

June 2011

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# Vision Bergen

The Visioning Component  
of the Bergen County Master Plan



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*Visioning effort conducted under the direction of the  
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<http://www.co.bergen.nj.us/planning/masterplan>

# Introduction

## The Challenge

Bergen County is the most populous county in New Jersey with over 900,000 residents, and also has the most local governments – seventy municipalities on 246 square miles, an average of only 3.5 square miles/municipality. While often described as the quintessential suburban county the reality on the ground is considerably more complex. In fact, Bergen County is a microcosm of the state of New Jersey, exhibiting many of the same contrasts and contradictions, strengths and shortcomings, as the state as a whole.

Bergen is a county of deep contrasts and startling extremes. Within its borders can be found a broad range of land uses from highly urbanized high density places capable of supporting sophisticated transit services to quasi-rural, auto-dependent low density ones. The county's population is extremely diverse, with a wide variety of ethnic groups and an equally wide diversity of religious beliefs and world views. One of the most affluent counties in the Nation, it nevertheless hosts significant pockets of populations that struggle to make ends meet. Its workforce is highly skilled and educated and its employment base boasts leading medical and health care facilities but it also hosts a large number of relics from an earlier manufacturing age that undermine its tax base and are a blighting influence on surrounding neighborhoods. It is a county with a world class park system that includes large nature preserves, but most of its residents are not within walking distance of a park or public open space. It is a retail mecca with a major concentration of regional malls and outlet centers and the healthy demographics to support them, yet a number of the county's small downtowns are struggling and depopulated. Limited access highways offer convenient North/South linkages, but East/West mobility is seriously hampered by a sparse network of mostly local roads that always seem congested, twist and turn in unintuitive ways and are notoriously difficult for outsiders to navigate.

A new master plan for the county must recognize and meet the challenges contained both in these conditions and in the jurisdictional fragmentation that constitutes the county's political landscape. The new master plan must take a hard look at current conditions, understand why things are the way they are, and identify ways to reinforce the county's strengths and mitigate its weaknesses. Key to this is developing a common vision that transcends municipal boundaries and empowers small local governments to work

together on initiatives that are often too large for each of them to tackle individually. Sharing resources, skills, knowledge and practical experiences is crucial to a smarter, more efficient future.

## Scope and Purpose of County Master Plan

In New Jersey, county master plans have a required scope defined legislatively in the New Jersey County and Regional Planning Act, NJSA 40:27-2 et seq.: "The county planning board shall make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the county. The master plan of a county, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive and explanatory matter, shall show the county planning board's recommendations for the development of the territory covered by the plan, and may include, among other things, the general location, character, and extent of streets or roads, viaducts, bridges, waterway and waterfront developments, parkways, playgrounds, forests, reservations, parks, airports and other public ways, grounds, places and spaces; the general location and extent of forests, agricultural areas, and open-development areas for purposes of conservation, food and water supply, sanitary and drainage facilities, or the protection of urban development, and such other features as may be important to the development of the county."

In addition, a county master plan – and the process used to develop it – can perform several important functions that are not explicitly captured in the statute. County master plans can promote cooperation and collaborative thinking between municipalities on issues of common interest, including issues or facilities that are too large, costly or complex for municipalities to handle on their own, that cut across municipal boundaries and/or that require inter-jurisdictional cooperation. County master plans can educate municipalities and the general public with respect to a wide range of planning-related issues. They can publicize best practices and planning tools, drawn both from within the county, and from outside, that municipalities can pursue locally in search of solutions to common problems.

## County Sub-Regions

In order to facilitate the public visioning and outreach process, the county was divided into three sub-regions, as follows:

- The Northeastern Region: Alpine, Bergenfield, Closter, Cresskill, Demarest, Dumont, Emerson, Harrington Park, Haworth, Hillsdale, Montvale, New Milford, Northvale, Norwood, Old Tappan, Oradell, Park Ridge, River Edge, River Vale, Rockleigh, Tenafly, Washington Township, Westwood and Woodcliff Lake.
- The Southern Region: Bogota, Carlstadt, Cliffside Park, East Rutherford, Edgewater, Elmwood Park, Englewood, Englewood Cliffs, Fairview, Fort Lee, Garfield, Hackensack, Hasbrouck Heights, Leonia, Little Ferry, Lodi, Lyndhurst, Maywood, Moonachie, North Arlington, Palisades Park, Ridgefield, Ridgefield Park, Rochelle Park, Rutherford, Saddle Brook, South Hackensack, Teaneck, Teterboro, Wallington, Wood-Ridge
- The Northwestern Region: Allendale, Fair Lawn, Franklin Lakes, Glen Rock, Ho-Ho-Kus, Mahwah, Midland Park, Oakland, Paramus, Ramsey, Ridgewood, Saddle River, Upper Saddle River, Waldwick, Wyckoff.

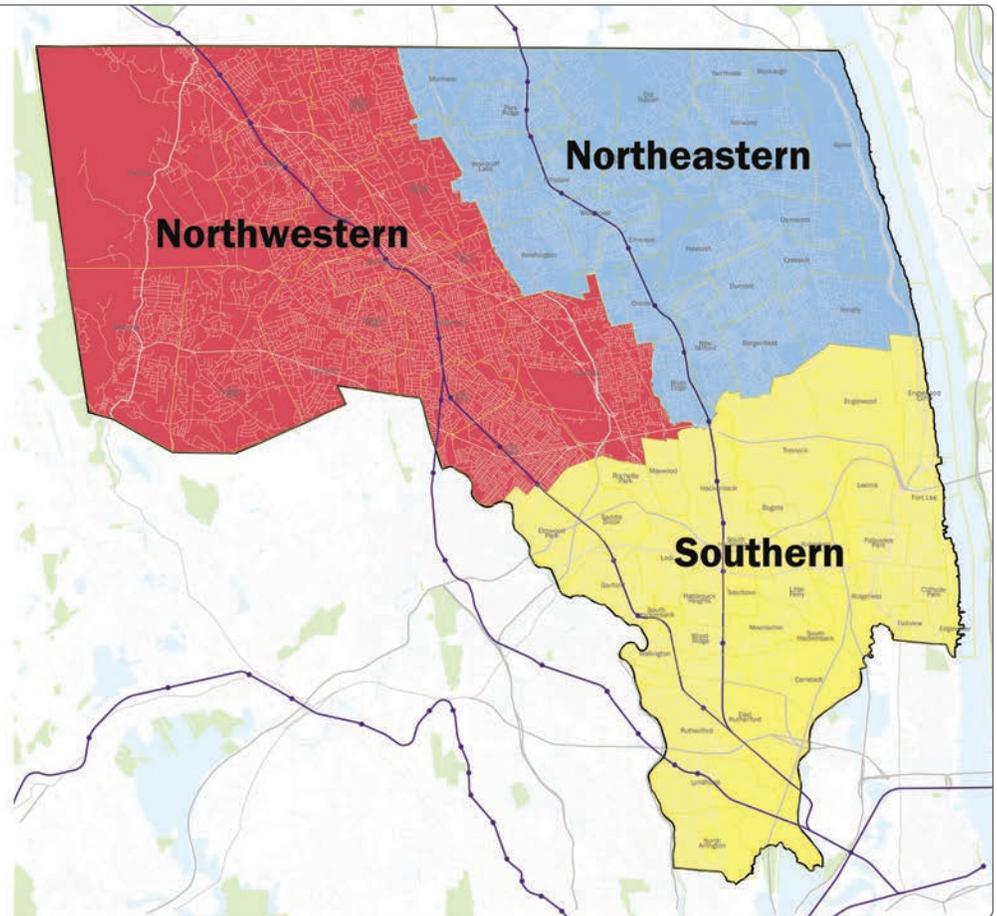
Our geographical approach to conducting the three visioning exercises to which we are constrained by the budget is based in common geography, but transcends this factor alone as we consider the broad brush of planning, development, environmental, and community issues.

The mix of factors used to identify three (3) planning areas for the purposes of visioning are spelled out below:

- Densities of development
- Population distribution
- Transportation facilities and issues
- Watersheds and water resources
- Historical political subdivisions and planning units
- Existing municipal boundaries
- Existing councils of government (mayors associations, shared services, school districts, etc.)
- Size and scope of area

It was ultimately decided to divide the county into Northwestern, Northeastern, and Southern Visioning Areas. These areas were achieved by roughly dividing the

# Visioning sub-regions



county by two axes: Route 4 dividing north and south, and the Garden State Parkway dividing northeast and northwest. These were then extrapolated to account for a number of factors, as listed above, with particular attention to watershed and drainage systems as well as municipal boundaries, but careful not to split up existing regional and sending/receiving school district arrangements. Generally speaking, the historical township delineation of Bergen County (pre-1890s “Boroughitis”) corresponds with the breakdown of the visioning areas – representing a shared history.

## Background & Analysis

A briefing book provided the factual basis and questions used to frame the conversation at breakout tables during the visioning process. It was not intended as a comprehensive compilation of data on all topics relevant to Bergen County, but rather as a concise summary of the issues most amenable and relevant to the visioning process. A summary of what we heard at the three visioning sessions can be found in the back of this report

### Bergen County within the New York Metropolitan Region

Bergen County developed in tandem with the larger New York metropolitan region, and shares a range of physical, economic and environmental resources. The Hudson River serves as both a boundary and a corridor that connects the county to the New York-New Jersey Harbor, the Hudson River Valley to the north and the cities to the south and east. The Ramapo Mountains define the county’s northern edge, but also connect it to the Appalachian Highlands, a national resource that forms the spine of the Eastern seaboard. The watersheds of the Hackensack, Passaic and other rivers form ecological links between Bergen and other counties in Northern New Jersey.

Shared infrastructure facilitates the flow of people and goods between Bergen and the rest of the metropolitan area. Interstate highways such as Route I-95 and Route I-80, crossings such as the George Washington Bridge, rail freight lines, and commuter rail and bus services operated by New Jersey Transit and others are critical to the economy of the county and the rest of the region. Electric power grids, water systems and waste management systems are also part of the underlying fabric linking the county to the region.

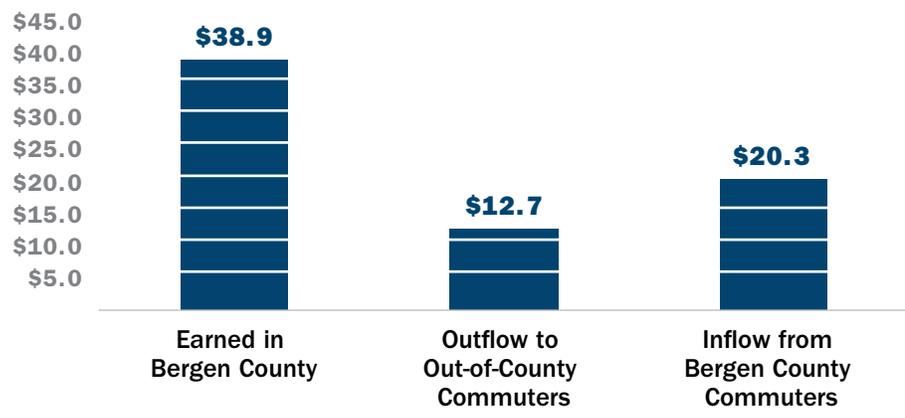
With a \$1.3 trillion economy and nearly thirteen million jobs, the tri-state metropolitan region gives Bergen residents and businesses access to one of the largest and most dynamic labor and consumer markets in the world. It also ties it to the challenges of high costs and congestion that come with this dense concentration of activity.

The interdependence between the county and the region can be seen in the flows of commuters and income. The majority of Bergen County residents (57.6%) commute to work within the county. This generates a demand for travel that is met mostly by private vehicles on local and county roads and certain portions of regional highways. The main locations of jobs for those who commute from Bergen are the adjacent counties of Manhattan, Hudson, and Passaic. In 2000, 14% percent of Bergen’s resident workforce commuted to Manhattan. While these are generally the highest paid jobs, twice as many residents commute to other locations.

The county has a workforce that supports businesses throughout the region and brings back a large portion of the income that supports home values, local businesses and tax revenues within the county. \$20 billion, or 44% of all the income earned by Bergen residents, comes from wages and salaries earned from jobs located outside of the county.

### Total Earnings, 2007, in billions

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Economic Analysis



Bergen also has a large employment base that supports both residents and commuters from outside of the county. Of the \$40 billion in wages generated by Bergen County businesses, about a third is earned by residents of other counties.

This two-way flow gives the county's economy diversified sources of income, job and business opportunities. In fact, of all the counties in the region, Bergen has one of the more evenly balanced economies in terms of reliance on both local businesses and regional employment opportunities.

Bergen also serves as an important housing market within the region, providing a mix of communities and housing types. As with other mature suburban counties, housing construction has slowed and prices have risen in recent years. The ratio of home values to household incomes in Bergen is comparable to counties such as Rockland, Nassau, and Fairfield, and somewhat less than in Hudson, Passaic, and Westchester.

From 1998-2007, about 25 new homes were built in Bergen County for every 1,000 residents. This is a much slower pace than either New York City or exurban areas of the region. It is slightly higher than Rockland or Westchester but much less than in Hudson County. Over the last decade, multi-family housing accounted for more than half of new construction. Note here that the amount of developable land remaining in Bergen is next to nothing, and that the bulk of any future housing development will take the form of redevelopment, likely at higher densities.

### Regional and Local Economies

Bergen's recent economy can be thought about in three distinct periods – a period with relatively rapid growth through the 1970's and 1980's, a period of stability from the early 1990's to 2008, and the current period of recession and uncertainty.

Jobs grew steadily through 1989, but have been relatively stable at just under 500,000 since rebounding from the recession of the early 1990s. Average wages peaked at \$57,000 per job in 2000 and have since declined to \$56,000. In spite of stagnant wages, household income grew during this period. This is partly due to the sharp increase in wages for those who commuted to Manhattan, and partly due to increases in non-wage income such as investment income.

More than many counties in the region, Bergen has a diverse economic base with large sectors in health care, professional services, trade and manufacturing. While this does not

necessarily make the county less susceptible to cyclical ups and downs, it does provide it with multiple avenues for potential growth.

Between 2001 and 2007, two sources of growth generated the largest numbers of new jobs in the county. The "Eds and Meds" sector that includes education, health care and social services grew by 18,000 jobs. These activities have been growing for decades through ups and downs in the economy, and can be expected to generate significant growth in the future. The other source of growth was the overheated real estate market. Real estate related activities, including sales, leasing and construction, added 17,000 jobs during this period. Since the bursting of the real estate bubble in 2007-2008, these industries have lost jobs and can be expected to continue their cyclical behavior in the future. The county has also added an estimated 30,000 self-employed. It is not clear what drove this growth, but many were likely in the real estate, financial and professional services industries.

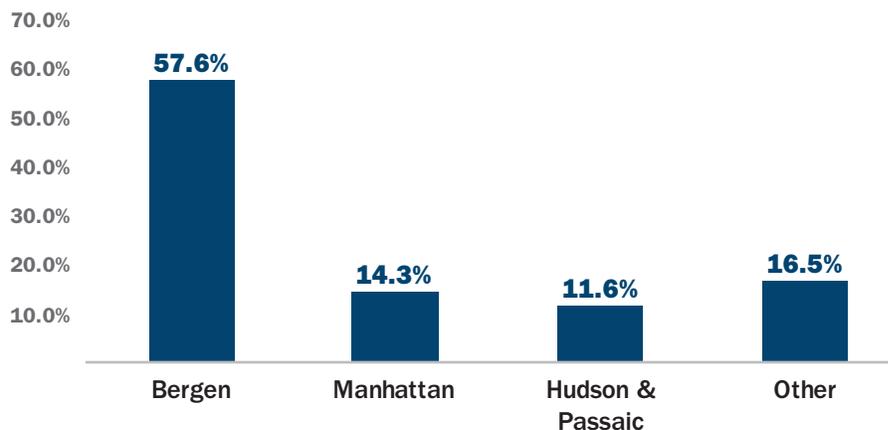
Like the rest of the United States, the county is in the throws of a recession that has lasted nearly two years. It is not clear when it will end or what the recovery will look like. While this "Great Recession" is the worst national downturn since the Depression of the 1930s, for Bergen County and the rest of the tri-state region, it still has far to go to match the number of jobs lost in the early 1990s. The early 1990s recession hit the New York area much harder than the rest of the country.

