
<td>1. Education &amp; Health (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Professional &amp; Business (20%)</td>
<td>2. Professional &amp; Business (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (16%)</td>
<td>3. Trade, Transportation, Utilities (16%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sectors that have large shares of current employment and have high use of public transit include:

- Manufacturing
- Trade, Transportation and Utilities

Sectors that have moderate shares of current employment and moderate use of public transit include:

- Education and Health Services
- Professional and Business Services

Analyzing commuting patterns demonstrates which sectors have the greatest share of employees using public transportation and indicate which industries may benefit most from enhanced transit service. Those industries with the greatest percentage of employees using transit ("High") include:

- Leisure & Hospitality (24%)
- Other Services (18%)
- Manufacturing (14%)
- Trade, Transportation and Utilities (13.5%)
- Information (12.3%)

Those with more moderate percentages of transit use ("Medium") include:

- Education & Health Services (9.5%)
- Financial Activities (9.3%)
- Professional & Business Services (6.7%)

One of the primary goals of this study is to identify economic development opportunities along the corridor that would benefit most from enhanced public transit. The following sectors should be targeted:

1. Sectors that are both expected to grow over the next decade and have high use public transit include:
   - Leisure and Hospitality
   - Other Services

Opportunity

Target sectors that either make up a large share of current employment or are expected to grow and use public transit include:

- Leisure and Hospitality
- Manufacturing
- Trade, Transportation and Utilities
- Education and Health Services
- Professional and Business Services

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1 Census Transportation Planning Products, 2000
The potential for economic development that enhanced transit service could offer is obtainable for each of the eight municipalities along the transit corridor. To better understand and illustrate these opportunities, land uses within a ½ mile radius of each proposed station area were analyzed for development and redevelopment potential. Cumulatively, development potential in the corridor was estimated to support over one million square feet of retail commercial, nearly two million square feet of office commercial, around one million square feet of industrial, over 150,000 square feet of institutional space, and approximately 1,800 additional residential dwelling units. Based on population and employment forecasts for Union County, this means that soft sites identified in the corridor could support over 20% of the employment growth and 8% of the residential growth estimated by 2035, though there is very likely capacity in the corridor for about twice the amount of residential development calculated.

Then, working closely with municipal stakeholders, and with the municipal plans, studies and the research summarized in Chapter 3, a summaries of the major issues and opportunities at each station area were developed and are presented in this chapter by municipality. The recommendations are intended to serve as a resource for municipalities as they plan for the future of these critical areas.
Introduction & Background

The City of Elizabeth is New Jersey’s fourth largest city and is the seat of Union County. It is a growing and increasingly diverse city. In recent years, Elizabeth has been redeveloping land uses both in the City’s downtown (Midtown), as well as on the periphery, with retail destinations such as Jersey Gardens Mall. The redevelopment has been guided by a variety of planning initiatives, including the city’s 2005 Master Plan and 2008 Reexamination, a series of redevelopment and neighborhood plans, and the 2011 NJTPA Elizabeth Midtown Multi-Modal Integration Study. The plans focused on opportunities to maximize transportation connections, redevelop land uses in the core, improve the city’s visual image, provide amenities for residents and workers, enhance environmental quality, leverage Elizabeth’s educational centers (Union County College and Kean University), and take advantage of an underutilized waterfront.

Several elements of planning processes have already been accomplished, including:

- Construction of a 580-space, multi-level parking garage
- Renovation of parts of the historic Elizabeth train station
- Significant streetscape and pedestrian improvements

Profile: Elizabeth

**Population** has increased since 1980 and is projected to increase through 2035, mirroring county and regional trends. Between 2000 and 2010, Elizabeth’s population became increasingly diverse, most notably in the surge of its Hispanic/Latino population. Over 80% of the city’s population is Non-White, far higher than in the county or region.

**Housing** vacancy rates increased from 5% to 11% between 2000 and 2010. Inflation-adjusted median home values increased nearly two-fold in this time frame. In 2010, the city’s median home value was less than the county’s median home value. Approximately 55% of Elizabeth’s households are burdened by housing costs, exceeding figures for the county and region.

**Employment** is concentrated in trade, transportation and utilities, education and health services, public administration, and manufacturing. Resident workers are employed primarily in the education, health and social services industry, manufacturing industry, and retail trade industry.

**Real estate** is concentrated in trade, transportation and utilities, manufacturing, and financial services.

**Transit** use is limited to about 10% of employed resident commuters of Elizabeth, with 8% using the bus and 2% traveling via train. Between 2000 and 2010, share of car usage as a means of transportation to work decreased by 11%, while share of bus and train usage decreased by 3%. A greater percentage of resident commuters are walking or taking other means of transportation to work. Nearly half of the city’s households have one vehicle, and approximately 25% have no vehicle, representing an opportunity for public transportation. Car ownership rates are much lower in the city than in the county and region.
Magnolia Avenue

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
Magnolia Station would be the last stop on the off-street segment of the service before heading to Jersey Gardens Mall and/or Newark Liberty International Airport. There is currently an UEZ corridor along both sides of Magnolia Avenue. Redevelopment opportunities are constrained along much of the north side of Magnolia Avenue by many small residential lots. However, there are some redevelopment opportunities, including:

- Marginal auto-oriented uses at corner of Route 1-9 and Magnolia Avenue Ramp

- Marginal auto-oriented uses between Catherine Street and Oak Street along south side

- A low-density motel site between Route 1-9 and Oak Street that could be redeveloped into a housing site

Opportunities for redevelopment in these places should include mixed-use development that would match the character of and support the surrounding neighborhoods. Design guidelines should be used to ensure transition and contextual design. As elsewhere in the corridor, there are higher population densities and density of uses within the ¼ to ½ mile radius of the future station, representing a source of potential riders. An assessment of the pedestrian/bicycle conditions should be done in this area in order to provide potential riders with safe, easy access to future transit service.

Jersey Gardens Mall

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
Jersey Gardens Mall is a two-level, 1,300,000 sq. ft. outlet mall built on a former landfill site in an Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ). It is surrounded by a number of large, paved parking lots. Redevelopment opportunities exist on the parking lots and on the undeveloped portion of the site, along the waterfront. Environmental constraints (both wetlands and brownfields) should be fully understood and waterfront access/coordination plans should also be part of the site plan review. As a regional shopping destination and retail employment center, the mall serves as a major origin and destination for any enhanced transit services.

As the site is redeveloped, transit circulation within the site should be part of the site planning process. A future station should feature high-quality design and be integrated with the rest of the redevelopment plan, providing close access to developed areas. Over time, other place-making strategies could be brought into play, including:

- New buildings should have a clear relationship with neighboring buildings and streets
- Carriageways between parking areas can become more like streets, with sidewalks and pedestrian-scale lighting and landscaping
Elizabeth Rail Station

Current Plans
The City of Elizabeth has been actively redeveloping the downtown for many years. The “Midtown Area”, where the former Central New Jersey (CNJ) right-of-way crosses the Northeast Corridor, is a designated Transit Village, the nexus of several redevelopment areas, as well as the core of an Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ). The immediate station area has been the subject of several design and planning studies by the City and by the NJTPA. These studies address the complex intersections and turning movements in this area and propose designs for a network of public spaces connecting the proposed service and the NEC. The objective is to create a distinctive place that would promote new TOD development. The historic CNJ train station is actively used as a restaurant.