Since April 2008, the Bergen-Hudson-Passaic Labor Market Area has lost over 3% of its jobs, slightly more than the rest of northern New Jersey and New York City. These job losses, are thus far only about a third of those experienced in the recession of 1989-1992.

The current recession has been broad-based, with every major industry except Education and Health Services experiencing a loss of jobs. Industries with the largest losses

### Share of Bergen's Resident Workforce by Place of Work, 2000

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census



### Housing Permits per 1,000 People, 1998-2007

Source: U.S. Census



include those that grew the most between 2001-2007, including Financial Services, Construction, and Professional Services.

Bergen's recovery from the recession, and its long-term growth, will depend on how it responds to likely changes in the global and regional economies:

- The U.S. is likely to experience a shift from consumption to savings. This could favor activities such as research and development, education, business investment and public infrastructure and undermine others, such as retail.
- The New York region is likely to remain one of leading global financial centers, but financial services will be less highly leveraged and potentially less highly paid. This could restrain income growth for residents working in finance, particularly Manhattan-based finance jobs.
- The region should retain advantages for activities with high intellectual capital. Because of its highly skilled workforce and concentration of high-value industries, universities, cultural institutions and other assets, the region is likely to remain a draw for activities ranging from global media and finance to research and consulting. As a result, keeping and expanding a highly skilled workforce is arguably the most important factor in maintaining Bergen County's prosperity.
- As the baby boom retires, a decline in the working age population will make competition for skilled workers more intense. Those places that provide a high quality of life and affordable places to live for working age families and individuals will have a distinct advantage.

- Bergen County will be particularly challenged to provide workforce housing options not only to lower paid workers, but also to recent college graduates and young professionals, whose residence in Bergen County is critical to its economy. Their presence represents the future highly skilled workforce that will drive the economy in the future.

Although there is no one single center of commercial or industrial activity, there are several areas and corridors where certain types of firms and jobs are located. As shown in the map of employment by zip code, there is a concentration of jobs stretching from Paramus through Hackensack, Teaneck and Englewood to Fort Lee. This east-west corridor has the largest concentrations of retail, office and health service jobs.

The two biggest employment centers are in Hackensack and Paramus. Hackensack, the county seat has over 50,000 jobs, with the county's largest number of health services

jobs and a substantial amount of retail, professional services and public administration employment. Paramus, with 45,000 jobs, is characterized by its large concentration of regional malls, retail strip development along the highways, office parks, and related employment.

Industrial jobs are located primarily in the southern part of the county. In addition to manufacturing jobs, there are also large numbers of wholesaling, transportation and warehousing jobs in places such as Lyndhurst, East Rutherford, Carlstadt and Saddle Brook.

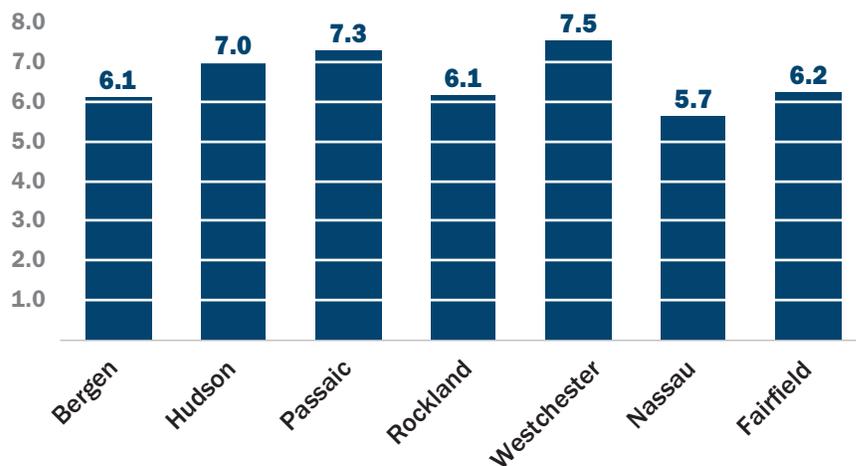
The northeastern portion of the county is largely residential, but does have a significant amount of corporate office employment near the northern edge, particularly centered on Montvale. Professional services, retail, health services and education are the largest industries in this part of the county.

The northwest section has a diverse mix of commercial industrial activity, including a concentration of health services in Ridgewood and a mixture of manufacturing, wholesale and retail employment near Mahwah and Ramsey.

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) forecasts that Bergen County's employment base will grow from 474,600 jobs in 2005 to 545,100 jobs in 2035, a gain of 70,500 jobs. An important consideration for this plan is the question of where this job growth will take place and in what type of environment. Will it be in the auto-dependent corporate office parks found in the northeastern part of the county, or in the denser, more transit-oriented environments found in the southern part of the county?

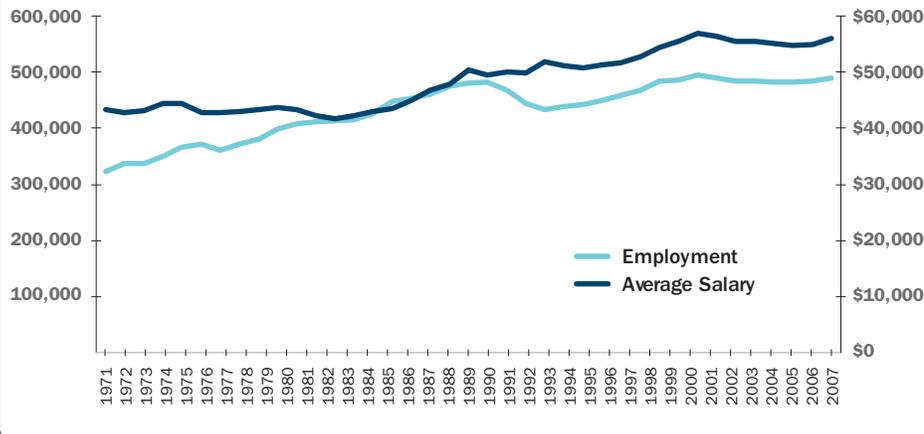
### Ratio of Home Values to Median Income, 2007

Source: American Community Survey



## Number of Payroll Jobs and Average Annual Salary (adjusted for inflation) in Bergen County, 1969-2007

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



## Population Density

Bergen County's residents live in a fairly dense environment, at about 3,700 persons per square mile, placing Bergen County fourth in density among New Jersey counties behind Hudson (13,000), Essex (6,200) and Union (5,000), and far exceeding the statewide density of 1,100 persons per square mile. Southern Bergen is the most densely populated area, particularly the southeastern municipalities with over 10,000 people per square mile approaching Hudson County-like density, with Cliffside Park topping the list at 23,847 persons per square mile. The northwestern area is the least dense with just over 1,800 people per square mile.

## Disparities in Underserved Populations

Bergen is an affluent county, compared to the tri-state metropolitan region and to the country. Its median household income, \$82,354, is nearly a third larger than the regional average and nearly 60% higher than the national median. Only 5% of the population is below the poverty line, compared to 13% in the region and 12% in the United States.

However, average incomes and poverty statistics do not tell the whole story. Because the cost of living, and in particular housing, is also high, low-income individuals and families can find it even more difficult to make ends meet. For example, 38% of Bergen households spend more than 35% of their income to cover housing costs, compared to 30% nationally. This is only slightly less than the 40% of households in the region paying this much of their income for housing.

Overall, 20% of county households have incomes less than \$30,000 per year. However, these households are concentrated in two areas in the southern part of the county. One concentration stretches east from the border of Passaic through Garfield, Wallington, Lodi and Hackensack, and the other stretches south from Fort Lee through Palisades Park, Cliffside Park, Fairview and Ridgeland.

## Demographic Trends

A review of Bergen County's historical and projected population growth reveals that moderate population growth is expected to continue in the future. Bergen County's population posted steady and consistent gains up until 1970 when the population stood at 897,148 (US Census). The two decades that followed, 1970 to 1980 and 1980 to 1990,

saw the County's first declines, by 5.8% and 2.4% respectively. That relatively brief trend was reversed between 1990 and 2000 when the population increased moderately by 7%, just under the statewide growth rate of 8.6%. Based on the 2005 US Census estimate the County has continued to grow by an additional 2% to just under 903,000 people. Bergen's recent growth is in line with growth trends in neighboring counties.

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) projects continued growth in Bergen County with the population reaching 919,400 by the year 2015, an increase of 4% over the 2000 population and crossing the 1 million threshold by 2035, an increase of about 10%. The NJTPA also forecasts that the county will gain 63,300 new households, from 332,200 in 2005 to 395,500 in 2035. Of great interest to this master plan is the question of where this additional population and these additional households will live, in what type of housing and in what type of community.

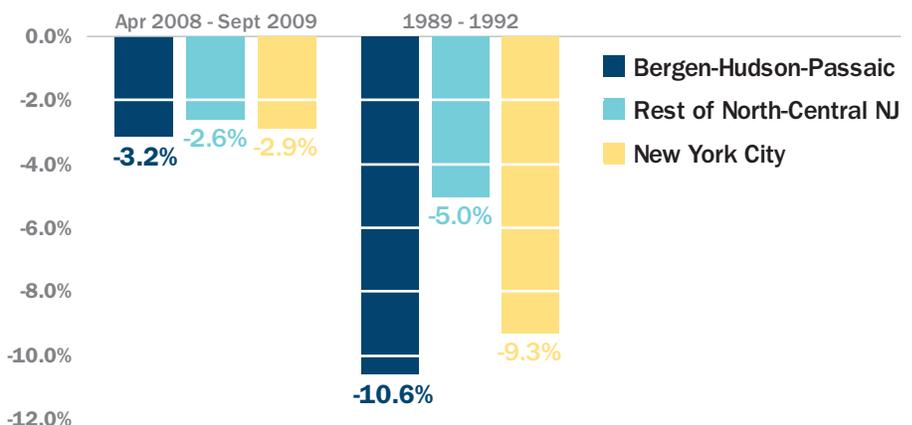
## Age

The median age in Bergen increased from 37.5 in 1990 to 39.1 in 2000. Bergen County's 2000 median age was the third highest of the twenty-one counties behind only Cape May (42.3) and Ocean (41), and was higher than the statewide median age of 36.7. It was substantially higher than the surrounding counties of Essex (34.7), Hudson (33.6), Passaic (34.8) and Rockland (36.2). Municipalities with a higher median age than the County average are concentrated across the middle of the County.

As a counter to this apparent aging trend, the County saw a 14% increase in population less than twenty years old between 1990 and 2000. This increase is slightly higher than the NJ average of 12%. An increase in youth population means more families with children.

## Percent Employment Change, 2008-2009 vs 1989-1992

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



## County Employment by Industry, 2001-2007

Industry	2007	Change 2001-2007
<b>Self-employed</b>	<b>121,672</b>	<b>30,422</b>
<b>Construction</b>	<b>29,770</b>	<b>5,914</b>
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>43,473</b>	<b>(12,337)</b>
<b>Wholesale trade</b>	<b>47,612</b>	<b>(3,768)</b>
<b>Retail trade</b>	<b>63,151</b>	<b>(2,699)</b>
<b>Transportation and warehousing</b>	<b>19,315</b>	<b>(1,033)</b>
<b>Information</b>	<b>15,053</b>	<b>(5,703)</b>
<b>Finance and insurance</b>	<b>30,916</b>	<b>1,135</b>
<b>Real estate and rental and leasing</b>	<b>34,590</b>	<b>11,181</b>
<b>Professional, scientific, and technical services</b>	<b>53,609</b>	<b>2,421</b>
<b>Management of companies and enterprises</b>	<b>16,446</b>	<b>(116)</b>
<b>Administrative and waste services</b>	<b>36,655</b>	<b>(1,015)</b>
<b>Educational services</b>	<b>13,832</b>	<b>3,913</b>
<b>Health care and social assistance</b>	<b>74,041</b>	<b>14,281</b>
<b>Arts, entertainment, and recreation</b>	<b>12,507</b>	<b>1,389</b>
<b>Accommodation and food services</b>	<b>33,763</b>	<b>7,569</b>
<b>Other services, except public administration</b>	<b>33,722</b>	<b>3,142</b>
<b>Government and government enterprises</b>	<b>50,045</b>	<b>4,923</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

## Diversity

Bergen County has a very diverse population in terms of race, ethnicity and religion. In 2000, 78% of Bergen's population was White, 12% was Asian and five percent were Black or African American. Hispanic or Latinos of any race amounted to 10%. This differs from the statewide average which has a higher proportion of Black or African Americans (13.6%) and significantly less Asians (5.7%).

Bergen County's population includes a wide variety of ethnicities. Italian is the most commonly identified first ancestry among Bergen residents. Irish-Americans and German-Americans are the next largest

ethnic groups, followed by residents of Polish descent and Greek-Americans. The diverse Latino population includes residents from Colombia, Cuba and an increasing number of immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Peru and Ecuador. There are a significant number of members of the Jewish faith and a moderately sized Muslim population.

Bergen has a significant Asian population, particularly Korean-Americans. In 2000, Bergen's Asian population included Korean (38%), followed by Indian (19%), Filipino (15%) and Chinese (15%). Asians were the second largest racial component in 2000, except for in the Southwest and Central areas of the county where Hispanics had higher percentages. A high number of Asians – over half of the state's entire Korean population – reside in the Southeastern part of the county. Eight of the nation's top ten municipalities by percentage of Korean population are located in Bergen.

## Educational Attainment

From 1990 to 2000 there was a significant increase in the number of people aged twenty-five years and over with an Associate or Bachelor's degree in Bergen County, mirroring a State-wide trend.

# Natural Systems

## Watersheds, Rivers, and Lakes

Bergen County is drained by a number of important river corridors. To the east, five Bergen County municipalities are located along the Hudson River. Nine other municipalities are located along the Passaic River to the west. The Hackensack, Ramapo and Saddle River also traverse the county and play significant roles in shaping the regional landscape. Other smaller water courses – such as Berry's Creek and Canal, Overpeck Creek, Bellmans Creek, Wolf Creek, Sprout Brook, Fleisher Brook, Teaneck Creek, Musquapsink Brook, Tenakill Brook, Sparkill Brook, Dorotockeys Run, Pascack Brook, Hohokus Brook, Darlington Brook, Ramsey Brook, Allendale Brook, and Valentine Brook – have an important presence at the local, but not regional scale. These smaller, more localized watercourses affect the region as tributaries to larger water systems including key drainage corridors, reservoirs and drinking water systems, and ecosystems.

Significant wetlands formations exist in the southern part of the county, along the Hackensack River and in the eastern portions of Carlstadt, East Rutherford, Rutherford, and Lyndhurst. Other wetlands formations generally associated with 100- or 500-year flood zones can be found along the four major rivers corridors and their tributaries and to the east of Tenakill Brook.

Lake Tappan, Oradell Reservoir and Woodcliff Lake Reservoir are also significant regional water features.