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
As described in the current plans, the connection between the proposed new service and the Northeast Corridor presents an exceptional opportunity to capitalize on TOD opportunities where public spaces are brought to life by commuters, workers, and residents occupying new mixed-use buildings. There are several redevelopment sites adjacent to the two stations, several sites that extend to the south into the downtown core, and sites to the north up to residential neighborhoods. In this part of the city, there is more multi-family housing than at other potential station areas in the corridor. These sites nearest the train station can support midrise office buildings over structured parking and some sites have accepted proposals for this kind of development.

Interestingly, many of the sites are aligned in a kind of north-south zone that is proximate to the Elizabeth River which is channelized as it passes through this part of the City. A riverside greenway between Broad Street and Bridge Street could be extended over time, becoming a greater open space amenity and linking the various redevelopment sites to each other as it passes by the new multi-modal station area. The current zoning links development to implementation of segments of this greenway and this, in turn, can be linked to the larger urban trail network that the City is implementing. Another urban design concept supporting the station area is the idea that Morris Avenue could play the role of a kind of “University Boulevard” with Union Community College at one end and Kean University at the other. Taken together, the many potential sites can support a very robust redevelopment program: approximately 1000 dwelling units, 180,000 square feet of retail and 470,000 square feet of office space. Because this is also a government center, there could be another 40,000 square feet of some institutional use as part of one or more of the mixed-use buildings.

Together with Plainfield, Elizabeth is the other major downtown anchor on the corridor. It already is a destination for work trips as well as a source of riders, drawn from a large population near and around Midtown where car ownership is lower. The TOD redevelopment described here can reinforce this role.
Elmora Avenue

Current Plans
There are currently no formal plans for the area around the proposed Elmora Avenue station.

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
The proposed Elmora Avenue station is the westernmost station in Elizabeth. It is surrounded by dense neighborhoods consisting mostly of single-family houses, although there are also two-family and three-family houses and some attached housing. There are several large-scale developments along West Grand Street, including a Pathmark supermarket and the headquarters for Actavis - a huge complex of buildings that manufactures pharmaceutical products.

There are some scattered redevelopment sites along the West Grand Street corridor where some three- and four-story residential buildings could be developed. But the real TOD development opportunity is around the intersections of Elmora Avenue with West Grand Street on the south side and Westfield Avenue on the north side of the tracks. There are “soft sites” on several of the corners that could be redeveloped as three and four story mixed-use buildings.

On the south side at the intersection of Elmora Avenue and West Grand Street, there is a dry cleaning business surrounded by surface parking. This is adjacent to an expansive parking lot for the Pathmark supermarket. The utilization of these parking lots, including the potential to provide shared parking, suggests that the edges of the lots could be redeveloped to better define the intersection with Elmora Avenue and create more of a sense of place. As West End Avenue comes into this same intersection, it creates a small triangular park which could be incorpo-rated into the re-design of this gateway. Finally, a historic fire station at the intersection of West Grand and West End Avenue gives this gateway a civic presence.

On the north side, at the intersection of Elmora Avenue and Westfield Avenue, there is a gas station on the southeast corner and a drive-through McDonald’s on the southwest corner. Although there is currently a proposal to expand the McDonald’s, serious consideration should be given to a more complex development program that could include a remodeled McDonalds as part of a mixed-use structure that relates to the sidewalks on the corner. McPherson Park, as with the fire station to the south, gives this gateway a civic presence. The block immediately to the north, at the intersection of Elmora Avenue and Park Avenue, is already being redeveloped with a mix of uses.

Collectively, a redevelopment program along these lines might yield 100 dwelling units, 200,000 square feet of retail and office uses, and 12,000 square feet of industrial uses.

Existing land use in Elmora Avenue station area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Density Residential</td>
<td>244.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Density Residential</td>
<td>34.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>42.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>6.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>14.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Property</td>
<td>14.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Land</td>
<td>8.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other or Unknown</td>
<td>17.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undefined in MOD IV</td>
<td>17.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Sites</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>380.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction & Background

The Borough of Roselle is located in central Union County and is well-connected to surrounding municipalities, via local roadways, and to the region via easy access to the Garden State Parkway, the NJ Turnpike, and the Raritan Valley Line in neighboring Roselle Park. Roselle is predominantly a single-family residential borough with pockets of multi-family residential and aging industrial properties. The Borough hopes to shift away from industry to more commercial/retail and is planning to redevelop a nearly 60-acre golf course into multifamily residential housing. Located on the out-of-service former CNJ Main Line right-of-way, one station stop is being considered for Roselle at Linden Road. Redevelopment directly around the station area and infill development sites present opportunities for the borough, including more retail and restaurants to help make Roselle more of a destination.

Profile: Roselle

**Population** declined between 2000 and 2010, but is projected to grow through 2035. Between 2000 and 2010, Hispanic/Latino persons comprised an increasing share of the borough’s population. At 16%, the borough’s share of White Non-Hispanic individuals is below that of the county and region, reflecting a more diverse racial composition.

**Housing** vacancy rates increased from 4% to 7% between 2000 and 2010. Inflation-adjusted median home value increased 72% in this time frame, though the borough’s median home value remains below that of the county. The percentage of households burdened by housing costs in increased from 36% in 2000 to 54% in 2010.

**Employment** is concentrated in trade, transportation and utilities, education and health services, manufacturing, and professional and business services. Resident workers are employed primarily in educational, health and social services, transportation, warehousing and utilities, and retail trade.

**Real estate** is concentrated in manufacturing, trade, transportation and utilities, and education and health services.

**Transit** use is limited to about 8% of resident commuters. Bus, train, and car use as a means of transportation to work declined between 2000 and 2010. Car ownership rates in the borough reflect car ownership rates in the county and region. Approximately 11% of Roselle households have no vehicle, and 48% of households have one vehicle, representing an opportunity for increased transit service.
Introduction & Background

The Borough of Roselle Park is a 1.2 square mile, predominantly residential municipality with a stable commercial corridor along Westfield Avenue and a number of aging industrial uses throughout. The Borough is served by the Roselle Park rail station on the Raritan Valley Line. Roselle Park is taking advantage of commercial and residential redevelopment opportunities throughout the borough, with particular focus around the rail station and around Chestnut Street. There are two proposed stations in Roselle Park: one at the intersection Locust or Chestnut Street and West 1st Avenue (which shares a border with Roselle) and one at Gordon Street and West 1st Avenue, near the Romerovski industrial complex. The proposed stations present an opportunity to advance economic development and achieve the station area vision.

Profile: Roselle Park

- **Population** has remained relatively unchanged since 2000, but is projected to increase through 2035. Hispanic/Latino and Black Non-Hispanic persons comprise a greater percentage of the borough’s population, demonstrating increasing diversity and reflecting county and regional trends.

- **Housing** vacancy rates increased from 2% to 5% between 2000 and 2010. Inflation-adjusted median home value increased 70% within this time frame, though the borough’s median home value remains below that of the county. Approximately 48% of all households are burdened by housing costs, comparable to the county and region.

- **Employment** is concentrated in trade, transportation and utilities, education and health services, and manufacturing. Resident workers are employed primarily in the educational, health and social services industry, professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management industry, and manufacturing industry.

- **Real estate** is concentrated in trade, transportation and utilities, education and health services, manufacturing, and professional and business services.

- **Transit** use is limited to about 10% of commuters. Share of car usage as a means of transportation to work decreased from 86% to 81% in this time frame, while share of bus usage increased from 2% to 5%, representing an opportunity area. Nearly 50% of households have one or no vehicle, indicating an opportunity for increased transit service.

Three of the stations for the proposed transit service – Linden Road, Locust/Chestnut Street, and Gordon Street – are located on the municipal border between Roselle and Roselle Park. The stations will serve residents and visitors and enhance the economic development potential of both municipalities.
Linden Road

Current Plans
There are currently no formal plans for the area around the proposed Linden Road station.