## George Washington Bridge- Fort Lee



## Selected Indicators of Economic Disparities

	Bergen County	Tri-State Metropolitan Region	United States
<b>Poverty</b> (Percent of people below poverty level)	<b>5%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Income</b> (Median household income)	<b>\$82,354</b>	<b>\$63,957</b>	<b>\$52,175</b>
<b>Housing Costs</b> (Percent of households paying over 35% of income for housing)	<b>38%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>30%</b>

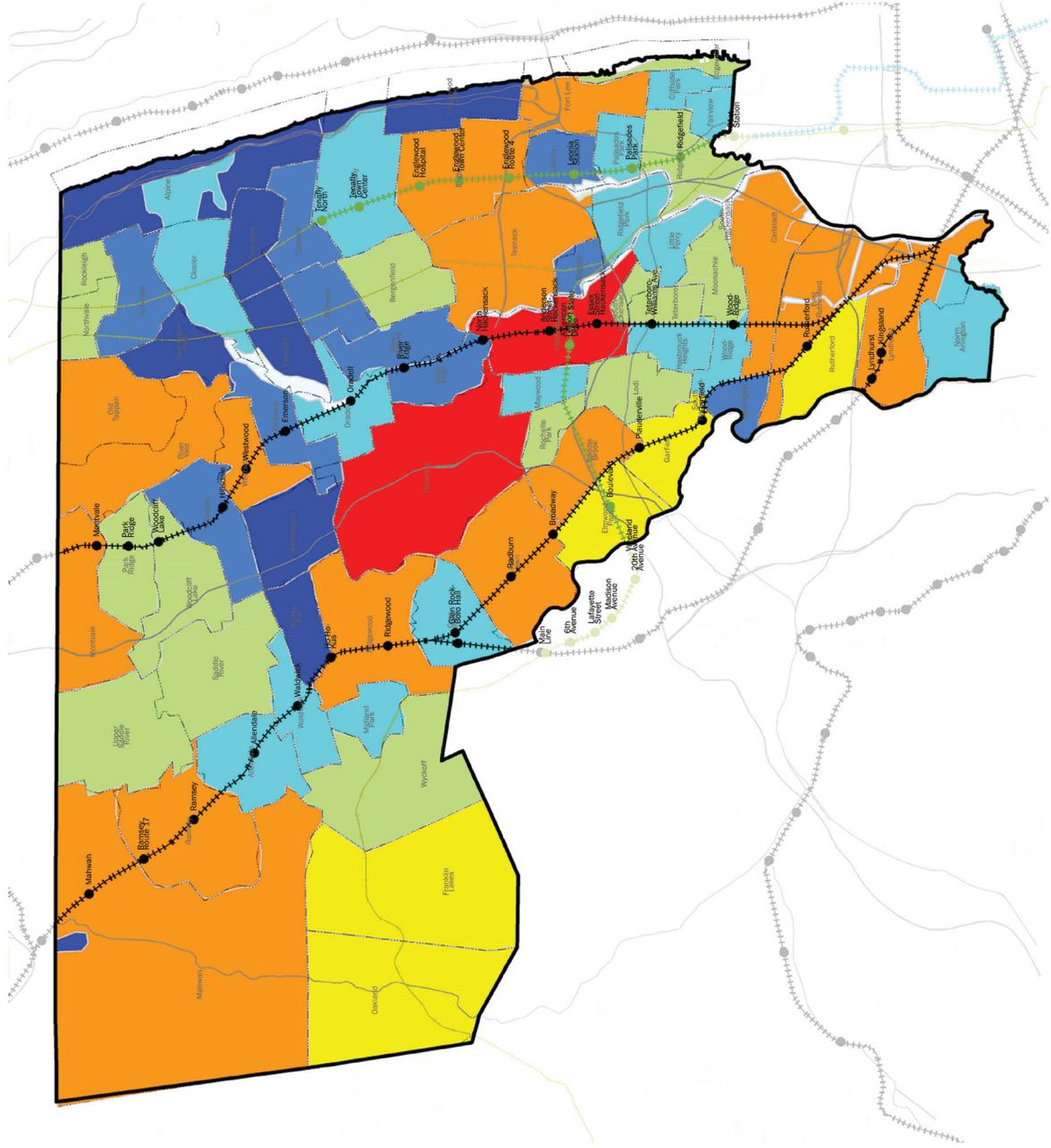
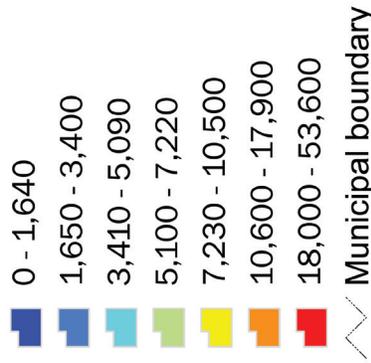
Source: 2006-2008 American Community Survey

# Employment

Total employment, by zip code.

Source: RPA analysis of Reference USA data, 2009.

Jobs per zip code tabulation area

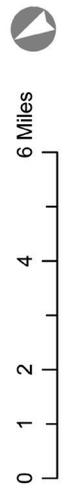
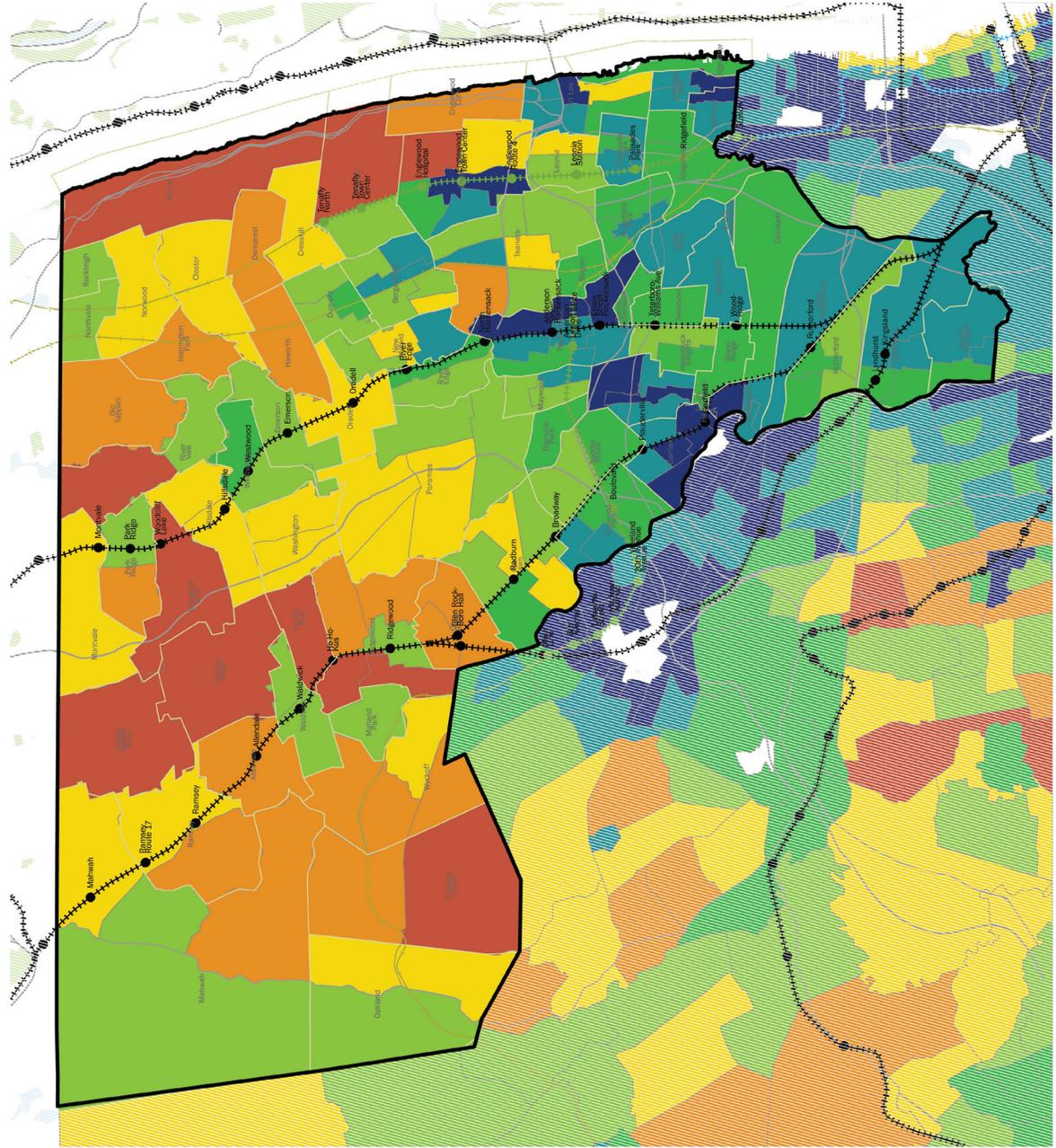


# Median household income

Source: Census 2000, shown by tract.

Median household income (\$)

- 26,800 - 44,200
- 44,300 - 53,000
- 53,100 - 63,500
- 63,600 - 77,800
- 77,900 - 93,900
- 94,000 - 117,000
- 118,000 - 172,000



## Parks, Open Space and Nature Preserves

The Bergen County Parks System encompasses almost 8,000 acres and offers a wide range of passive and active recreation opportunities. Residents can enjoy picnics overlooking the Hudson River, as well as overnight camping, swimming, horseback riding, skiing and visits to a zoo. The County also offers public golfing opportunities at five golf courses in the central and northern areas, fifteen miles of bicycle/pedestrian paths and a trail system. Large parks and recreation spaces and facilities are afforded by the County Park System at various locations including: Overpeck, Saddle River, Van Saun, Riverside and Darlington County Parks and the Ramapo Valley and Campgaw Mountain County Reservations, among others.

Other significant preserved open space areas include the following:

- Palisades Interstate Park, formed in 1900 to protect the cliffs on the west bank of the Hudson River across from Manhattan. The Palisades park system now includes twenty-four parks and eight historic sites, covering over 100,000 acres along with more than twenty miles of Hudson River shoreline in New Jersey and New York. The Palisades Interstate Park was designated a national Historic Landmark in 1965.
- Flat Rock Brook Nature Center, a 150-acre preserve and education center situated on the western slope of the Palisades in Englewood and one of the last remnants of the Palisades Forest.
- Tenafly Nature Center, a sixty-five-acre nature preserve adjoining the 316 acre Lost Brook Preserve, sits on top of the Palisades overlooking the Hudson River.

Ramapo Mountain State Forest, a 4,200 acre state forest in Bergen and Passaic Counties, containing the 1,417-acre Ramapo Lake Natural Area and a 120-acre mountain lake. The forest borders the Ramapo Valley County Reservation, part of the Bergen County park system, and has a trail system which runs along the ridge of the Ramapo Mountains north to Mahwah.

Of considerable interest is the role these large areas of preserved or regulated open space, along with privately-owned open space, can play as part of a countywide strategy to mitigate carbon emissions, create additional carbon sinks and adapt to the effects of global climate change.

## Perspectives on Climate Change

Under our current energy system, the necessities of daily life such as heating & cooling, transportation, manufacturing, and electricity, all rely on the burning of fossil fuels which contribute heat trapping (“greenhouse”) gases into the atmosphere. The United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has established a conservative global warming estimate of between four and seven degrees by end of century. Worldwide, this warming is expected to result in a loss of sea ice, an increase in hurricanes and cyclones, increased extinction of species, and water shortages, all of which may have widespread impacts on human populations and ecosystems.

Locally, climate change scenarios predict summer temperatures to rise by as much as six to fourteen degrees Fahrenheit. Communities across the region are expected to be affected by heat waves that are more frequent, intense, and of longer duration, potentially increasing the annual number of heat-related deaths by 50%. More frequent summer droughts also suggest a need to preserve and expand water recharge and storage capacities for the Hackensack, Ramapo and Passaic rivers and aquifers. Coastal areas are expected to be impacted by more frequent and intense storms that will cause erosion and damage transportation and utility infrastructure with particular risk to water supply and water treatment facilities. Flooding within the “100 year” flood zone may occur every few years, stressing coastal communities, infrastructure and habitats. Ocean levels are expected to rise as a result of warming water temperatures and sea ice melting. Increased sea levels may inundate low-lying marshlands, damage or destroy beaches, dunes, and cliffs, and expose inland areas to flooding. Infrastructure and habitat along the Hackensack and Passaic Rivers and within the Hackensack Meadowslands is considered particularly vulnerable.

Twelve of Bergen County’s seventy municipalities – Cliffside Park, Closter, Demarest, Englewood, Fair Lawn, Haworth, Northvale, Ridgewood, Saddle Brook, Teaneck, Tenafly, and Washington Township – have signed the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement to support the goals of the United Nations Kyoto Protocol in local communities through local actions to inventory emissions and initiate strategies that include greater municipal efficiency, recycling, and adopting smart growth and alternative transportation policies.

The State of New Jersey has adopted legislation calling for a 20% reduction in emissions statewide by 2020; and has drafted recommendations to limit the

growth of vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and encouraging more efficient land use and transportation patterns.

As NJ’s most populous county, uses and activities in Bergen County are a significant contributor to the state’s greenhouse gas emissions and the results of choices and decisions made within the county will significantly impact overall state emissions. Major emissions contributors in the state are electrical generation, gas and diesel fuel burning vehicles, heating oil and natural gas, and methane emissions from landfills. Although Bergen County has slightly higher transit ridership than the rest of the state, the share of single-occupancy drivers is equivalent to the state average. On-road gasoline usage has increased 34% between 1990 and 2005. VMT has increased 1.5% per year from 1990 to 2005.

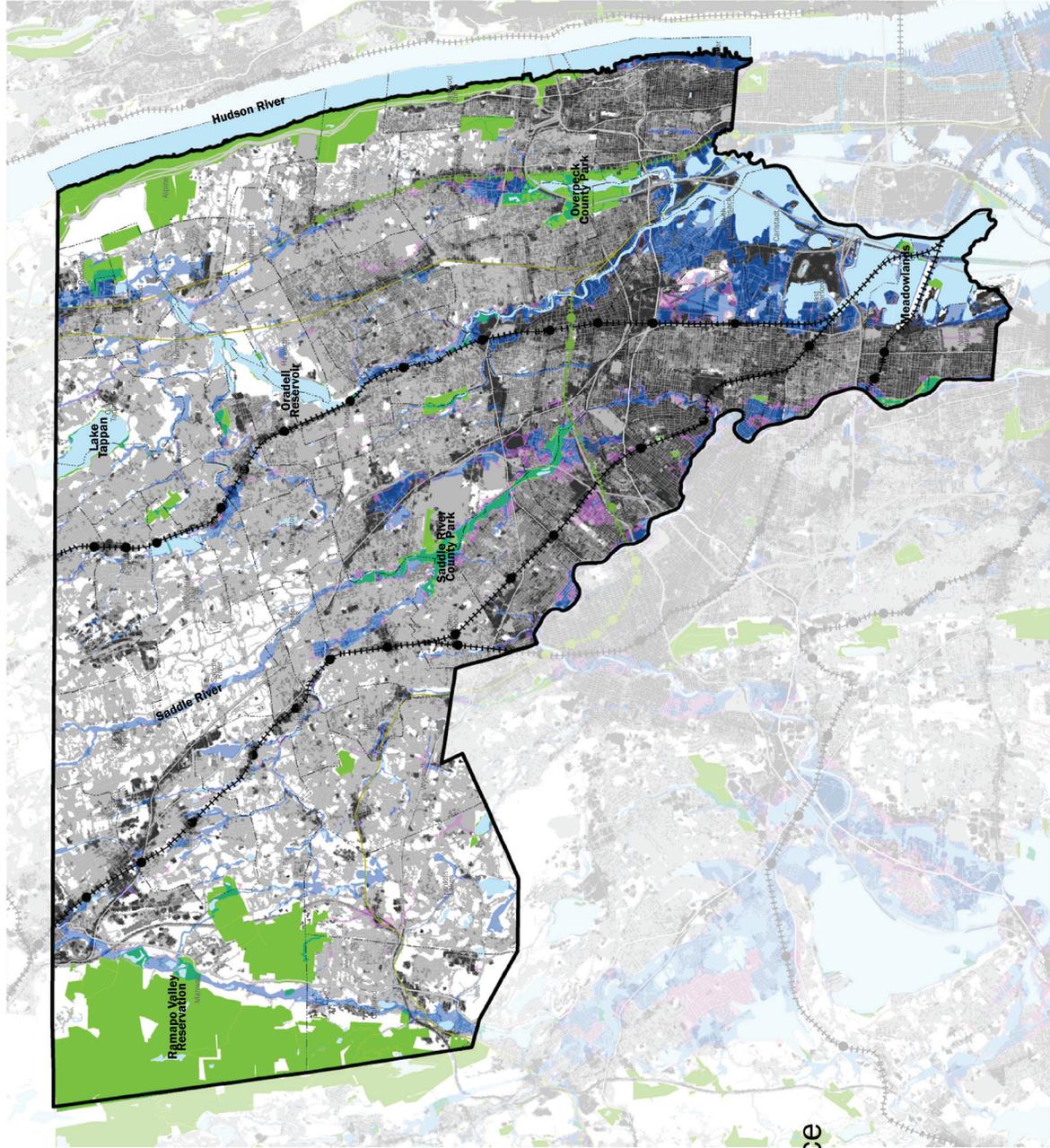
While a county master plan does not directly affect local land use and transportation, it can promote a better understanding of how local decisions affecting land use and transportation translate into outcomes that affect greenhouse gas emissions in positive or negative ways. It can also promote cooperation between municipalities with respect to more efficient land use patterns capable of supporting transit. The county master plan can publicize best management practices and showcase case studies where local actions have helped to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

# Water and open space

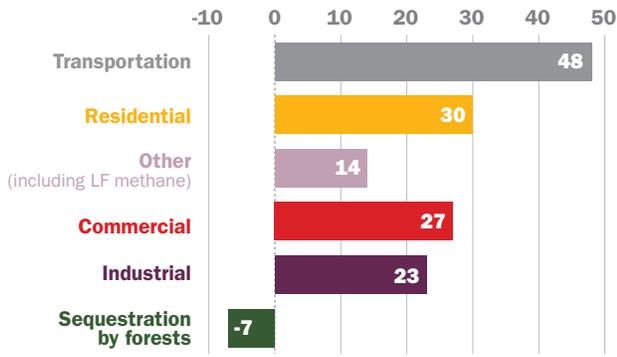
Federal, state, county and municipal open space. Dark blue shows land within the estimated 100 year flood extent, pink shows 500 year flood extent.

Source: NJDEP, RPA, NJTransit.

- Open space
- Water bodies
- Urbanized area
- 100 year flood
- 500 year flood
- Passenger rail service
- Proposed passenger rail service
- Light Rail
- Freight rail
- Municipal boundary

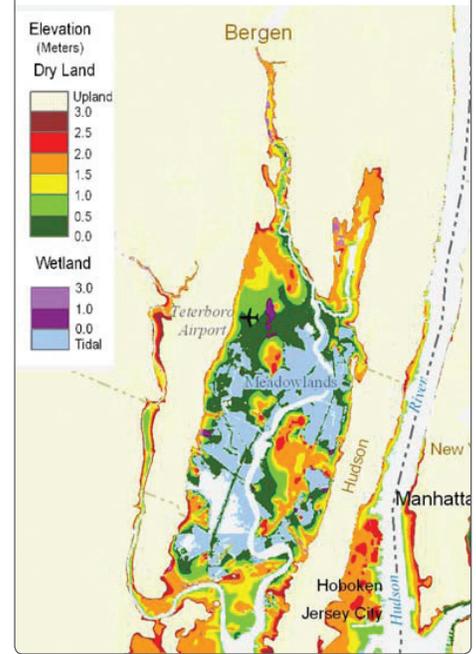


**Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Sector, New Jersey 2004**  
(including CO2 from generation of electricity used by sector: millions of metric tons CO2 equivalent)



**Lands Most Vulnerable to Impacts of Climate Change – Elevations of Land Close to Sea Level**

Source: Excerpted from J.G. Titus and J Wang. 2008. "Maps of Lands Close to Sea Level along the Mid-Atlantic Coast". US Environmental Protection Agency. This map is a general graphical representation of regional elevation variation and is accurate at any one point within 150 cm.



## Transportation and Mobility

### Travel Behavior

#### Where do Bergen County Residents Work?

Over half (58%) of Bergen residents are employed within the county. New York City, specifically Manhattan, ranks second at 18%, and Hudson and Passaic Counties each attract 6% of the workers residing in Bergen County.

#### How do Bergen Residents Commute to Work?

85% of Bergen County residents drive to work and only 13% use transit. This divide is even greater when we filter out those destined for workplaces only within the County, where a vast majority (91%) commute by auto, only 3% by bus and less than 1% by rail.

New York City is the next most popular destination for Bergen County commuters, with 82% of these working in Manhattan. Among the Manhattan bound group, 38% use buses and 15% rail. Manhattan bound

work trips grew by 14% between 1900 and 2000, but work trip travel to other places has declined.

This data only reflects work-trips and does not include discretionary or non-work trips, which are considerable.

From 1990 to 2000 average travel times across the county have increased by four minutes. The southern portion of the county has some of the worst congestion and delays, with travel times increasing by almost eight minutes on average during the same period.

### Vehicular Circulation

The macro arterial grid serving Bergen County includes some of the largest and most heavily travelled facilities in the state, and indeed in the nation, with high volume toll roads – such as the New Jersey Turnpike and the Garden State Parkway (GSP) – limited access highways, such as the Palisades Interstate Parkway (PIP), Route I-80 and Route I-287 – and a number of state highways. Unfortunately, the highway network has a predominantly north-south orientation, and the much sparser east-west connections create circulation difficulties, particularly in the central and northern parts of the county.

In southern Bergen, north-south movement occurs by way of the New Jersey Turnpike (Route I-95), Tonelle Avenue (Routes 1&9), Route 17, and Route 21 on the western side of the Passaic River. The only high volume east-west roads are Routes 3 and 46.

In central Bergen, north-south trips take place on the Garden State Parkway, Palisades Interstate Parkway, and Routes 9W, 17 and 4/208. East-west movement is limited to Route I-80. In the absence of other east-west connections, Route 17 functions as a proxy, connecting the few discontinuous east-west routes.

### Commuters by Mode to All Destinations & Regional Share of County Commutation

Region Name	Auto		Bus		Rail		Other		Total
	#	Share	#	Share	#	Share	#	Share	
<b>Southern</b>	182,925	82%	23,901	11%	4,634	2%	10,430	5%	221,890
<b>Northwest</b>	84,266	88%	4,105	4%	4,971	5%	2,227	2%	95,569
<b>Northeast</b>	85,422	88%	6,545	7%	2,218	2%	2,527	3%	96,712
<b>Bergen County Total</b>	352,613	85%	34,551	8%	11,823	3%	15,184	4%	414,171
<b>Southern vs County</b>	52%		69%		39%		69%		54%
<b>Northwest vs County</b>	24%		12%		42%		15%		23%
<b>Northeast vs County</b>	24%		19%		19%		17%		23%

Source: US. Census 2000 – Census Transportation Planning Package- Tables 8 & 14 Calculated Shares

Finally, in northern Bergen, north-south traffic can take the GSP, Route I-287 and Routes 17 and 202. There is no major east-west facility.

Route 17 plays a special role in circulation within the County. Constructed in the early 1930's it continues to serve as a major regional artery and a vital link in the Northern New Jersey transportation network. Route 17 traverses Bergen County from its northern border with Rockland County, cutting diagonally to its southern border with Hudson County at Route 7 in North Arlington. In the north, Route 17 is almost a limited access highway with three lanes in each direction. In the South, through the commercial areas of Paramus, Route 17 operates as a land-service highway with grade-separated cross-streets and numerous curb cuts for retail and offices. The County considers Route 17 its highest highway priority.

Route 17 also serves as the "missing link" between the New Jersey Turnpike and the New York State Thruway for truck freight movements to all points north. This is the most convenient route for trucks coming from the New Jersey Turnpike, logging significantly less mileage than the much more circuitous Route I-287 beltway around the Metropolitan area.

## Regional Roads

### Southwest Bergen

- Major state roads – New Jersey Turnpike, Route 17, Route 120 and Route 46.
- Major county roads – Washington Avenue/Moonachie Road (CR 503), Union Avenue (CR S-32), Paterson Avenue (CR 120) and Empire Boulevard.
- Route I-80 in Teterboro, Route 3 in East Rutherford and Rutherford and Route 17 in Hasbrouck Heights all have over 100,000 Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT). They are the most heavily traveled roads in this part of the county and are among the most heavily traveled in the State.
- Trucks contribute to congestion in Carlstadt and the southern corridor of Route 17. There is major congestion in Lyndhurst at Orient Way and Valley Brook Avenue.
- There is considerable congestion on roads accessing the Meadowlands Sports Complex during events.

### Southeast Bergen

- North-south roads – Route I-95, Palisades Avenue/Lemoine Avenue (Route 67), Grand Avenue (Route 93), Anderson Avenue (CR 29) and River Road (CR 505).
- East-west roads – Route 4, Route 46, Route 5, Fort Lee Road/Main Street (CR 56) and Grand Avenue/Engle Street (CR 501).
- Four locations in Fort Lee (Main Street at Schlosser Road, Lemoine Avenue, Center Avenue at Hudson Terrace and Center Avenue at Bigler Street) and four in Edgewater (River Road at Russel Avenue, Hillard Avenue, Garden Place, and NJ Route 5) experience major congestion.
- The routes that access the major highways serving New York City experience severe congestion. Other heavily traveled locations are Route 1&9 between Christies Lane and Main Street in Fort Lee (57,000 AADT), Route 9W between Shopping Center and Linwood Avenue in Fort Lee (41,000 AADT), Route 1&9 between Pleasantview Terrace and Lancaster in Ridgefield Borough (29,000+ AADT) and Route 67 in Fort Lee (23,000 AADT).

## Commuters by Mode to New York City with Manhattan Detail

Origin Region	Destination	Auto		Bus		Rail		Other		Total
		#	Share	#	Share	#	Share	#	Share	
<b>Southern</b>	<b>New York City</b>	20,690	50%	16,431	40%	4,052	10%	295		41,468
<b>Northwest</b>	<b>New York City</b>	6,968	47%	3,574	24%	4,326	29%	21		14,889
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>New York City</b>	11,440	61%	5,293	28%	1,803	10%	73		18,609
<b>All Counties</b>	<b>New York City</b>	39,098	52%	25,298	34%	10,181	14%	389		74,966
<b>Southern</b>	<b>Manhattan</b>	14,640	43%	15,249	45%	3,698	11%	239		33,826
<b>Northwest</b>	<b>Manhattan</b>	5,056	41%	3,360	27%	4,048	32%	8		12,472
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Manhattan</b>	8,215	55%	4,937	33%	1,734	12%	69		14,955
<b>All Regions</b>	<b>Manhattan</b>	27,911	46%	23,546	38%	9,480	15%	316		61,253

Source: US. Census 2000 – Census Transportation Planning Package – Tables 8 & 14 Calculated Shares

## Commuters by Mode to Intra-County – Region to Region

Origin Region	Destination	Auto		Bus		Rail		Other		Total
		#	Share	#	Share	#	Share	#	Share	
<b>Southern</b>	<b>Southern</b>	73,226	86%	3,751	4%	83	0%	8,414	10%	85,474
<b>Southern</b>	<b>Northwest</b>	19,786	93%	871	4%	33	0%	524	2%	21,214
<b>Southern</b>	<b>Northeast</b>	10,445	93%	501	4%	0	0%	272	2%	11,218
<b>Northwest</b>	<b>Southern</b>	14,695	98%	145	1%	46	0%	142	1%	15,028
<b>Northwest</b>	<b>Northwest</b>	31,789	94%	230	1%	90	0%	1,687	5%	33,796
<b>Northwest</b>	<b>Northeast</b>	6,644	99%	15	0%	6	0%	65	1%	6,730
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Southern</b>	20,279	96%	557	3%	44	0%	260	1%	21,140
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Northwest</b>	11,093	99%	92	1%	5	0%	46	0%	11,236
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Northeast</b>	24,744	92%	353	1%	57	0%	1,882	7%	27,036
<b>All Intra-County Trips</b>		212,701	91%	6,515	3%	364	0%	13,292	6%	232,872

Source: US. Census 2000 – Census Transportation Planning Package- Tables 8 & 14 Calculated Shares

## Central Bergen

- North-south roads – Garden State Parkway, Route 17, Route 208, Paramus Road/Passaic Street (CR 62), Farview Avenue (CR 61), Forest Avenue/Maywood Avenue (CR 59), and Kinderkamack Road (CR 503).
- East-west roads – Route I-80, Route 4, US Route 46, Ridgewood Avenue/Oradell Avenue (CR 80).
- Five most congested locations are Teaneck Road in Teaneck, Selvage Avenue in Teaneck, South River Street in Hackensack, River Road and Slater Drive in Elmwood Park and Forest Avenue and Route 4 in Paramus.
- Most heavily traveled route in the County – Route I-95 in Teaneck (296,200 AADT) which accesses New York City via the George Washington Bridge.
- Other locations with AADT exceeding 100,000 – Route I-80 in Elmwood Park, Route 4 in Paramus / Teaneck, Route 17 in Paramus and Rochelle Park, and the GSP in Paramus and Saddle Brook.

## Northern Valley

- North-south roads – Route 9W, the Palisades Interstate Parkway and Knickerbocker Road (CR 505).
- East-west roads – Route 4, Palisade Avenue (CR 505), Liberty Road (CR 49), Clinton Avenue (CR 72), River Edge Road (CR 70); Madison Avenue/ Union Avenue/Hillside Avenue (CR 74), Westwood Avenue (CR 110), and Closter Dock Road (CR 502).
- Most congested locations on county roads – West Forest Avenue – at Engle Street and at South Dean Street in Englewood Cliffs.
- The Palisades Interstate Parkway in Alpine carries the most traffic, with 61,000 AADT.
- Routes that access the major highways serving New York City or Paramus experience congestion during peak commuting hours and depending on commercial activity experience congestion mid-day and on Saturdays as well.

## Pascack Valley

- North-south roads – Garden State Parkway, Pascack Road (CR 63), Forest Avenue (CR 59) and Kinderkamack Road (CR 503).

- East-west roads – Grand Avenue (CR 94), Woodcliff Avenue/Prospect Avenue (CR 90) and Washington Avenue (CR 502).
- No major highways serve as truck routes, trucks rely on the County road system.
- Two most congested locations – Chestnut Ridge Road and County Road in Woodcliff Lake and Spring Valley Road and Paragon Drive in Montvale. There is also considerable congestion on the Garden State Parkway in Washington Township and Montvale Borough. There are moderately congested locations in Park Ridge, Washington, and Woodcliff Lake.

## Northwest Bergen

- North-south roads – Route I-287, Route 208, Route 17 and Route 202, all of which have very high AADT and experience peak hour congestion, especially at some interchanges.
- East-west connections – Franklin Avenue/Wyckoff Avenue (CR 502).
- Route 17 in this region has no signalized intersections, but the extensive land uses along the highway and regional traffic demand create congested conditions.
- During peak hours county routes experience periodic congestion at key intersections: East Saddle River Road and Wearimus Road in Ho-Ho-Kus, Main Street/Wyckoff Avenue and Central Avenue in Ramsey, Franklin Avenue and Old Mill Road/ Summit Road and Franklin Avenue with Colonial Road.

## Accident Locations

NJDOT 2003 accident data (the latest year available) identifies the top accident locations in Bergen County.

- Central Bergen – Contains the most locations in the Top 100 and the Top 10. Route 17 and Route 4 in Paramus, Route 4 in Teaneck and Hackensack Avenue/River Street (CR 503) in Hackensack had the most accidents in the county. Route 17 had the most locations.
- Southeast Bergen – Twenty-four locations in the Top 100 and one in the Top 10. River Road in Edgewater (CR 505) had the most accidents. Grand Avenue (Route 93) in Palisades Park, Route I-95 in Ridgefield and Route 46 in Ridgefield had the highest percent of injuries. Route 93 in Palisades Park had the highest percent of accidents involving pedestrians.

- Southwest Bergen – Route 17 in Hasbrouck Heights, Route 3 in Rutherford and New Jersey Turnpike Western Spur (Route I-95) in Carlstadt had the most accidents.
- Northern Valley – One accident location in the Top 25 – Route 4 in Englewood. South Washington Avenue (CR 39) in Bergenfield had the most pedestrian accidents in the County.
- Northwest Bergen – Three accident locations in the Top 50, with Route 17 in Ramsey as the location with the highest number of accidents.

## Transit

### How is the Railroad Network Used Today?

There are two active commuter lines that serve the county, the Pascack Valley Line, with thirteen stations and the Main-Bergen Line, with sixteen stations. The Main-Bergen Line has relatively frequent service throughout the morning and evening peak, with an average of four trains per-hour in the peak direction and an average of two trains per hour in the off-peak direction. Over the past seven years there have been two important developments that have improved the county's commuter rail service.

The first was the opening of the Secaucus Junction Station in 2003. This station made it possible for commuters on the Main-Bergen Line and the Pascack Valley Line to access Penn Station New York by transferring at the new station, enabling them to reach midtown Manhattan more quickly. These commuters previously had to transfer in Hoboken and use the uptown PATH branch to reach midtown.

The second was the construction of passing sidings on the Pascack Valley Line. Until recently, service on the line was infrequent and limited to only the peak-direction due to its single track configuration. Trains were stored at Hoboken during the day and turned around for the evening commute to Spring Valley. In 2007 NJ Transit completed the construction of four passing sidings, making bi-directional service possible on the line. These improvements enabled NJ Transit to add fifteen additional trains each day, including twenty-three on the weekends where there was previously no service available. Today, there are an average of three trains per peak hour and one per hour at other times.

Both lines have weekend service and run until almost 12:30 AM (last train departing New York).