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
The existing land use pattern in the Linden Road study area is one of commercial and mixed-use corridors parallel to the proposed right-of-way: Westfield Avenue on the north side and 1st Avenue on the south side. Similar to rest of the corridor, compact, single-family neighborhoods predominate and come up to the edges of these corridors.

The Linden Road area is distinguished by the fact that even though 1st Avenue is predominantly commercial, the Westfield Avenue corridor has become largely residential, with several multi-family developments on former industrial sites. As a result, Westfield Avenue has a primarily residential character.

A future station area here will benefit from its namesake, Linden Avenue, an important corridor that extends south to Warinanco Park, a major Union County recreational resource. There are a few significant short or medium redevelopment opportunities near the proposed station: the northwest corner at Linden and Westfield could support a new three or four story mixed-use building. An old warehouse on the southeast corner could be redeveloped for mixed-use with residential uses, perhaps a restaurant and a farmers’ market. This area is thought of as a gateway for Roselle and redevelopment around a future station would support the city’s objective of becoming more of a destination downtown with restaurants and small shops. There are several “soft sites” near the station area. In total, these sites might yield 200 dwelling units, and 15,000 square feet of retail. Farther west on 1st Avenue, there is a marginal industrial area that might support as much as 26,000 square feet of flex industrial space.
Locust / Chestnut Street

Current Plans
Roselle Park’s 2007 New Directions plan focused on redevelopment opportunities throughout the borough. It focused on enhancing the existing downtown by revitalizing the blocks around Chestnut Street between Westfield Avenue and downtown. Through infill and redevelopment, the vision laid out opportunities to make this area a true gateway to Roselle Park with mixed-use residential and commercial buildings. The plan also laid out a vision for a redesign of Westfield Avenue – particularly at the intersection of Chestnut Street - as a boulevard with an enhanced streetscape and traffic calming measures that creates a gateway to Roselle Park. The Borough prefers to see a future station at Chestnut Street, versus nearby Locust Street. The Borough of Roselle has produced a redevelopment plan for the nearby Roselle golf course, located less than a mile from this proposed station. The plan calls for 900 multi-family residential units set in a walkable, sustainable community.

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
The proposed station area is comprised of commercial and mixed-use corridors, surrounded by compact single-family neighborhoods with some multifamily housing along the major arterials. This proposed station presents an opportunity to connect several parts of town and create a cohesive, pedestrian-oriented center with a distinct identity. The proposed station sits at the nexus of three commercial and mixed-use corridors: Westfield Avenue (East and West) on the north side of the tracks; 1st Avenue (East and West) on the south side of the tracks; and Chestnut Street which intersects with both of these and is the closest to being Roselle Park’s “Main Street”.

If Chestnut Street was extended across the right-of-way, it would create one continuous “Main Street” linking the north and south sides of town. However, the construction of a commercial property eliminates the possibility of reconnecting Chestnut Street as a road. The municipality feels that, if properly designed, a future station at Chestnut Street could provide a connection, at least for pedestrians and bicyclists. Chestnut Street extends north to the Roselle Park station on the Raritan Valley Line, and with the proposed station, could develop as a corridor linking two regional transportation resources.

There are significant redevelopment opportunities in the area; for example, there are scattered infill opportunities along Westfield Avenue and 1st Avenue. Just west of Chestnut Street, there is the opportunity to create a node of mixed-use development where 1st Avenue intersects with Locust Street, which is the next road that that links the north and south sides of town with an underpass. Infill opportunities along Chestnut Street can reinforce its “Main Street” character.

The biggest redevelopment opportunities are the abandoned properties and surface parking lots along Westfield Avenue between Locust and Chestnut Streets. The municipality studied this area in their New Directions plan, which included a “Chestnut Street Gateway” concept plan. These surface lots would contain three-story mixed-use buildings oriented towards Westfield Avenue. Appropriately, the centerpiece of the plan is a public space in front of a future transit stop. This new “station plaza” is directly on axis with the Chestnut Street alignment, accomplishing the link between the north and south sides of town described above.

Collectively, these opportunities create a robust redevelopment program: approximately 340 dwelling units, 200,000 square feet of retail, 320,000 of office and 57,000 of flex production space. If this location became enough of a destination, the municipality could support a small boutique-scale hotel.

Additionally, a large golf course within a mile of the station in Roselle is being redeveloped for 900 units of housing. While this is outside of the immediate station area, if connected, it could contribute to the success of a transit-oriented center.
Gordon Street

Current Plans
The proposed station at Gordon Street and West 1st Avenue is one block from the Romerovski industrial site, which is subject to an existing redevelopment plan. The vision for the Romerovski site calls for the development of a gateway site with housing and neighborhood retail along walkable streets.

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
This potential station area is distinctive in several ways. First, it is where the Raritan Valley Line (RVL) intersects the proposed service and is the transition between the on-road service to the west, and the off-road service to the east. This impacts the characteristics of the future service in terms of speed and the need to construct a new station along the off-road portion. Second, the site is dominated by old loft factories known as the Romerovski complex. These are beautiful, if deteriorating, old loft-style buildings that one would more readily expect to find in older urban industrial areas, and which are found in only a few locations along the NJ Route 28 corridor. One of the Romerovski buildings has particular historic significance – it is here that Marconi established a wireless telegraph lab and factory, and was the site of the first regularly broadcast radio station. The Borough is mindful of preserving the history of this site, which may influence the type of development implemented. Elsewhere, land uses are similar to other places along the NJ Route 28 corridor: a familiar mix of smaller scale businesses and some attached housing, although, perhaps reflecting the industrial heritage of the area, there were several smaller manufacturers in the immediate area. This suggests that there may be a small manufacturing base that can be grown here. To the south and west along the RVL, there are several very large industrial sites which contain more contemporary, large footprint, single story buildings.

Collectively, these industrial properties and the large open areas behind them, present an opportunity for mixed-use transit-oriented development at a scale that is not found elsewhere on the corridor. Older loft structures immediately evoke images of live-work, mixed-use spaces where entrepreneurs and light industry co-habit with other creative industries. For the purposes of this study, a very aggressive build-out might result in as much as 200,000 square feet of retail, 200,000 of office, 550,000 square feet space of light industrial uses, and 50,000 square feet of institutional uses in the form of an industry “center of excellence” that can work with local entrepreneurs or incubate new businesses. Because of concerns about environmental conditions, no residential development was presumed in the factories.

The challenges of reusing older industrial buildings are enormous, ranging from environmental remediation, to upgrading building systems, and to the sheer scale of market demand required to fill them. In the last few years there have been proposals for new residential development in this area, including a proposal for approximately 250 dwelling units, but this proposal involved tearing down the older industrial buildings, rather than adaptively reusing them. There is an apartment complex nearby, Sunrise Village, which while in the long term might benefit from improvements to this area, in the short term presents an additional challenge.

Recent history suggests that this location could serve as a destination for work trips, a place of origin for work trips, or some combination of the two. Despite the challenges, there is interest in trying to reuse some portion of the Romerovski complex, since these buildings lend a distinctive identity to this place and to the corridor. Also, the corridor-wide analysis shows that industrial uses can generate transit ridership. Because of the complexity of the site, implementation will involve more than zoning changes. A Redevelopment Area will make it possible to manage investments over time, to curate a richer mix of activities, and to develop design guidelines to make sure the site is oriented towards a future transit stop.
Romerovski complex as former Marconi Wireless Building

Intermodal connections at a Raritan Valley Line station
Introduction & Background

The Township of Cranford is 4.8 square miles and is located in the center of the study corridor. Cranford is predominantly a low-density residential community with commercial uses in its downtown and along North and South Avenues, and commercial and industrial uses in Cranford Office Park on the south end of town. The downtown is served by the Cranford Rail Station on the Raritan Valley Line. Downtown Cranford underwent revitalization in the 1980s, establishing a Special Improvement District that encourages a Victorian look for its local businesses. In 2000, Cranford developed a comprehensive Downtown Vision Plan that laid the groundwork for much of the recent mixed-use redevelopment south of the tracks, effectively expanding the downtown. Additional mixed-use residential units are being constructed directly across from the rail station, a later phase of development. The proposed new transit service would stop at an on-road station near the rail station.