Not surprisingly, ridership has increased by over 20% on the Pascack Valley Line due to these service improvements, whereas prior

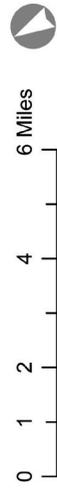
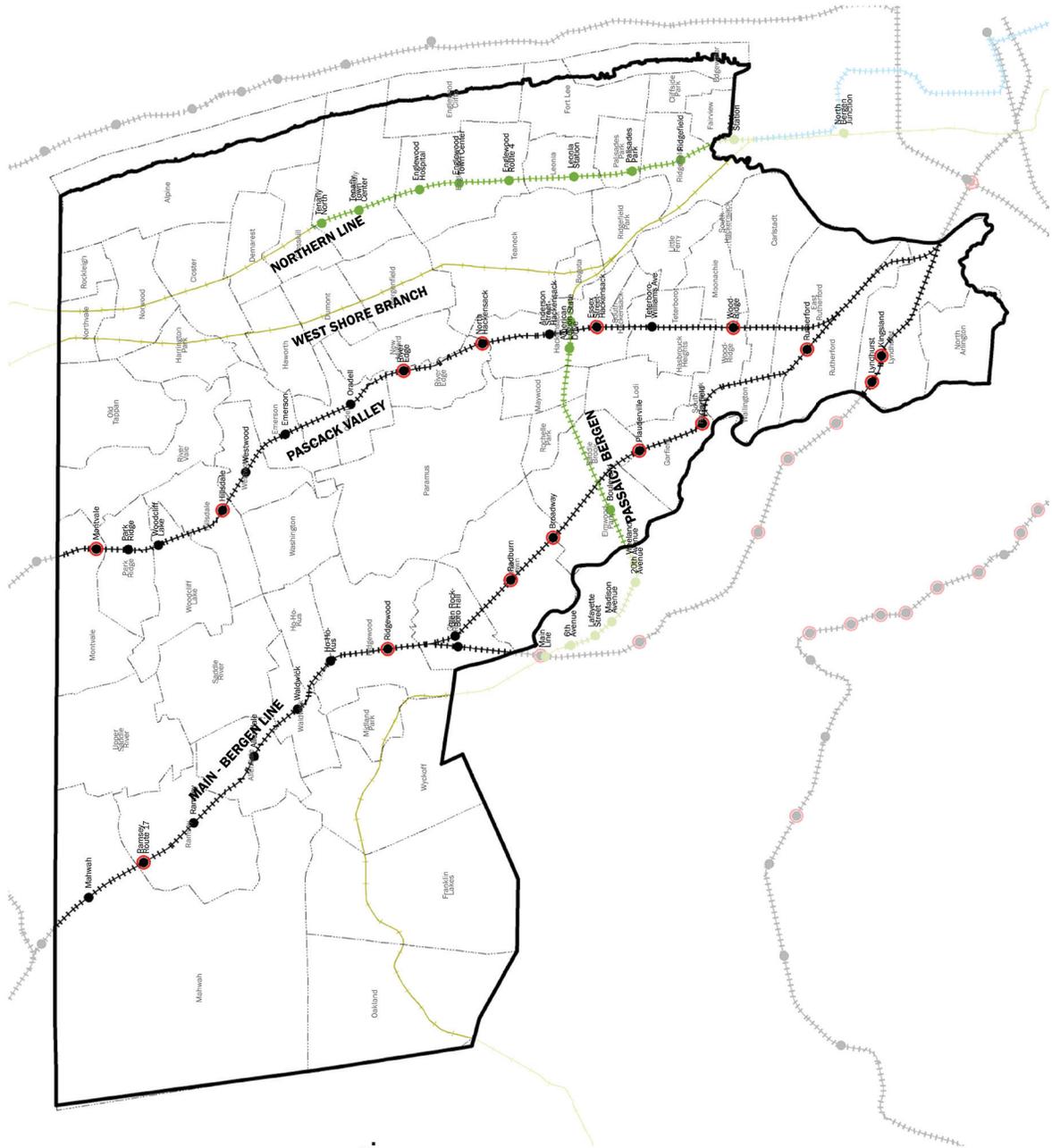
# Rail

All active rail lines, including passenger, freight, and proposed services.

Stations with more than 15% growth in ridership since 2000 are highlighted.

Source: RPA, NJ Transit, US Census 2000.

- Passenger service
- Proposed passenger service
- Light Rail
- Freight
- Ridership up more than 15%

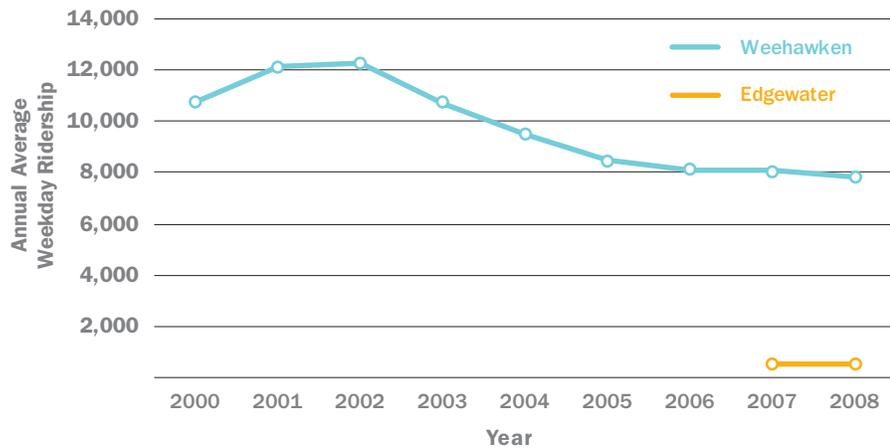


## Commuter Rail Station Parking in Bergen County

Line	Stations	Parking Spaces	Average # of Spaces per Station		Parking Utilization (2007)
<b>Bergen-Main Line</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4,654</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>2,726</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Pascack Valley Line</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1,878</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>1,502</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6,532</b>			

Source: New Jersey Transit – 2007 Parking Database

### Weehawken vs. Edgewater Daily Ferry Ridership



to this it had remained relatively the same from 1999 to 2006. Ridership on the Main-Bergen Line has grown steadily by 44%, or by an average of 4% annually. Ridership on both lines has continued to increase even during the current economic downturn.

The Main-Bergen Line still carries about three times the number of passengers as the Pascack Valley (10,238 daily boardings vs. 3,688). This difference can be explained in two ways. First, the Bergen-Main Line has long had a more robust service pattern with service throughout the day and on weekends. Second, the Pascack Valley is slow, its speed hampered by closely spaced stations. Third, the Pascack Valley Line typically has stations with less parking available, constraining the usage of its stations as the data above suggests.

A new service recently inaugurated by NJ Transit is Sunday passenger service on a spur from Secaucus Junction to the Meadowlands and Giants Stadium, offering rail service to sports fans on game days.

### Are Other Rail Lines Possible?

The West Shore freight rail line also runs through Bergen County. Restoring passenger service on the West Shore line has been discussed in the past. The issue is primarily one of heavy freight movements. The line is currently owned by CSX and is considered a critical link for freight service between the port facilities in NJ and points north. The freight railroad interests have as yet been unwilling to share the track for passenger

service, which would require either separate and expensive rights of way to be obtained or temporal separation with freight running during the night and passenger service during the day along with major infrastructure to be built.

### Light Rail in Bergen County

The Hudson Bergen Light Rail terminates at Tonelle Avenue, approximately 2 miles south of the Bergen County line. NJ Transit plans to extend the light-rail to Tenafly along the Northern Branch railroad, a lightly used freight corridor with no current outlet to the north. This is designed to be a frequent service that will connect with both the NY Waterway ferry and PATH train to New York City and provide access to job centers along the “Gold Coast” in Hoboken and Jersey City.

### River Road Multi-Modal Corridor

The county’s one existing ferry landing is located in the municipality of Edgewater off County Route 505/River Road. New York Waterway runs a single service to Pier 79 on West 39th Street in Manhattan and provides a free transfer to crosstown buses. Traffic along the seven mile stretch of River Road has increased during the last twenty years, with industrial facilities being redeveloped for residential use. Little consideration has

been given to transit access on River Road leading to the auto-centric nature of these developments and resulting in congestion. This congestion, along with limited east/west access along the Palisades and the lack of robust transit connections are major factors contributing to the low ridership numbers for the Edgewater Ferry (see table). By comparison, the Weehawken ferry in Hudson County has connections to the Hudson Bergen Light Rail (HBLR) and numerous bus routes, and twelve times the ridership of Edgewater.

To increase ferry ridership at Edgewater and improve intra/inter-county mobility on River Road transit solutions like Bus Rapid Transit, extension of the HBLR and others should be considered.

### Bus Service

There are fifty-one NJ Transit bus routes in Bergen County, the majority of which serve the residents of the southern region. Interstate bus ridership from Bergen County to New York increased by almost 23% between 2007 and 2008. In contrast, local bus ridership dropped by 2% during the same period and has been decreasing since 2004.

The concentration of service in the south is closely linked to the higher population density and lower levels of auto ownership in that area, which in turn generates sufficient demand to support a greater level of transit service. The northern and western sections of the county have higher levels of auto ownership and lower population densities. Not surprisingly the 2008 American Community Survey indicates that 58% of all households in Bergen County have 2 or more cars available, while 35% have one car and 8% have no motor vehicles.

The final stop for 80% of the Bergen County NJ Transit buses will be one of the two bus facilities in New York City.

Forty-one NJ Transit routes in Bergen County are linked to Manhattan at either the Port Authority Bus Terminal (PABT) at 41st Street and Eighth Avenue or to the George Washington Bridge Bus Station (GWBBS) in Washington Heights on upper Manhattan.

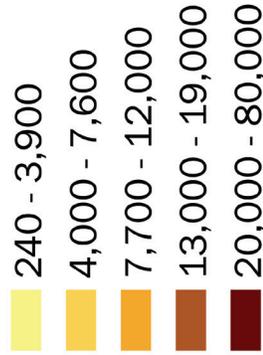
Private bus carriers do cover the areas of the county that are currently not served by New Jersey Transit, predominantly in the northern and western portion of the county. The major private carrier is Coach USA, which includes the subsidiaries Red & Tan and Rockland Coaches.

<sup>1</sup> Most of the trans-Hudson service is directly operated by NJT; conversely much of the local bus service has been contracted out by NJT. These private operators run NJT branded buses and collect the same uniform fares; however, NJT does not collect detailed ridership data for these routes.

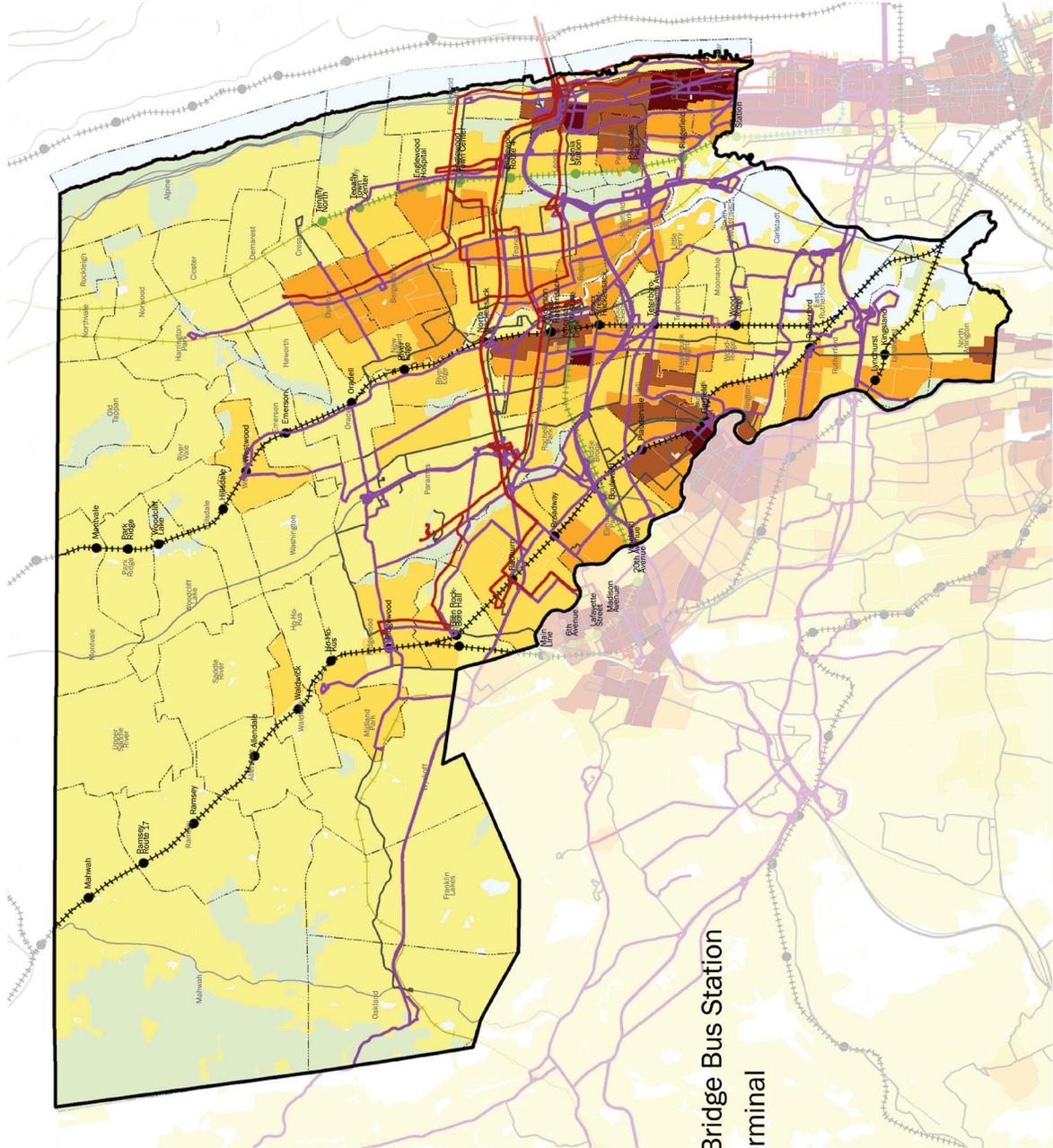
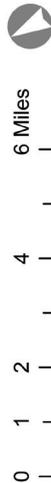
# Bus services, population

Source: US Census 2000, NJ Transit.

People per square mile



- Bus service to George Washington Bridge Bus Station
- Bus service to Port Authority Bus Terminal
- Other bus services
- Passenger rail service
- Proposed passenger rail service
- Light Rail
- Freight rail





Private commuter bus service to New York City works better for those residing in the western part of the northeastern region, further out from the City, than those commuting from municipalities closer to the Hudson River. This can be explained by the lack of limited-access roadways in the eastern part of the region preventing buses from Alpine, for example, from quickly accessing the major crossings to the City, whereas buses originating in Montvale can use the Garden State Parkway or Route I-80. Buses are not permitted on the Palisades Interstate Parkway.

### Local Bus Service

Local buses, for the most part, serve residents who do not own cars or prefer not to drive and are reliant on them for mobility. To attract “choice” riders who have a car available to them buses must be able to compete from a travel time perspective. This is difficult because, as long as buses have to share the same roads with other traffic and face the same congestion delays, they will have trouble competing. Even worse, buses are slowed because they must stop to drop off and receive passengers, making travel times by bus less competitive.

There are many ways to speed up buses. In recent years, many of these methods have been put in place nationally under the rubric of Bus Rapid Transit or “BRT”. Methods to speed buses include the provision of a separate right-of-way to allow buses to avoid congestion traffic. Other means include the provision of preferential treatment at intersections, institution of off-vehicle fare collection to speed up loading, and bus fleets with low floors to reduce the effort and time for boarding and alighting, and marketing of BRT service branding it as “premium” transit.

The most difficult of these BRT actions is the provision of separate rights-of-way, since it requires the use of existing rights-of-way currently used by mixed traffic lanes or for parking lanes in more urban settings. This can take away capacity from the majority who remain in private cars or from parking capacity. To justify a BRT right-of-way requires enough bus volumes so that the benefits to the transit rider outweigh the loss to those in other vehicles. This might be accomplished even with insufficient bus volumes if the lane is also used as a high occupancy vehicle lane (HOV) permitting private vehicles with either two or more or three or more occupants. Should separate

rights-of-way not be available it is still possible to institute other BRT features, such as low-floor buses and off-vehicle fare collection.

### Informal Transit Services

Informal transit in Bergen County has accelerated over the past two decades due to an increase in immigrant populations. These services are more accessible to immigrants because they are able to transcend the language barrier, are more affordable and serve many areas that are not covered by the NJ Transit network. Not much is known about how these services operate within Bergen County, with most of them concentrated in the southern section of the county, connecting to Hudson and Passaic counties – and especially evident in the Route 4 corridor between Paterson, Paramus and New York City. Hudson County has recently shed some light on these operations as part of a study they undertook in 2007<sup>2</sup>. The study recommended regulating these services to ensure safe operations and to rationalize the routes to reduce congestion and better serve residents.

<sup>2</sup> A Hudson County Division of Planning report prepared by Urbitran Associates Inc. Hudson County Bus Circulation and Infrastructure Study, November 2007, Chapters, 5 & 6.

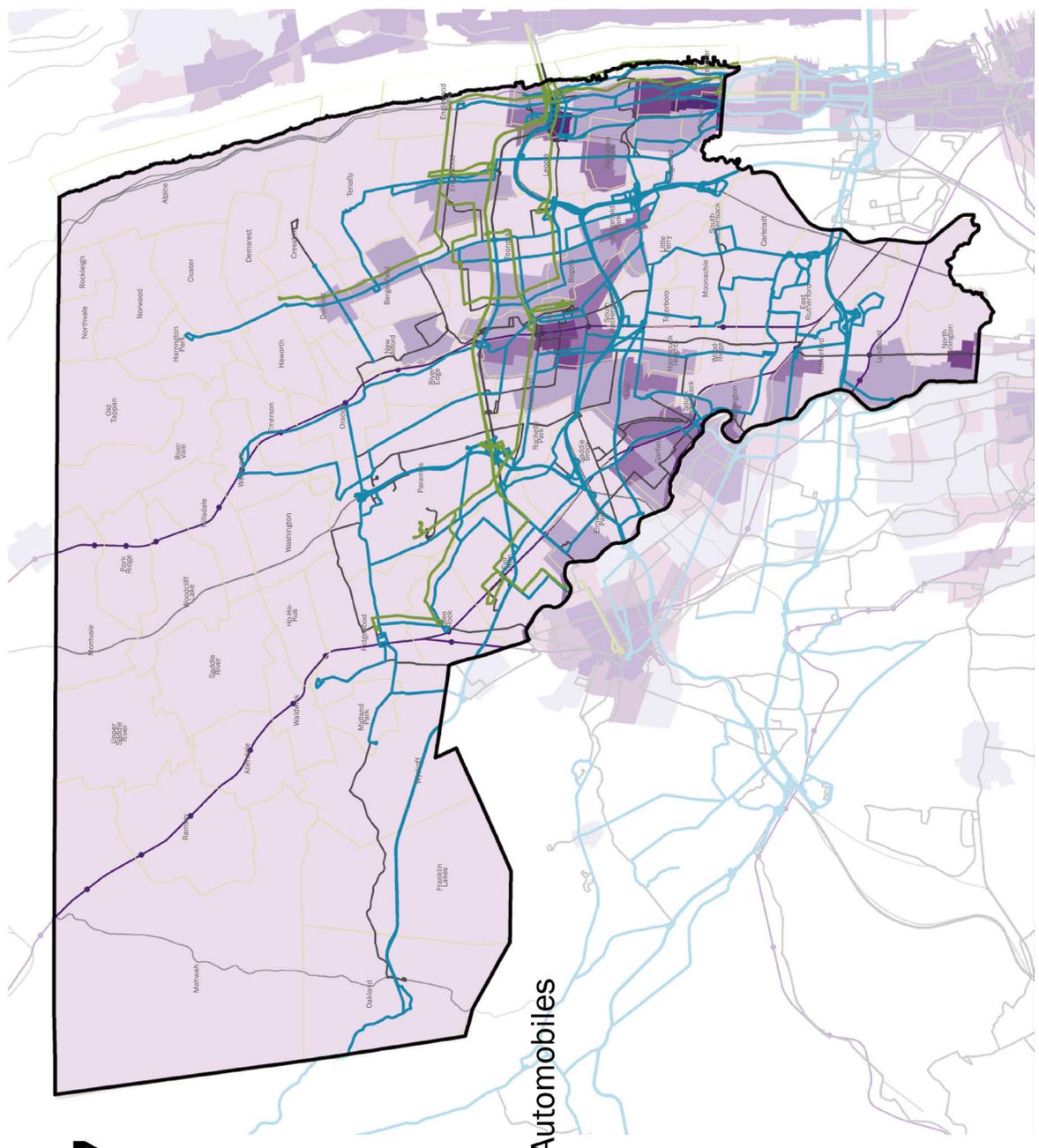
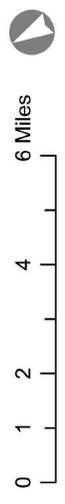
# Bus services, households without access to an auto

Source: RPA analysis of Census 2000,  
NJ Transit

Households per Sq. Mile without Automobiles

- Less than 250
- 260 - 630
- 640 - 1,100
- 1200 - 2,000
- More than 2,000

- Services to PABT
- Services to GWBBS
- Other bus services



# Transit Improvements

Proposed transit service improvements, including:

Northern Branch

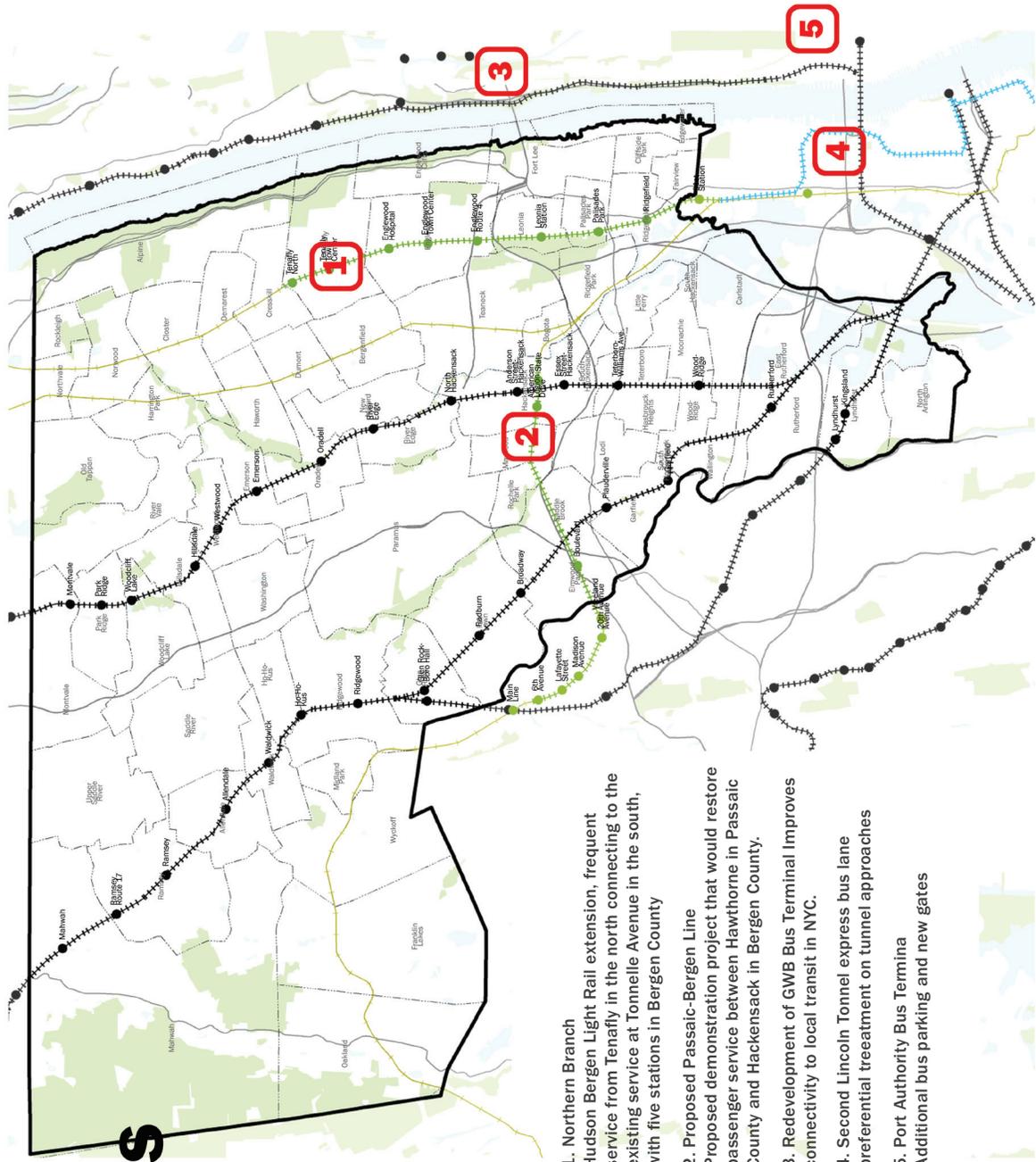
Passaic-Bergen Line

Redevelopment of the GWB bus station

Lincoln Tunnel express bus lane

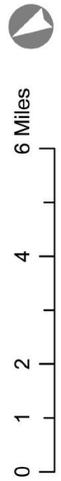
Port Authority Bus Terminal improvements

Source: RPA.



1. Northern Branch Hudson Bergen Light Rail extension, frequent service from Tenafly in the north connecting to the existing service at Tonelle Avenue in the south, with five stations in Bergen County
2. Proposed Passaic-Bergen Line Proposed demonstration project that would restore passenger service between Hawthorne in Passaic County and Hackensack in Bergen County.
3. Redevelopment of GWB Bus Terminal Improves connectivity to local transit in NYC.
4. Second Lincoln Tunnel express bus lane preferential treatment on tunnel approaches
5. Port Authority Bus Terminal Additional bus parking and new gates

- Passenger service
- ..... Proposed passenger service
- Light Rail
- Freight



## Transit Oriented Development

Transit Oriented Developments or TODs cluster development around transit to support more frequent service and reduce discretionary auto trips by fostering walkable communities and mixed-used development. For a successful TOD there must be local community interest, the surrounding environment should be walkable and there needs to be the potential for more development around the station.

The southern and northwestern regions are served well by transit, with a number of existing traditional neighborhoods that are transit oriented. There are opportunities to further enhance the existing transit oriented communities and other transit assets in this region that might be potential candidates for transit oriented developments (TOD).

Some stations may have limited TOD development potential while others may have the ingredients required for successful TODs. Not surprisingly, the municipalities of Ridgewood and Radburn have the greatest number of residents within walking distance of their rail stations. However, preliminary analysis suggests that Glen Rock, Waldwick, Ho-Ho-Kus, Ramsey Main Street and many of the proposed Northern Branch HBLRT stations are strong candidates for TODs. The municipalities, County, and NJ Transit should work together, considering these possibilities to make the rail system a more integral part of the community.

## Future Transit Improvements

Though plans to construct a new trans-Hudson tunnel have been canceled, the recognition that additional capacity is needed under the Hudson persists, and a number of alternative plans are currently being considered. Any successful project that increases tunnel and platform capacity to Manhattan and creates a direct connection to the Bergen County rail lines will decrease travel times and provide a one-seat ride from the three existing Bergen County lines to Penn Station New York. A 2010 RPA study demonstrated that such improvements to the rail network could serve to boost home values within 2-miles of NJ Transit stations by a cumulative \$18 billion and generate \$375 million a year in new property tax revenue for municipalities, based on models of prior, similar transit line improvements.

- The extension under consideration of the Hudson Bergen Light Rail line to the Northern Branch will create eight stations in Bergen County – Ridgewood, Palisades Park, Leonia, Englewood-Route 4, Englewood-Palisade Avenue, Englewood

Hospital, Tenafly and Tenafly North – and offer frequent service from Tenafly in the north connecting to the existing service at Tonelle Avenue in the south.

- The proposed Passaic-Bergen Line will restore passenger rail service between Paterson and Bergen County. It remains to be seen whether this new line will significantly improve transit service to residents of Bergen County. The future of this project is uncertain at this time.
- The proposed expansion of the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Midtown would create additional bus parking and new gates.
- A proposed second Lincoln Tunnel Express Bus lane would provide preferential treatment on approaches to the Lincoln Tunnel to reduce bus travel times to the PABT.
- The proposed redevelopment of the George Washington Bridge Bus Terminal could improve connectivity to local transit in NYC.
- On-going studies are evaluating the potential for new trans-Hudson ferry services.
- On-going studies are evaluating the potential of Bus Rapid Transit to serve various high-intensity corridors and activity centers throughout Bergen County, and linking these with regional transit and rail lines.
- NJ Transit is the lead agency for the “Northeast New Jersey Metro Mobility Study” which is studying how to better coordinate and enhance bus service in Bergen and Passaic Counties, as well as looking at interstate bus services passing through Bergen County from Orange and Rockland Counties to the north.

## Land Use

Bergen County has a wide variety of land uses which are combined in different ways across the county. Significant industrial and warehousing uses are found primarily in the southern part of the county, which also has considerably more compact, mixed-use environments. The more recently developed northern part of the county has lower density residential, stand alone retail centers and single use corporate office parks.

This notwithstanding, there are compact, traditional mixed-use downtowns surrounded by residential neighborhoods everywhere in the county, often but not always associated

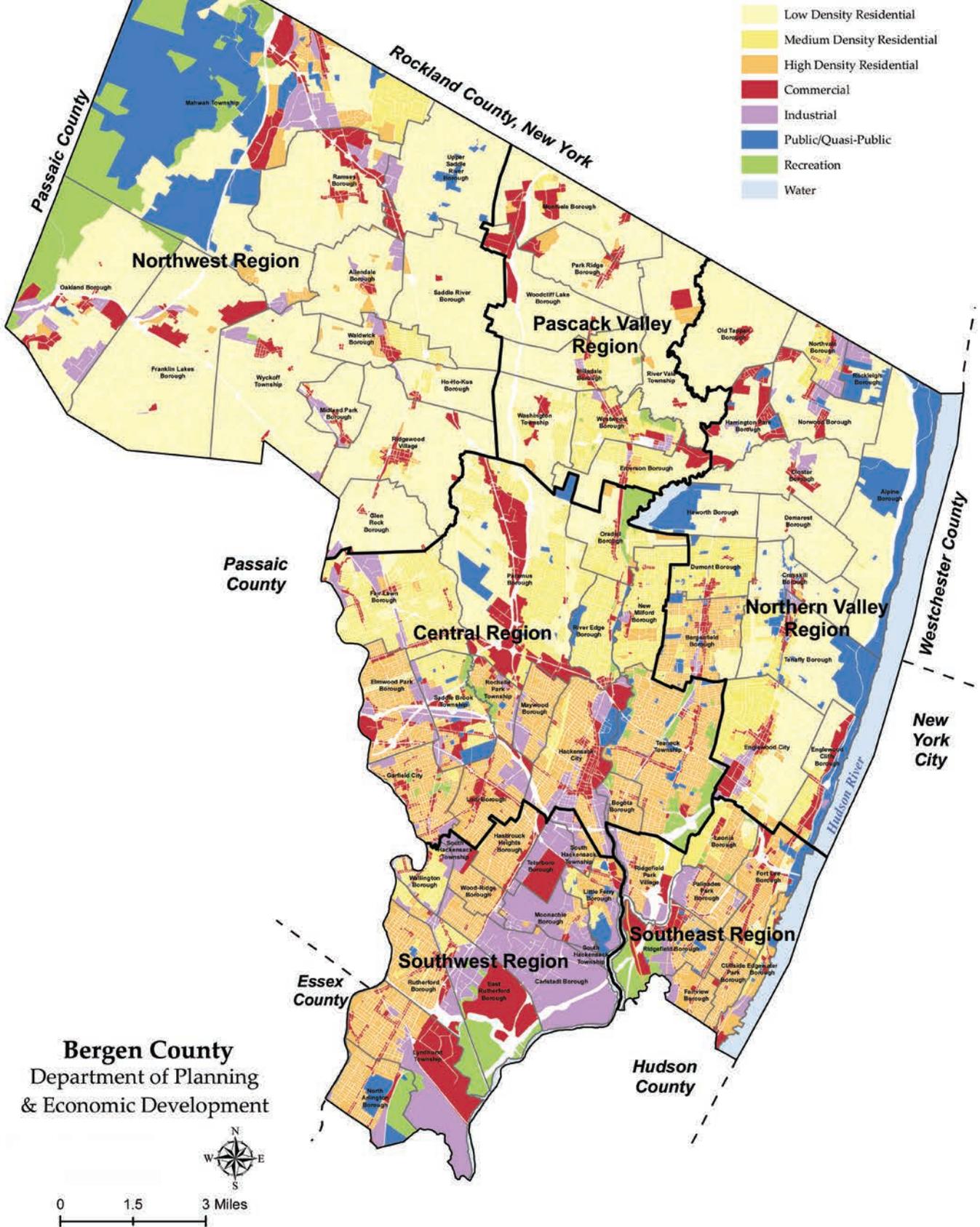
with an existing stop on one of the county’s rail lines. While many of these downtowns have suffered from the competition presented by stand alone suburban shopping centers – and are consequently underperforming in terms both of retail sales and as centers of their communities – this existing network of places provides a framework that, if reinforced in appropriate ways, can help revitalize downtowns and better anchor the more dispersed, lower density parts of the county.