Profile: Cranford

Population declined between 1970 and 1990 and has been stagnant since, contradicting county and regional trends. However, Cranford’s population is expected to increase through 2035. Between 2000 and 2010, Cranford became increasingly diverse, with an increase in the share of its Hispanic/Latino population. Nevertheless, the township’s population remains less diverse than that of the county and region.

Housing vacancy rates increased from 2% in 2000 to 5% in 2010. Inflation-adjusted median home values increased by 64% within this time frame. Median home values are higher in Cranford than in the county. In the last decade, housing cost burdens have become more severe, though when compared to the county and region, a lower percentage of Cranford’s households are burdened by housing costs.

Employment within the township is concentrated in professional and business services, construction, manufacturing, trade, transportation and utilities, and financial services. Resident workers are employed primarily in the educational, health and social services industry and the professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services industry.

Real estate is concentrated in education and health services, professional and business services, trade, transportation and manufacturing.

Transit use is limited to about 11% of employed resident commuters of Cranford, with 4% using the bus and 7% using the train. Share of bus usage as a means of transportation to work has increased in the past decade, while share of car usage has decreased. Approximately 34% of Cranford households own one vehicle or no vehicle. Car ownership rates are higher in the township than in the county or region.
Cranford Rail Station

Current Plans
The vision guiding current growth and redevelopment in Cranford stems largely from the establishment of a Special Improvement District (SID) in 1986 – the first in the state. The SID established design standards, set up a capital fund for improvements, and created a Downtown Management Corporation to oversee economic revitalization efforts. The proposed new transit station area lies within the heart of the SID near the existing rail station. A Downtown Vision Plan developed in the early 2000s laid out a blueprint for higher density, mixed-use growth in the downtown around the rail station. Cranford was also awarded Transit Village status in 2003. In its 2009 Master Plan, the Township laid out a vision for 2020 that includes the following applicable statements:

- Promote economically vibrant Downtown with a balance of office, professional, retail and residential uses
- Encourage commercial uses in the Downtown that make it a destination
- Highlight accessibility to various modes of transportation (rail, bus, air and highways),...
- Concentrate dense residential in the Downtown Core with less dense residential uses emanating out from the Core

The Master Plan identifies a downtown core to direct new growth in order to preserve the character and open spaces of the surrounding community.

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
Cranford is a community that has completely embraced transit-oriented development. In 2009, Cranford Crossing was completed, one of the flagship models for TOD development in the region. Built over an underutilized municipal parking lot, it comprises 50 condominiums and 22,000 square feet of retail wrapped around a 300-space parking deck that serves residents, shoppers and commuters. Through its contextual design and pedestrian orientation, this project has extended the downtown across the tracks to South Avenue (County Route 610), the on-road portion of the proposed transit service. Building on this model, a similar pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development is underway just east of Cranford Crossing, opposite the surface parking for the train station. Called Riverfront at Cranford Station, it will comprise 127 residential units, 20,000 square feet of retail uses and 20,000 square feet of office uses. At the eastern edge of the study area, on South Avenue East, there is a proposal for another 163 dwelling units. The municipality would like to see a boutique-scale hotel as well as more office space that can support the formation of small, three or four person businesses.

Over the years, there has been speculation about extending this redevelopment model to the surface parking lots around the station. The market cannot currently support additional development and implementation would require complex phasing to maintain the existing parking.

There are some redevelopment opportunities north of the tracks. The municipality is concerned about the condition of the gateway area where North Avenue/ NJ Route 28 enters the downtown. This area is currently occupied by marginal uses and a firehouse that is nearing the end of its lifespan. There has been preliminary discussion about moving the firehouse and promoting mixed-uses on the available land. This might result a redevelopment program comparable to Riverfront:

Existing land use in Cranford Rail Station area

- Low Density Residential: 229.59 Acres
- High Density Residential: 5.58 Acres
- Commercial: 50.66 Acres
- Industrial: 2.97 Acres
- Institutional: 14.94 Acres
- Public Property: 45.55 Acres
- Vacant Land: 1.86 Acres
- Other or Unknown: 26.22 Acres
- Utility: 0 Acres
- Undefined in MOD IV: 26.22 Acres
- Total: 375.4 Acres

approximately 100 dwelling units and a few thousand square feet of retail and office uses. Collectively, these efforts will reinforce the current role of Cranford as a source of ridership for transit, and as a destination for the kind of specialty dining and shopping that corridor residents look for when they want a nearby “downtown” experience.
Introduction & Background

Garwood is a 0.75 square mile borough located in the center of the study corridor and directly between the two downtowns of Westfield and Cranford. Garwood is predominantly a low density, single-family community with both commercial and industrial uses on North and South Avenues along the rail line. The Borough is served by the Garwood Rail Station on the Raritan Valley Line. Recent development in Garwood includes a mixed-use residential and retail development called The Mews at Garwood that includes 31,000 square feet of retail, 40 apartments and 44 partially age-restricted townhomes, completed in 2009. The proposed new transit service would stop at an on-road station near the Garwood Rail Station.

Profile: Garwood

Population has remained relatively unchanged since 1990, though is expected to increase through 2035. Between 2000 and 2010, there was an increase in the share of the Non-White population, demonstrating increasing diversity and reflecting county and regional trends. Nevertheless, Garwood’s racial composition varies greatly from that of the county and region.

Housing vacancy rates increased from 3% to 6% between 2000 and 2010. In this time frame, inflation-adjusted median home values went up 68%. Approximately 42% of all households are burdened by housing costs. A higher share of owner-occupied households is burdened by housing costs; this contradicts county and regional trends, where a higher share of renter-occupied households is burdened by housing costs.

Employment is concentrated in trade, transportation and utilities, manufacturing, and leisure and hospitality. Of these industries, businesses in leisure and hospitality are most likely to take advantage of increased transit service. Resident workers are employed primarily in the retail trade and educational, health, and social services industries.

Real estate is concentrated in trade, transportation and utilities, manufacturing, and other services.

Transit use is limited to about 5% of resident commuters. Share of bus usage as a means of transportation to work decreased from 2% in 2000 to 0% in 2010. Share of car usage as a means of transportation to work decreased from 88% to 83% within this time frame. Over 10% of the borough’s households have no car, representing a 4% increase in zero-car households from 2000. Approximately 30% of the borough’s residents have one vehicle. Car ownership rates in Garwood are comparable to the county and the region.
Garwood Rail Station

Current Plans
Planning in the Borough of Garwood is currently guided by its 2009 Master Plan & Re-Examination Report. The land use element of the plan classifies potential redevelopment, including a Townhouse Residential District; Community Commercial (conversion of underutilized industrial properties to active mixed-use); Mixed Use Development (The Mews at Garwood); Transit Oriented Development District (focused on South Avenue west of the rail station); Service Oriented Development (along much of South Avenue); Office/Retail (north of North Avenue); and Industrial Land Use (a Light Industrial zone along North and South Avenues at the edges of town).

Following up on a 2011 TOD study, NJ TRANSIT and NJTPA worked with Union County in 2012 on a pedestrian safety and “walkability” audit of Downtown Garwood. In addition, the Borough updated zoning on key brownfield parcels near Garwood Station so that TOD and commuter parking could be allowed and encouraged. NJ TRANSIT continues to partner with the Borough, the County and NJTPA to implement recommendations from the earlier study.

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
The blocks abutting both sides of the Raritan Valley Line along North Avenue (Route 28) and South Avenue (Route 610) are a mix of aging industrial and commercial uses with some more recent auto-oriented commercial activities interspersed. Connecting the north and south sides of the tracks is the Center Street underpass. Center Street south of the tracks has a kind of “Main Street” feel and the intersection with South Avenue is a well-defined commercial crossroads. In contrast, the intersection of Center Street with North Avenue is not as well defined, with a gas station on one corner and a huge expanse of surface parking on another. North Avenue also has a “main street” feel with one and two story pedestrian-oriented businesses. While compact single family neighborhoods predominate, there is some multi-family housing along North and South Avenue and one large townhome development at the intersection of South Chestnut and North Avenue.

The Garwood Station is located between North Avenue and the tracks next to a small surface parking lot. The narrow turning area in front of the station, as well as the geometry of Center Street – its steep curvature and grades – makes a potential intermodal connection to a bus very difficult, should it pull into the station area. The underpass is currently a bottleneck at some times of the day. There is also limited parking in this area, should ridership at the station increase. There are several very large properties along the south side of the tracks: to the east of Center Street is a large shopping center and to the west is Casale Industries, which specializes in custom metal fabrications.

A TOD redevelopment scenario here might have several different dimensions. First, there are scattered infill sites primarily along the North and South Avenue Corridors. North Avenue, east of the station area, has several potential redevelopment sites abutting the tracks. If this area is redeveloped, it would create one of the gateways to the downtown. Second, the underutilized properties around the intersection of Center Street and North Avenue – the gas station and surface parking lots – could support three or four story mixed use buildings to create an identifiable node near the train station. These areas might yield as much as 60 dwelling units and 120,000 square feet of commercial retail and office space. Third, there is a large industrial complex at the intersection of South Avenue and Center Street that could be redeveloped, although there may be environmental contamination issues to investigate and remediate, depending on the industrial use. Finally, because there are already viable manufacturing businesses in this area, several of the sites could remain industrial, especially a cluster of buildings at the east end of the study area along North Street. These might yield as much as 120,000 square feet of new production space. Overall, the municipality wants to repurpose underutilized properties to spur economic development and create employment opportunities.

Industrial uses along the corridor could support increased transit ridership. Therefore, the role of this station area in the larger corridor could be a destination for work trips.
Introduction & Background

Westfield is a nearly 7-square mile town centrally located along the corridor study area. The Town is predominantly a lower-density residential community. The thriving and well-known downtown is oriented around the Westfield Rail Station on the Raritan Valley Line. Development has occurred on both sides of the tracks but with greater intensity on the north side. There are some areas with a variety of multi-family housing. Downtown Westfield is an important retail destination and employment base with local and national chains. Commercial, office, and a small amount of industrial uses are located along North and South Avenues outside of downtown. Land uses in Westfield are largely well-established and not likely to change. Recent developments in the Town include mostly infill and rehabilitation in the downtown, including the conversion of a two-story building into three stories following a fire, as well as the development of age-restricted luxury housing, The Savannah. Very little commercial development has occurred in recent years. The proposed transit service would stop at an on-road station near the Westfield Rail Station.

Profile: Wesfield

Population has increased since 1990, and is projected to grow through 2035. Hispanic/Latino and Asian persons comprise a greater share of the town’s population, though in general the town exhibits less diversity than the county or region.

Housing vacancy rates increased from 2% to 4% between 2000 and 2010. Inflation-adjusted median home value increased by 55% in this time frame. At $665,000, median home value is far higher in Westfield than in the county. The percentage of households burdened by housing costs increased in the last decade, but remains below that of the county and region. Renters are more likely to be burdened by housing costs than owners.

Employment is concentrated in education and health services, professional and business services, trade, transportation and utilities. The town’s resident workers are employed in the professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management industry, the educational, health and social services industry, and the finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing industry.

Real estate is concentrated in education and health services, professional and business services, trade, transportation and utilities, and other services.

Transit use is limited to about 13% of resident commuters. Bus use as a means of transportation to work increased from 2% to 4% between 2000 and 2010, while share of train use decreased during this time frame. Share of car usage as a means of transportation to work has remained relatively unchanged. Nearly 30% of the town’s households have one or no vehicle. Nevertheless, car ownership rates are higher in Westfield than in the county and region.
Westfield Rail Station

Current Plans
Westfield’s land use decisions are currently guided by the 2009 Land Use element of its Master Plan. The plan defines goals and objectives relevant to land use, including:

- Promoting bulk, density and design standards that provide light, air and open space
- Preserving the suburban character of the town through zoning and design guidelines
- Encouraging green building design
- Maintaining and enhancing the viability of the business districts through encouraging a mix of land uses
- Promoting a desirable visual environment that preserves the small town atmosphere
- Providing adequate parking
- Promoting a desirable pedestrian environment and discouraging auto-oriented development in the central business district
- Providing a wide range of housing types compatible with current single-family housing through zoning and density standards
- Addressing the need for senior housing

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
Westfield is a well-established small downtown surrounded by compact, walkable neighborhoods. However, the downtown has a very limited presence on the south side of the tracks. Instead, there are limited commercial uses and a huge expanse of surface parking along South Avenue West (County Route 610). The proposed transit service will operate along South Avenue east of Westfield and along North Avenue/NJ Route 28 west of Westfield.

The redevelopment opportunities in the downtown are limited. At the eastern edge of downtown, a gateway exists where North Avenue/NJ Route 28 intersects with Central Avenue. Here, there are several surface parking lots which could be redeveloped. However, these lots are currently used by employees of the downtown businesses. Providing structured parking will be a complex and expensive proposition.

On the south side of tracks, there is another gateway opportunity where Central Avenue crosses South Avenue West (County Route 610). This is a commercial crossroads with several marginal commercial properties and an abandoned site. There are additional redevelopment parcels on Central Avenue just south of South Avenue. Along South Avenue, at the western end of the study area where the proposed transit corridor turns to go under the tracks, there are several more soft sites which could be redeveloped to create more of a gateway.

Collectively, if populated with new three- and four-story mixed-use buildings, these sites might yield several hundred new dwelling units and another 150,000 square feet of office and retail uses. The transit service, having crossed over to North Street, does not front on the largest and most opportunistic sites at Central Avenue and South Street. Finally, the surface parking lot would appear to be an enormous opportunity. Similar to other heavily utilized surface parking lots along the corridor, new mixed-use development with structured parking requires extensive planning and phased implementation to maintain adequate parking.

Westfield is a source of riders and a destination for visitors searching for specialty dining and shopping in a “main street” environment.
Introduction & Background

Fanwood is a 1.3 square mile borough near the western end of the corridor study area. The Borough is dominated by lower density residential uses with a cluster of commercial and industrial uses between South Avenue and the Raritan Valley Line. The community is served by the Fanwood Rail Station on the Raritan Valley Line. In recent years, downtown Fanwood has been undergoing major redevelopment efforts. Fanwood Crossing is a mixed-use redevelopment project located on a 6.5 acre site that is currently entering the second and third phases of development. Outside of the downtown, the Borough is investigating some older industrial areas for redevelopment opportunities, including lower density housing. The proposed enhanced transit service plans for one stop at the Fanwood Rail Station, near Fanwood Crossing.