The twelve municipalities in the Southwestern part of the county – wedged between the Hackensack River to the east and the Passaic River to the west – are characterized by relatively high population densities, a still significant industrial base and the Meadowlands. Industrial uses occupy a significant amount of land in the northeastern section of this area. The majority of existing residential land is situated west of the Pascack Valley rail line and Route 17. There are residential clusters in Little Ferry, Moonachie and South Hackensack. Commercial uses are scattered throughout, and are also centered along the Route 3 and 17 corridors. Large tracts of public and therefore tax exempt land are owned by the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission and Teterboro Airport.

The eight municipalities in the Southeastern part of the county have an even higher density land use pattern. The Palisades run north-south along the banks of the Hudson River and the top of the Palisades are intensely developed. Fort Lee, Edgewater and Cliffside Park, located directly across from New York City, have substantial high rise residential uses near the Hudson River. There is a residential concentration east of the Northern Branch rail line and commercial corridors along Bergen Boulevard (County Route 501 and NJ Route 63), Anderson Avenue (CR 135) and Lemoine Avenue (NJ Route 67). Industrial and public land lies between the Northern Branch rail line and Route I-95. A large residential cluster exists west of Route I-95 in the Village of Ridgefield Park.

The fourteen municipalities in the Central part of the county are characterized by older suburban land use patterns that include “garden apartment” style residential development and single-family homes on smaller lots. Radburn in Fair Lawn is one of the “Garden Cities” prototypical of early 20th century planning. Paramus is the regional shopping hub of Bergen County with several million square feet of commercial space. Hackensack is the County seat. Large nodes of commercial uses are located along the Route 4 and 17 corridors. Public land and exempt properties are situated along the Saddle River and Hackensack River.

# Generalized Zoning





The fifteen municipalities of the Northern Valley are characterized by a suburban land use pattern that includes residential development on larger lots and lower than average population densities. The area is mostly residential. The Palisades Interstate Park runs north-south along the Hudson River. Englewood's central business district represents a large mixed-use node in the Northern Valley. Other Northern Valley communities with smaller downtowns include Closter, Tenafly, Northvale, Bergenfield and Dumont.

The eight municipalities in the Pascack Valley Region are characterized by a suburban land use pattern with residential development on larger lots and lower than average population densities. This area is mostly residential, although commercial clusters exist in Montvale, Hillsdale, Westwood, along Kinderkamack Road and along Chestnut Ridge Road (County Route 73) in the vicinity of the Garden State Parkway and also along Summit Avenue (CR 104).

Finally, the thirteen municipalities in the Northwestern part of the county are also characterized by a suburban land use pattern that includes residential development on larger lots and lower than average population densities. There are large areas of open space in Oakland and Mahwah. The area is mostly residential although significant commercial nodes exist along Route 17. The northwestern portion of Oakland and Mahwah are in the Highlands Preservation Area. The remainder of Oakland and Mahwah are in the Highlands Planning Area.

### Redevelopment

Because Bergen is a mature county in terms of its development pattern, future growth will primarily occur through redevelopment and infill. This trend is already occurring in the Southeastern part of the county, in former industrial properties fronting on the Hudson River which have been redeveloped into luxury condominiums, retail and service oriented developments. This trend is not limited to the high value Hudson waterfront. It can be found throughout the county including in its more suburban environments. Of particular interest is the redevelopment potential of vacant or underutilized lands in communities that will benefit from new or enhanced transit service, such as the communities that will benefit from reactivation of passenger service on the Northern Branch Rail Line, on the proposed Passaic-Bergen line and along potential Bus Rapid Transit corridors.

Redevelopment also provides opportunities to create new public spaces and green areas in places that have none – an increasingly important indicator of quality of life – as well as to reduce impervious coverage and put in place more effective, naturalized mechanisms for reducing storm water runoff, increasing storm water retention and infiltration and improving water quality. Redevelopment on a large scale using green guidelines has the potential over time to significantly ameliorate many of the county's storm water run-off and water quality issues.

Redevelopment can occur spontaneously and be privately driven, or it can take place as a result of a public initiative, usually under the jurisdiction of a local redevelopment agency. There is no comprehensive source on the number of active or dormant redevelopment agencies in Bergen County. A partial list is available from the NJ Office of Smart

Growth, which indicates active redevelopment agencies in the following towns: Edgewater, Englewood, Fort Lee, Garfield, Hackensack, Lodi, Ridgely, Ridgely Park, Ridgewood, River Edge and Wallington.

### Land Use and Traffic

A significant feature of the existing land use pattern in Bergen County is that large amounts of commercial space – generating high volumes of traffic – are located along a limited number of corridors.

There are also many downtowns in Bergen County, both in the southern part of the county in Hackensack, Garfield, Englewood, as well as further north, Westwood, Ridgewood, Allendale, Ramsey, Hillsdale, Mahwah, Teaneck, Closter, Northvale and Bergenfield. These downtowns of various sizes – with commercial uses clustered in walking environments and mixed with a variety of other uses, including housing, generally perform better in terms of traffic. Those parts of the county where commercial uses are strung along miles of arterial roads – including corridors leading into downtowns – are more auto-dependent and contribute to the significant traffic congestion experienced on all the major arterials. This pattern is also behind the intense competition between local downtowns and main streets and highway commercial and regional malls.

### Community Character

The diverse and densely-developed land use pattern in Bergen County presents special concerns for the preservation of community character and existing neighborhoods. Many residential neighborhoods abut or are located in proximity to industrial areas, major commercial centers, high traffic corridors and major community facilities, particularly in those areas (Southwest, Southeast and Central) of the county that have the highest densities and the most diverse range of land uses. This trend is likely to grow in the future as the premium for developable land increases and pressures for redevelopment and infill continue. Careful planning and sensitive design guidelines for redevelopment and infill can help address these concerns.

### Low Density Single-Family Bias

One significant concern with the existing zoning is that the most prevalent zoning category in the County is Low-Density Residential. This produces a pattern of land development that does not support most

forms of transit and is therefore largely auto-dependent, is expensive and generally out of reach for people with lower or fixed incomes, and is poorly suited to the changing demographics of single and two-person households. The only part of the county where Low-Density Residential does not exist is in the Southwest. The bulk of land in the Northern Valley, Pascack Valley and Northwest is zoned Low-Density Residential, together comprising a significant amount of the total land area for the County. The Central area also includes Low-Density Residential zones, mainly in Paramus and Oradell; in the Southeast they can be found in Leonia and Fort Lee. While a certain amount of land dedicated to this use is desirable, over zoning for low density residential does not lead to a sustainable land use pattern and is a fiscal disaster at the local level.

### **Brownfields**

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, Bergen County has seven Superfund sites on the National Priorities List. The site thought to have the worst contamination is the Scientific Chemical Processing site in Carlstadt. Other Superfund sites in Bergen County include Universal Oil Products in East Rutherford, the 40-acre Ventron/Velsicol site in Wood-Ridge, the Maywood Chemical Company, located in Maywood, Lodi, and Rochelle Park, the 15-acre Quanta Resources site in Edgewater, the Fair Lawn Well Field; and the Curcio Scrap Metal site in Saddle Brook.

According to the NJDEP Site Remediation Program, there are currently over 2,000 “active” known contaminated sites in the county, and another 117 sites “pending”.

## **Housing**

### **Type of Housing**

The majority of the housing stock in Bergen County (55%) takes the form of single-family detached housing, with attached and multi-family housing accounting for the rest of the stock. This contrasts with the surrounding New Jersey counties, where the majority of the housing stock is attached or multi-family housing, with Hudson County topping the list at 90%.

Much of the county’s stock of attached and multi-family housing (72% and 57%, respectively) is concentrated in the southern part of the county.

In the Northern Valley, Pascack Valley, Central and Northwest areas over 60% of the housing stock is single-family detached. The balance between single-family detached and other housing types was more evenly split in the Southwest and Southeast. More housing in the Southeast was multi-family.

### **Median Age of Housing Stock**

In 2000, the median year of housing construction countywide was 1955. The housing stock in the northern tier of municipalities is even more recent. Bergen has a younger housing stock than the surrounding New Jersey counties, where the median was 1948 in Hudson County, 1951 in Essex County and 1954 in Passaic County. The statewide median year was 1962.

### **New Construction**

From January 2000 to December 2003, municipalities in Bergen County issued almost 8,000 building permits for residential construction, including over 2,500 building permits in the Southeast, over 1,500 permits in the Central and Northwest areas, and over 1,000 permits in the Northern Valley. Less than 1,000 permits were issued in the Southwest and Pascack Valley. In 2004, another 2,164 permits were issued, with 2,972 in 2005 and 2,142 in 2006. Generally, 40% to 50% were for single-family detached units, about 10% for two-family units and 35% to 40% were for multifamily units. Construction permit activity has dropped significantly in the last two years as a result of the poor economic conditions and collapse of the capital markets.

The scarcity of vacant, developable land in “greenfields” locations means that future housing construction in the County will take place largely through redevelopment of previously developed sites – whether brownfields or greyfields – usually occupied by commercial or industrial uses. Redevelopment is generally more expensive and often only feasible at higher densities.

Two major concerns resulting from modest housing production are the challenge to provide adequate housing stock for the special population segments that are growing in Bergen County – including seniors, students and new immigrants – and maintaining overall housing affordability.

### **Demolitions**

New housing construction is off-set by residential demolitions. From 2000 to 2007, there were over 4,900 residential demolitions

countywide, for an average of over 600 per year. Over 95% of demolitions were for single and two-family units. Communities with high demolition rates include Palisades Park, Cliffside Park and Leonia.

### **Households and Families**

Between 1990 and 2000, the total number of households increased by 7% in the County, and by 10% statewide. Every region of the County increased in the total number of households. The Northwest Region posted the greatest increase (20%) in the total number of households, with the Southeast Region following a close second at 11%. The Central and Northern Valley Regions both reported the smallest increases (less than five percent) in total households.

Average household size in the County remained constant from 1990 to 2000 at 2.64 persons per household, slightly lower than the State-wide average of 2.68. Average household size is lower in the southern part of the county and higher in the north.

The number of family households increased throughout the county, ranging from a 1.7% increase in the Central area to 9.6% in the Southeast. Family household growth between 1990 and 2000 was 4.4% countywide and 6.6% statewide.

In 2000, the average family size in Bergen County was 3.17, slightly under the State average of 3.21. Every area, except the Pascack Valley and the Northwest, increased in median family size.

### **Housing Prices**

Median housing values in Bergen County increased 11%, from \$226,000 to \$250,300, between 1990 and 2000. Statewide, the median housing value of \$170,800 was \$79,500 lower than the County’s median value, although it also increased 6% percent from 1990 to 2000.

### **Tenure**

With 65% of housing units owner-occupied, Bergen has a home-ownership rate higher than the statewide average of 61%. But there are wide disparities within the county in the distribution of rental and owner-occupied units. In the southeast, there are as many rentals as owner-occupied units, and in the southwest there are 1.3 owner-occupied units for every rental. But in the northwest there are seven owner-occupied units for every rental and 5.5 in the Pascack Valley.

The number of owner-occupied units in Bergen County increased marginally (1%) between 1990 and 2000, just slightly under the Statewide average of two percent. Homeownership increased everywhere in the County except for the Central Region, where it decreased by one percent.

The County also marginally increased its stock of renter-occupied units, by 1.4%. Statewide, the number of renter-occupied units decreased by 0.1%. In the Pascack Valley and Northwest the number of renter-occupied units also decreased. Elsewhere in the County the number of rentals increased, in particular in the Southwest where they increased four percent.

## Contract Rents

In 2000, median contract rent in Bergen County was \$805, a 17% increase from 1990. The median contract rent Statewide increased by 14% from \$592 in 1990 to \$672 in 2000. Each region followed the County and Statewide trend and increased in median contract rent by 16% or more. The median contract rent increased the most in the Northern Valley, from \$886 to \$1,237, and the least in the Pascack Valley (16%).

## Residential Conversions

One area of concern is the legal and/or illegal conversion of housing from single-family to multi-family. A review of the existing land use maps for each Region reveals significant amounts of land currently being used for single family residential and only clusters in certain areas – including the Southeast, Southwest and Central Regions – shown as being used for multi-family residential. Conversions are not reflected on the existing land use maps. Given the density levels in the County, particularly in the southern Regions, a significant amount of legal and/or illegal conversions may exist in the areas currently depicted on the existing land use maps as single-family residential.

## State Affordable Housing Requirements

Many public comments received during the visioning process for the Bergen County Master Plan addressed concerns regarding the cost of housing and the struggle that municipalities were having in dealing with the uncertainty regarding the regulations of the Council On Affordable Housing (COAH). Since the visioning sessions and the Vision Bergen Symposium were held, the situation with affordable housing in New Jersey has become even more unclear.

During 2010 and early 2011, activity regarding affordable housing in general and COAH in particular has been occurring on several fronts. Senate Bill No. 1 (S1) was filed in January of 2011, released from Committee in March, passed by the Senate in June, revised by the Assembly (A-3447) in December and conditionally vetoed by Governor Christie in January of 2011. S-1/A-3447 would abolish COAH and establish a new system for determining affordable housing obligations. On February 9, 2010, Governor Christie signed Executive Order No. 12, which created the Housing Opportunity Task Force and suspended the majority of COAH's functions for 90 days. However, on February 19, 2010, the Appellate Division issued a stay on the portion of the Executive Order.

Meanwhile, several entities filed legal challenges with the Appellate Division regarding the revised Third Round COAH Rules that were adopted in 2008 and the Court struck down the "growth share methodology" of the revised Rules in October of 2010. The League of Municipalities and other entities then petitioned separately for certification by the New Jersey Supreme Court. On March 31, 2011, the NJ Supreme Court agreed to take certification of all of the challenges to the Appellate Division decision.

While the legal and legislative winds have been blowing, COAH has quietly resumed the review of municipal petitions, including mediation, and the approval of development fee ordinances and spending plans based on the prior round Rules.

# Sewer & Water Infrastructure

## Sewer

Most of Bergen County has public sewers and is located within a sewer service area. Wastewater treatment in Bergen County is provided primarily by three utility authorities – the Bergen County Utilities Authority (BCUA), the Northwest Bergen County Utilities Authority (NBCUA), and the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners (PVSC).

- The BCUA covers the majority of the County, including the entirety of the Pascack Valley and Northern Valley Regions, and portions of the Central, Southeast and Southwest Regions excluding Edgewater. In 2004, the BCUA served a population of almost 539,000 people in 51 municipalities. The flow through BCUA's facilities averaged 85.19

Million Gallons Per Day (MGD). The maximum month design plant capacity is 109 MGD. The sewage is conveyed to the secondary treatment plant, located in Little Ferry, by a 108-mile system of gravity and pressure sewer lines and pumping stations. The treatment plant discharges into the Hackensack River.

- The NBCUA covers the Northwest Region excluding Oakland. Allendale, Ho-Ho-Kus, Midland Park, Ramsey, and Waldwick are considered completely sewer. Saddle River, Upper Saddle River, Franklin Lakes and Ridgewood are partially covered by the NBCUA sewer service area. Saddle River and Upper Saddle River do not have a significant length of sewers. In 2004, the NBCUA served a residential population of approximately 75,000 in eleven municipalities. The NBCUA operates a secondary treatment plant in Waldwick, and discharges into the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook. Average daily plant flow is around 11 MGD. The capacity of the treatment plant is rated at 16.8 MGD on a monthly basis.
- The PVSC generally covers the western portion of the Central Region and the southern portion of the Southwestern area and serves nine municipalities in Bergen County: Glen Rock, Fair Lawn, Elmwood Park, Saddle Brook, Garfield, Lodi, Wallington, Lyndhurst and North Arlington. Rutherford and East Rutherford are partial contributors. The secondary treatment facility is located in Newark. The average capacity of the secondary treatment plant is 330 MGD with peak dry weather flows of 400 MGD, and peak wet weather flows of 550 MGD. The average wastewater flow is 278 MGD and permitted to discharge 330 MGD into the New York Harbor. The PVSC does not treat wastewater generated in the BCUA sewer service area.