Profile: Fanwood

**Population** has increased slightly between 1990 and 2010, and is projected to increase through 2035. Between 2000 and 2010, the borough's population became increasingly diverse, mirroring county and regional trends in Hispanic/Latino population growth. Nevertheless, the borough's racial composition varies greatly from that of the county and region.

**Housing** vacancy rates increased from 2% to 5% between 2000 and 2010. Median home values went up 54%, but at a slower rate than the other municipalities on the corridor. The share of Fanwood's households burdened by housing costs (36%) is lower than in the county and region. In 2000, only 16% of the borough's renter-occupied households were severely burdened by housing costs. In 2010, approximately two-thirds of the borough's renter-occupied households were severely burdened by housing costs.

**Employment** is concentrated in professional and business services, trade, transportation and utilities, education and health services, and leisure and hospitality. Of these, leisure and hospitality businesses are most likely to take advantage of increased transit. Fanwood's resident workers are employed primarily in the education, health and social services industry.

**Real estate** is concentrated in professional and business services, trade, transportation and utilities, and education and health services.

**Transit use** is limited to about 13% of resident commuters. Between 2000 and 2010, a greater share of resident workers used the bus as a means of transportation to work. Over 70% of Fanwood households have at least two vehicles. Vehicle ownership rates are higher in Fanwood than in the county and region.
Fanwood Rail Station

Current Plans
Much of the redevelopment in Fanwood stems from a Redevelopment Plan for the 6.5 acre site where Fanwood Crossing is being built. The plan was adopted in 2005 and was updated later that year, again in 2008, and twice in 2010. The plan designates a redevelopment area and provides a concept plan for redevelopment districts on the site for a mix of uses, including 122 residential units and a variety of commercial uses, such as retail and restaurants. Phase 1 of the project was completed in 2012. Phase 2 – which includes 40 residential units and ground floor retail – as well as Phase 3 – which includes additional apartments, pedestrian connections and a public gathering space – commenced in spring/summer 2013. The plan also contains design guidelines to ensure an attractive, walkable, transit-oriented development.

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
Similar to other parts of the corridor, Fanwood is a tale of the two sides of the tracks: north of the tracks are well-established, compact and walkable single-family neighborhoods. The historic train station sits in a beautiful little park. Land use south of the tracks follows the characteristic corridor pattern: a mix of auto-oriented businesses wedged between the roadway and the railroad tracks.

The area immediately around the train station, at the intersection of South and Martine Avenues, is already developed and mostly “built out.” Even though the station is surrounded by surface parking, the other corners have viable businesses and there is a significant senior housing development east of the intersection. Fanwood has embraced transit oriented development in the form of a new mixed-use development on the southwest corner, Fanwood Crossing.

There are no identified “soft sites” in the station area. Along South Avenue, there are some scattered opportunities for housing, mixed-use or light industrial. There are some land uses in the immediate station area that may be transit supportive, but overall, there are no significant opportunities for the kinds of employment that would be more transit supportive. Fanwood’s larger role in the corridor may be to supply work trips for other destinations, since surrounding neighborhoods are compact and walkable with good connectivity to the existing train station and the corridor. Over time, this represents an important population of potential transit riders.

Existing land use in Fanwood Rail Station area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Type</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Low Density Residential</td>
<td>506.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Density Residential</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Vacant Land</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other or Unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undefined in MOD IV</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soft Sites</strong></td>
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Introduction & Background

Plainfield, Union County’s third largest municipality, is a 6-square mile city at the western end of the corridor study area and planned terminus for the enhanced transit service. The City has an urban core, with high density residential and commercial uses, that is surrounded by lower density residential areas. There are a number of vacant and active industrial uses along the rail line. The City is served by both the Netherwood and Plainfield rail stations along the Raritan Valley Line, both of which received significant investments (restoration, improved parking, ticketing and signage and improved accessibility) over the past decade and a half. In recent years, the City has looked at the redevelopment potential at each station. Some redevelopment did occur near the stations: a new Walgreens near the Netherwood Rail Station; and the Union County Department of Social Services building, a medical office complex and a street plaza near the Plainfield Rail Station. The proposed transit service would provide three stops in Plainfield, one at each rail station and a third at Grant Avenue on the southwest edge of town.

Profile: Plainfield

Population has grown steadily since 1980, and is projected to grow through 2035. Between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic/Latino share of the population increased, while the Black Non-Hispanic share of the population decreased. Plainfield’s population is considerably more diverse than that of the county and region; White Non-Hispanics comprise less than 10% of the city’s population.

Housing vacancy rates increased from 6% to 12% between 2000 and 2010. Inflation-adjusted median home value increased 75% within this time frame. The percentage of households burdened by housing costs increased from 38% to 59% within the last decade; this exceeds the share of county and regional households burdened by housing costs. Nearly two-thirds of Plainfield’s renter-occupied households are burdened by housing costs.

Employment is concentrated in education and health services, trade, transportation and utilities, and professional and business services. Resident workers are primarily employed in educational, health and social services and manufacturing.

Real estate is concentrated in education and health services, trade, transportation and utilities, and manufacturing.

Transit use is limited to about 9% of resident commuters. The share of car usage as a means of transportation to work decreased from 84% to 71% between 2000 and 2010. In this time frame, transit use increased by only 1%. Approximately 16% of households have no vehicle, while 43% have one vehicle. Car ownership rates are slightly lower in Plainfield than in the county and region, representing an opportunity for increased transit service.
Netherwood Rail Station

Current Plans
Plainfield’s 2009 Master Plan identifies the Netherwood Rail Station as an area in need of redevelopment and envisions dense, mixed-use development. There are numerous Redevelopment Sites and a designated Redevelopment Area north of the tracks on the southwest corner of the North Avenue and Leland Avenue intersection. In 2010, the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) carried out a studio in Plainfield focusing on transit oriented development opportunities within the city. A group of students studied the Netherwood station area and produced several massing and development alternatives. In December 2012, the City of Plainfield passed ordinances to support redevelopment around the Netherwood and Plainfield stations, following recommendations from the Master Plan and NJIT study. The ordinances establish zones around each station - “Transportation Oriented Development Netherwood” (TODN) zone and “Transportation Oriented Development Downtown” (TODD) zone - to encourage redevelopment. TODN calls for commercial uses immediately around the station, varying residential density surrounding the commercial uses, some office uses south of the station, and one high density residential zone near the border of Fanwood. The following opportunities reflect Plainfield’s vision for this area.

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
The land use pattern in the Netherwood Station study area is similar to the rest of the corridor: the north side of the tracks maintains some of its industrial character even though many of the manufacturing businesses are very marginal or have been replaced with auto-oriented commercial uses. The south side of the tracks, along Route 28, is primarily scattered, auto-oriented commercial uses. Abutting the two commercial corridors are compact, walkable, single-family neighborhoods.

The opportunity sites tend to be scattered along the two corridors and are assumed to be primarily retail and office uses in low-rise buildings. In a few locations, where the neighborhoods meet the edges of the corridor, new townhouse or other attached housing formats help complete the residential edge. There is also potential for small-scale “urban manufacturing” in the mixed-use area north of the tracks.

The TODN zone makes it possible to speculate about a more consolidated district around the station area. In this location, Leland Avenue runs underneath the tracks, linking the two corridors and organizing the area as a crossroads. The existing station plaza south of the tracks could serve as the open space focus for some three or four-story mixed-use buildings. The zone plan calls for a bicycle and pedestrian walking path south of the tracks that provide additional open space and connect the Netherwood Rail Station to the South Avenue corridor.

North of the tracks, part of the surface parking lot could be reclaimed for a new public open space oriented towards the station and some three and four story mixed-use buildings. The TODN calls for rezoning industrial properties north and south of the tracks to allow mixed use buildings around the station.

The zone also calls for conversion of existing large residential structures along Woodland and Belvedere Avenues into professional offices and linking the zone with the adjacent Netherwood Heights district, creating an ‘entryway’ into the TODN zone.

Redevelopment along the corridors and more intense development around the station area could yield more than 150 dwelling units and approximately 280,000 square feet of office and retail space. Re-using the remaining industrial sites could provide approximately 30,000 square feet of flex industrial space. Otherwise, these areas could become a mix of commercial and residential uses.
Plainfield Rail Station

Current Plans
Plainfield’s 2009 Master Plan targets the Central Business District (CBD) for redevelopment and revitalization as a retail center that serves residents and the surrounding region. The area is being targeted “because this location can capitalize on its proximity to the Plainfield train station...” The goal is to make a downtown that is “bustling 24 hours a day for people to live, work, shop, and recreate.” In 2010, the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) carried out a studio in Plainfield focusing on transit oriented development opportunities within the city. A group of students studied the Netherwood station area and produced several massing and development alternatives. In December 2012, the city of Plainfield passed ordinances to support redevelopment around the Netherwood and Plainfield stations, following recommendations from the Master Plan and NJIT study. The ordinances establish zones around each station - “Transportation Oriented Development Netherwood” (TODN) zone and “Transportation Oriented Development Downtown” (TODD) zone - to encourage redevelopment. The “Transportation Oriented Development Downtown” (TODD) zone for downtown calls for:

- Creating a concentrated mix of uses around the station area
- Improving the appearance and safety of downtown
- Encouraging a walkable and bikeable network connecting neighborhoods to transit
- Preserving residential neighborhoods adjacent to the zones
- Maintaining adequate parking
- Providing an improved streetscape

The zone focuses on seven key areas including:

1. The CBD – that would be the main shopping district
2. The historic district – that serves as the entryway into the city by transit users
3. The Cleveland Arts District – that promotes arts and culture-related uses
4. A parking district – that provides parking for the entire zone
5. A college district – that promotes the expansion of Union County College
6. A civic historic district – that preserves the character of City Hall, City Hall Annex, the YMCA building and the War Memorial
7. A transition district between the core and the neighborhoods. The opportunities below reflect the vision the city has for this area.

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
Downtown Plainfield grew up around its railroad station. The downtown core is north of the station, organized along East Front Street. The rest of downtown straddles the historic station area. The City is aggressively rehabilitating older and historic properties for mixed-use, civic, and residential. They are also encouraging the reuse/conversion of existing structures to more intense mixed uses through zoning.

There are several opportunity sites in the study area and most are within the seven transit oriented development zones described above. North of the station, one opportunity area connects the station and the core of the downtown at East Front Street. Together, these zones capture most of the study area. Several redevelopment projects are underway and many were completed in the last decade. In redevelopment areas around the station, the City has distinguished sites for new construction and sites for adaptive reuse.

Some ongoing manufacturing uses south of the tracks present an interesting opportunity to manage the transition to innovation-based manufacturing. Here, the City envisions the Cleveland Avenue Arts District where it intends to promote arts, culture, restaurants, and entertainment uses. If the City is interested in promoting and attracting innovation-based manufacturing, it could also promote arts-related uses that are attracted to these types of inexpensive industrial spaces.

This site could support more industrial square footage than any other sites along the corridor; perhaps as much as 150,000 square feet of industrial flex space. The rest of the redevelopment program could consist of 133 dwelling units, approximately 90,000 square feet of retail space, and 340,000 square feet of office space.

Together with Elizabeth, Plainfield is one of two large downtown anchors on this corridor. It has the potential to be a source of significant ridership and a destination for employment and entertainment.
Grant Avenue

Current Plans
The 2009 Master Plan for the City of Plainfield makes several recommendations for the former rail station area around Grant Avenue. In particular, it aligns with the city’s goals to redevelop underutilized industrial and commercial areas into productive, mixed-use areas. The plan recommends moderate intensity transit oriented development around the station area, which has been considered a potential site for a park and ride since the 1998 Master Plan. In 2010, NJIT conducted a transit-oriented development research study for the City of Plainfield, funded through the NJ Urban Enterprise Zone Program. Architecture and planning consultants and graduate students in architecture studied the Grant Avenue station area for its potential as a transit-oriented community services and recreation hub.

Station Area Issues and Opportunities
Grant Avenue, the third of three potential stations in Plainfield, is the westerly-most stop and the terminus for the proposed service. The City has long considered this site for a potential park and ride facility. The area is unusual because, unlike other potential station areas, the land between the RVL tracks and the adjacent neighborhood is vacant land that can be redeveloped. South 2nd Street creates the edge of a compact neighborhood comprised mostly of single family homes, but also some multi-family homes and several churches. There are a few small businesses at the intersection with Grant Avenue. Given a history of industrial uses, there may be some environmental issues – potential contamination that would need to be remediated – on the vacant sites, but the extent and the impact on redevelopment is not clear.

There are several redevelopment sites on both sides of South 2nd Street. To the north, the city envisions higher density, mixed uses, including commercial and residential development, to serve as the main commercial downtown of what the city calls its “West End” on the western edge of town. At the intersection with Grant Avenue, a small mixed-use development could, together with the existing business and the industrial site just to the south of Grant Avenue, complete this as the commercial node the city envisions. The proposed park and ride facility would include an accessory pick-up/drop-off area, bus parking, and commuter parking. Additionally, the facility could include retail uses, a child care center, an indoor athletic center with a bowling alley, indoor soccer field, theatre, and other youth related athletic uses to address the city’s shortage of community center activities.

New townhouses or low-rise multi-family buildings could complete the neighborhood to the south and frame South 2nd Street with a connected public realm. At the north end of the study area, South 2nd Street has a forked intersection with Muhlenberg Place. This creates an opportunity to make a distinctive place with a less conventional land use-mix: there could be some incubator-scale space for local entrepreneurs and perhaps a school or training facility. South of South 2nd Street, residential development of an appropriate density could serve as a buffer between the northern side development and existing moderate density neighborhood along West 3rd Street.

The kind redevelopment described above might result in at least 100 new dwelling units, about 80,000 square feet of office retail space, 15,000 square feet of flex retail/industrial, and 45,000 square feet of institutional/recreational uses.

There are several additional redevelopment opportunities sites scattered within a ½ mile radius of the proposed station. Between the tracks and Route 28/West Front Street, the land-use pattern is similar to other places along the RVL corridor, containing industrial and commercial properties interspersed with houses. There is the potential for a supermarket in this area and a public housing project that is slated for re-building. Additional transit service could support these commercial and residential redevelopment projects, but access to the proposed station from the north side of the tracks will require riders to walk to underpasses at either Grant Avenue or Plainfield Avenue.

In terms of its role in the corridor, neighborhood-oriented commercial uses are valuable, but will not create an employment destination outside of the local residents. Residents may select this location to take advantage of the proposed new transit service, making this location a source for ridership. Because it is the terminus of the new service, there is value in creating a park and ride that incorporates new mixed-use development.
The Corridor Tomorrow

A corridor-wide vision

A Corridor-Wide Vision

The Union County Sustainability Corridor is a thriving network of communities – each with their own, unique assets – collaborating to foster economic development within and beyond their borders. The proposed enhanced transit service would effectively connect the corridor to regional destinations including Newark Liberty International Airport and Jersey Gardens Mall, as well as the Northeast Corridor rail line.

The vision statement above suggests a dual role for municipalities in the corridor. First, each will need to focus on assets and opportunities within its borders, such as making the recommended zoning changes and working with partners to realize redevelopment and economic opportunities. Second, municipalities will need to work with each other as a unified corridor by supporting common interests and leveraging resources to enhance economic development. Planning and decision-making at the corridor level will require a clear understanding of the role and contributions each can play. The proposed enhanced transit service will open up opportunities for every community, but in different ways. Similarly, the service will be used differently at each stop. The Corridor Vision presented in this chapter highlights how the individual municipalities and station areas can function as a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Community & Ridership Types in the Corridor

The Union County Sustainability Corridor is comprised of eight municipalities and fifteen identified potential transit stops (including Newark Liberty International Airport and Jersey Gardens Mall). The strategies for economic development and anticipated ridership for each transit stop is place-specific. To help shape the Corridor Vision, three different community types and three different ridership types were assigned to each station area. This will help municipalities understand how a station area could contribute to the overall corridor, and will help guide planning and development decisions. Not every station area can, or should be, a major downtown destination attracting many visitors. A healthy, functioning corridor will have a balance of regional, corridor, and local destinations. Some will serve as an origin for riders, while others will be a destination for riders to visit. The following section describes the general community and ridership types and discusses how each is applied to the fifteen proposed station areas.
Community Type
Regional Center: A more urban center with a wide variety of uses, one or more areas of concentrated densities, and the capacity to support higher populations. A Regional Center serves its own residents, residents from the corridor, and residents from the greater region.

Corridor Center: A more suburban center with a variety of uses, concentrated densities in a central business district, and the capacity to support moderate populations. A Corridor Center serves its own residents and residents from the corridor.

Neighborhood Downtown: An urban or suburban location with some mixed uses, but a higher percentage of residential uses. A Neighborhood Downtown serves residents within and around it.

Ridership Type
Reservoir: An area that supplies ridership to the transit service at that location. Reservoirs typically have higher residential uses or facilities and connections that bring riders to the location (e.g. park and ride, etc.).

Destination: An area that riders use the transit service to reach. Destinations typically have mixed uses, employment centers, or other amenities that attract riders.

Reservoir & Destination: An area that serves to both supply riders at that location as well as attract riders from other locations.

Municipal Station Area Roles in the Corridor

Newark Liberty International Airport
A major origin and destination

While there are no redevelopment opportunities around it, Newark Liberty Airport is a critical stop for the enhanced transit service as it is a major origin and destination for riders, and therefore a Reservoir & Destination for the corridor. Whether comprised of corridor residents on their way to or from the airport, or out of town visitors looking for an interesting place to stay with easy access to the airport, ridership numbers will be driven in large part by a convenient connection to the airport.

Jersey Gardens Mall
The place to work and shop

As a Reservoir & Destination, Jersey Gardens Mall could supply ridership through a potential park and ride facility, but already serves as a destination due to the retail employment opportunities. Retail workers from the corridor – young people in first jobs or seasoned sales associates – will be able to use the enhanced transit service to easily access jobs. The potential for residential development could help to make this a community in the future.

Magnolia Avenue
A unique, local approach

As a Neighborhood Downtown, future uses around the Magnolia Avenue station will largely include services and local jobs for the surrounding residents. The surrounding residential neighborhoods help make this station a Reservoir of ridership for the proposed transit service.

Elizabeth Rail Station
The center of activity, east

The area around the Broad Street Elizabeth Rail Station is very much a Regional Center. Now and in the future, it will be a hub for jobs, services, and attractions for regional residents and visitors. As a Reservoir & Destination, ridership will be generated from the higher population densities of nearby residents and will also draw riders to its amenities. Efforts should be made to provide connections between transit, neighborhoods, and destinations.

Elmora Avenue
A unique, local approach

As a Neighborhood Downtown, future uses around the Elmora Avenue station will largely include jobs and services for the surrounding residents. The surrounding residential neighborhoods make this station a Reservoir of ridership for the proposed transit service.
As a Neighborhood Downtown, future uses around the Linden Road station will largely include jobs and services for the surrounding residents. The surrounding residential neighborhoods make this station a Reservoir of ridership for the proposed transit service.

As a Corridor Center, future uses around the Locust/Chestnut Street station could include a major expansion of downtown retail, residential, and commercial space to draw corridor residents. As a Reservoir & Destination, this station area will provide places to live and places to work and shop for visitors.

As a Neighborhood Downtown, future uses around the Gordon Street station will provide local services for residents and employees. Both a Reservoir & Destination, the surrounding residential neighborhoods will provide potential riders, while the Romerovski redevelopment site could be a major employment destination.

The area around the Cranford Rail Station is and will continue to be a Corridor Center, providing restaurant and nightlife for residents. As a Reservoir & Destination, the higher density residential downtown and the adjacent lower density neighborhoods provide potential riders, while the downtown retail and restaurants provide jobs for nearby corridor residents.

As a Neighborhood Downtown, local services will continue to be important around the Garwood station area. The potential for commercial retail and office space redevelopment around the station could make Garwood a future Destination for riders.

The area around the Westfield Rail Station is and will continue to be a Corridor Center, providing a major shopping and dining destination. As a Reservoir & Destination, connecting the station area and neighborhoods provides easy access for residents and visitors taking advantage of retail and dining amenities.

As a Neighborhood Downtown, Fanwood will largely serve nearby residents. With new housing and established neighborhoods, Fanwood will be a Reservoir of riders for the proposed transit service.

As a Neighborhood Downtown, future uses around the Netherwood Rail Station will largely include jobs and services for the local residents. As the area redevelops with more residential uses, it will become a strong Reservoir for the proposed transit service.

As a Regional Center, the area around the Plainfield Rail Station will support a mix of uses, including shopping and the arts. These new attractions and the jobs they offer, combined with residents in existing neighborhoods, will make this station a Reservoir & Destination of riders for the proposed transit service.

As a Neighborhood Downtown, future uses around the Grant Avenue station will largely include jobs and services for the local residents. The potential for a mixed-use park-and-ride, in addition to the existing residential areas, will make this station a Reservoir & Destination of riders for the proposed transit service.
Moving Ahead

Municipal leaders and stakeholders are interested in moving ahead with the proposed enhanced transit service and taking advantage of the connections it would provide and the economic development opportunities it would create. The municipal leaders and stakeholders plan to use the results of this study to help advocate for its implementation and required capital investment. To ensure that collaboration continues across the corridor, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Establish a corridor-wide forum for collaboration
   One of the best outcomes of this study was the forum created for municipal leaders and stakeholders to discuss land use, transportation and economic development across municipal borders. Municipal leaders and stakeholders found common interest and support amongst peers and identified common causes that they can pursue with a unified voice. The forum should not end with the completion of this project. Union County could play an important role by periodically meeting with municipalities to continue the conversation and take steps towards implementation.

2. Consider the new transit service in all land use decisions
   Transportation projects take time to implement. However, economic development opportunities often emerge over shorter time periods. This mismatch in timing can lead to poor land use decisions that allow development to occur that does not relate to transit. Based on the planning exercises and specific land use recommendations, it is recommended that municipalities consider the proposed transit service as economic development opportunities emerge.

3. Identify with and market “The Corridor”
   Municipalities largely agreed that the corridor could capitalize on a new identity. For example, a joint marketing campaign, such as “shopping locally” or “staying locally” can highlight the uniqueness of each community while introducing the concept of “The Corridor” as a place. Such steps taken now will only be bolstered should the proposed transit service be implemented.