Areas not covered by these utility authorities are Oakland and Edgewater which have individual sewer service. A small section of Ridgewood is included in the NBCUA's water quality management plan (WMP), with the rest included in the PVSC's WMP. Similarly, a small section of Washington Township is in the NBCUA's WMP, and the rest served in the BCUA's WMP. There are also hundreds of regulated individual dischargers, mostly industrial and commercial. In response to NJDEP's new water quality management planning rules, the utility authorities in Bergen County, like all other utility authorities around the state, updated their plans in 2009.

In addition to the three major providers, the local providers that serve individual municipalities or smaller areas are as follows:

- The Oakland Municipal Authority owns and operates its own sewer service.
- Edgewater owns and operates a treatment plant.
- The Orangetown Sewage Treatment Plant, located in Orangetown, Rockland County, New York serves portions of Rockleigh. The permitted capacity is 12.75 MGD which are discharged into the Hudson River.
- The Ridgewood Water Pollution Control Plant located in Glen Rock serves the Village of Ridgewood and portions of Glen Rock, Ho-Ho-Kus, Midland Park, and Washington Township. The plant has a system capacity of 3.0 MGD and discharges into the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook.

Edgewater has a combined sewer system (CSS) where sanitary and storm water flow through the same system. A sewer separation project is underway. Portions of Cliffside Park, Fort Lee, Hackensack and Ridgely Park are also served by CSS. Inflow and infiltration is considered a major problem in many of the older systems, where it is estimated to contribute up to 40% of wastewater flow.

## Water

There are a number of both large and small water purveyors in Bergen County.

United Water New Jersey is the largest purveyor, providing water to the majority of Bergen County, with the exception of Allendale, Elmwood Park, Garfield, Ridgewood, Glen Rock, Midland Park, Wyckoff, Ho-Ho-Kus, Lyndhurst, Mahwah, North Arlington, Oakland, Park Ridge, Ramsey, Saddle River and Waldwick. United Water serves a resident population of 750,000. In 2003, 38 billion gallons of water was delivered. The average system capacity is 300 MGD. In 2003, the average daily demand was 104-105 MGD, and the peak daily demand was 166-168 MGD. United Water also sells water to Fair Lawn, Lodi, Wallington, Woodcliff Lake and Saddle Brook.

The Passaic Valley Water Commission (PVWC) serves approximately 750,000 customers, and distributes 83 MGD of water. The primary source of water supply is the Pompton and Passaic Rivers. The main treatment facility is located in Totowa, in Passaic County. The PVWC partially serves Lodi and North Arlington.

There are also a number of smaller municipal water departments:



- Allendale Water and Sewer Department serves 6,700 people and has five active wells.
- Elmwood Park Water Department serves close to 19,000 people with purchased surface water.
- Fair Lawn Water Department serves 32,000 people, operates sixteen production wells which draw water from the New Brunswick Aquifer, and treats it at a treatment facility. The wells provide 55% of the Borough's water. The Borough purchases treated water in bulk from the PVWC and United Water to augment its groundwater supply.
- Garfield Water Department serves close to 30,000 people, primarily from groundwater.
- Ho-Ho-Kus Water Department serves over 4,000 people from groundwater.
- Lyndhurst Water Department serves 19,800 people with purchased surface water.
- Mahwah Water Department serves 40,000 people from surface water.
- Oakland Water Department serves 12,000 people from groundwater.
- Park Ridge Water Department serves 4,700 customers of Park Ridge and Woodcliff Lake and operates 19 wells located throughout the two towns.
- Ramsey Water Department serves 18,500 people with five deep groundwater wells.

## Public Services

### Hospitals and Medical Centers

Bergen Regional Medical Center is located on a 65-acre campus in Paramus and it is the largest hospital in the state with 1,070 beds.

Hackensack University Medical Center is a 775-bed teaching and research hospital and the largest provider of inpatient and outpatient services in the state of New Jersey. It has more than 1,400 physicians and dentists and a volunteer population of more than 1,600.

Holy Name Hospital, in Teaneck is a 361-bed acute care medical center.

Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation, in Saddle Brook is a 112-bed, four-story hospital campus.

Select Specialty Hospital-Northeast New Jersey in Rochelle Park is the first free-standing Long Term Acute Care Hospital in New Jersey.

Englewood Hospital and Medical Center – the largest voluntary acute care hospital in Bergen County and the third largest in New Jersey with 547 beds, a nursing staff of 800 and a medical staff of 380. A 400-seat auditorium is an important location for medical and educational conferences.

Valley Hospital in Ridgewood – an acute care 451 bed hospital and the second busiest hospital in New Jersey in terms of admissions.

Level of service for hospitals is often measured in terms of “hospital beds per 1,000 persons,” an indicator of hospital capacity frequently used in international and intra-national comparisons. However, as a result of significant changes in health care technology this indicator has been declining considerably in the last 10 years, and is now considered of limited value. According to the final report of the NJ Commission on Rationalizing Health

Care Resources (2008), the Hackensack-Ridgewood-Paterson market area had one of the highest surplus of hospital beds in the state and the highest proportion of hospitals below the statewide average financial viability score. The Commission predicts at least one hospital will close by 2015.

### Public and Private High Schools

There are eighty school districts in Bergen County with 279 public schools or programs and a 2008-2009 enrollment of almost 135,000 students, according to the NJ Department of Education. Enrollments in individual school districts vary from 144 in Alpine to 5,659 in Ridgewood. There are also 139 private schools in the county. The county is home to 45 public high schools and twenty-three private high schools. There are seven regional school districts: Carlstadt-East Rutherford (HS), Northern Highlands, Northern Valley, Pascack Valley (HS), River Dell (HS) and Westwood.

### Institutions of Higher Education

The county is also home to the following institutions of higher education:

- Felician College is a private Roman Catholic college with two campuses located in Lodi and Rutherford. It has 500 full-time and 500 part-time undergraduates. The Rutherford campus is home to the historic Iviswold Castle.
- Touro University is a medical school recently located on Route 17 in Hasbrouck Heights.
- Bergen Community College is a two-year college in Paramus with 15,000 students enrolled in Associate's degree programs and another 10,000 students in non-credit, professional development courses.
- Berkeley College is a private, for-profit college specializing in business with seven locations in New York and New Jersey including Paramus. The college offers Associate's and Bachelor's degrees.
- Fairleigh Dickinson University is the largest private university in New Jersey with a largely commuter campus in Teaneck and Hackensack, a second

campus in Madison and Florham Park, and 5,400 undergraduate and 2,500 graduate students.

- Ramapo College in Mahwah is a public liberal arts and professional studies institution on a 300-acre campus in Mahwah offering four-year liberal arts, sciences, and professional studies to 5,700 students. The campus includes the Angelica and Russ Berrie Center for Performing and Visual Arts and a 2,200-seat arena.

### Libraries

All 62 of Bergen County's public libraries are members of the Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS), along with 13 libraries from Essex, Hudson, and Passaic counties. The BCCLS was formed in 1979 to foster resource sharing among Bergen County public libraries. A patron's hometown library card is honored at all participating libraries. The BCCLS also participates in an Open Borrowing program with participating libraries in Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren counties. Patrons have



the opportunity to access more than ten million books, DVDs and CDs by in-person borrowing from over 150 public libraries.

## Historic Resources

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic resources worthy of preservation. The New Jersey Register is the official list of the state's historic resources of local, state and national interest. It is closely modeled on the national program. Inclusion on the New Jersey and National Registers provides historic resources with a level of review and protection from inappropriate, publicly funded modifications and damages, but not from private actions. Property owners investing in these properties are eligible for financial incentives in the form of federal tax credits.

According to the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Bergen County has almost 400 individual properties on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. These include a wide variety of buildings, structures, grounds and archaeological sites, from large complexes such as the Hackensack Water Works in Oradell, to individual houses. Many are publicly owned, but many are not. Of the publicly owned properties, many have been turned into museums and are open to the public. There are also a number of museums housed in structures that are not historic.

There are also designated historic districts encompassing multiple properties in Alpine, Closter (two), Englewood (two), Fairlawn, Hackensack, Lyndhurst, Mahwah, Maywood, North Arlington, Ridgewood (two), Rockleigh, Rutherford, Saddle River and Westwood. In addition, a number of linear historic districts encompass multiple jurisdictions – railroad rights-of-way (Bergen County Line/Erie Railroad Main Line), highway rights-of-way (Garden State Parkway, Palisades Interstate Parkway, US Route 46) as well as the Palisades Interstate Park.

Three of the properties in Bergen County included on the federal and state registers – the Hermitage in Ho-Ho-Kus, Palisades Interstate Park in Alpine and the Stanton (Elizabeth Cady) house in Tenafly – are also designated as National Historic Landmarks. These properties are designated by the US Secretary of the Interior and are deemed to have national significance and exceptional historic value.

Further protection of historic resources can be accomplished through local historic preservation ordinances and the creation of historic preservation commissions. A number of municipalities in Bergen County have adopted such ordinances and have active

commissions. The level of protection afforded by these ordinances varies widely. Locally designated historic districts may also receive federal tax advantages.

The County has a 2001 (revised August 2003) draft Historic Preservation Plan prepared by the Bergen County Historic Preservation Advisory Board. The plan is intended to provide guidance for historic preservation efforts in coordination with land use decisions. The County has an annual Historic Preservation Commendation Program and funds historic preservation projects through its Open Space, Recreation, Farmland Preservation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund.

In addition to the preservation of historic resources and their protection from destruction or inappropriate transformation, the public policy challenge with respect to historic preservation is to find effective ways to take advantage of the great potential found in all these resources to enhance the County's sense of identity and civic pride and to create more vibrant and dynamic places that build on, rather than destroy, their historical heritage.

## Cultural Arts Facilities

- Williams Center for the Arts, Rutherford – two live theater venues, three cinemas and an open-air meeting gallery housing the Rivoli Theater.
- Art Center of Northern New Jersey, New Milford is Fine Arts School and Gallery for children and adults.
- Bergen County Players, Oradell is one of the oldest amateur groups in America.
- Hackensack Cultural Arts Center, Hackensack is stand-up comedy, poetry readings, lectures, plays, musicals, book readings, music, cabaret and dance.
- Puffin Cultural Forum, in Teaneck is a gallery and performance space.
- River Edge Cultural Center, in River Edge has exhibits; musical events in the park and at the library.
- Bergen County Performing Arts Center, in Englewood has a theater and performing arts.
- JCC on the Palisades, in Tenafly is a performing arts school, music school, center for special services and art gallery.
- Old Church Cultural Center School of Art, in Demarest has educational and cultural programs.

- Onstage, in Ramsey is a youth oriented summer theatre group.
- Saddle River Valley Cultural Center, in Upper Saddle River has a theater, workshops, enrichment classes, art exhibits, acting classes and music.

## Visioning Format

In order to solicit public input on a number of critical topics in the master plan, Bergen County – assisted by Regional Plan Association and Maser Consulting– created a website ([www.co.bergen.nj.us/planning/masterplan](http://www.co.bergen.nj.us/planning/masterplan)) to disseminate information and garner further public input and hosted three visioning sessions:

- November 14, 2009 – Northeast Bergen, Demarest
- December 5, 2009 – Southern Bergen, Hackensack
- January 20, 2010 – Northwest Bergen, Mahwah

Sessions were widely publicized and open to anyone interested. Close to 200 people participated.

The intention behind these sessions was to allow the participants to productively explore all relevant ideas. To achieve this result and still remain focused, it was helpful to establish a framework and define parameters for the discussion. The group discussion followed an iterative two step process. First, participants were encouraged to discuss “big picture” issues relevant to the entire county and to its relationship with the metropolitan region. Tables were set up to facilitate small group discussions around a number of relevant themes – economic development, housing, the environment, transportation and others. Each table was provided with a list of questions to help focus and frame the discussions, without limiting the creative thinking.

Participants were free to move from the broader county-wide scale to more localized discussions, and back up again, thus providing local illustrations to countywide issues. These discussions help develop both the countywide and more localized agendas.

In addition, the county planning staff – assisted by Regional Plan Association – organized a well publicized one-day master plan conference at the Sheraton-Mahwah on May 18, 2010. With over 300 participants, including representatives from the surrounding counties, the conference confirmed the strong level of interest in planning issues among Bergen county stakeholders, residents and businesses.

# Summary of Workshop Discussions

## Economic Vitality

There is every indication that economic prosperity in the future cannot be taken for granted and that increased competition for economic assets will increase between regions. What should Bergen county and its municipalities do to better position themselves in the economic arena?

## Questions for Discussion

- What types of businesses and jobs should the County have in the future?
  - Do you see the County being able to encourage these and if so, how?
  - What economic sectors will be most important to the County?
  - Which ones will grow and which ones will shrink?
- Where do you see new business and jobs locating, and where will they leave?
  - What specific cities, towns, and commercial areas will this happen to?
  - What areas can have more commercial activity and what industrial or otherwise underutilized areas can be reused and redeveloped to benefit the economy?
  - How will this impact the surrounding neighborhoods and municipalities?
- What business development policies should be pursued by the County and/or municipalities? How can we attract and locate new businesses?
  - Can zoning, tax incentives, infrastructure development and public-private partnerships work?
  - What other forms of business assistance might help?
- What will happen to the County's retail areas in the future? How and in what ways will they change or should they change?
  - What forms and types of retail will be most and least successful?
  - How will they impact communities positively and negatively?

- How can large retail areas have a more productive co-existence with communities?
- What will the County's workforce look like in the future? What do we want it to look like and what workforce and education policies can shape it?
  - What industry specific job training and specific education programs would help?
  - What other issues will affect employees and employers in the future?

## Ideas and Issues Discussed Include

Employers in the county find it difficult to attract and retain a skilled labor force, in particular young professionals, which face high housing costs and high taxes. There is also shortage of day care centers, an important type of public service to support the labor force.

Few areas are seen as having more room for development. But the reality is that there are many sites throughout the county that offer opportunities for significant additional growth through redevelopment, but these are not readily apparent to many local officials.

Improvements to intra-county mobility are a major economic factor. The current barriers compromise further economic prosperity. Opportunities for additional transit service should also be explored, to better link jobs and housing.

Industry is leaving Bergen County because of high taxes. Taxes, home rule (fragmented government) and inadequate transportation services are discouraging new business from locating in Bergen County.

Health care industry jobs are very important for the county and hospitals are major employers. With the advent of health

care reform there are nascent opportunities for gaining more economic activities given the strong medical presence in the County. There could be opportunities for expansion of jobs by leveraging the federal changes in insurance and provision of health services.

Arts and culture activities in downtowns could be better leveraged, to help ensure that the County's Main Streets are healthy and thriving again. Residential development above retail can help keep downtowns alive, especially at night.

There was a perception that the mix of industry in the county is imbalanced, with a need for more of an industrial base. The displacement of industrial activities by residential cited as a concern, as industry is an area of potential growth for the County's economy. Green industries could be a solution for the transition of industrial economic activities into the new century. Instead of zoning all industrial lands for mixed use activities, incentives should be put in place to grow new types of green industries.

International business attraction is an important economic development strategy. Bergen County's strategic location in the region provides a competitive advantage that could be leveraged by better economic development planning.

Should there be another referendum on the "Blue Laws"? Better research would be needed to quantify the impact on the communities and businesses.

It was suggested that Asian immigration is viewed a positive trend, and that the relationship between South Korea and Bergen County may be explored as a potential avenue for economic vitality. Attraction of new talent could provide for future opportunity; e.g., attraction of foreign students from countries that value quality education to the County's colleges and universities.





### What we heard people suggest for the County's Vision

- Commission a study analyzing the competitive position of the county – to better inform decisions for economic planning – complemented by a marketing plan to attract and retain businesses.
- Investigate ways to assist municipalities decrease property tax and business tax burdens to stimulate economic growth.
- Sponsor a series of case studies that showcase how redevelopment that is sensitive to its surroundings and context can improve local communities.
- Encourage temporary uses for large parking lots for office buildings and train stations, which can become farmer's markets on weekends when there is no demand for parking.
- Investigate potential transit service in high employment and transit-deficient areas such as the area around the Sheraton in Mahwah.
- Investigate potential partnerships between medical institutions in the County and renown institutions of higher learning to create new educational and economic opportunities for development.
- Try to attract a large university of high standards.
- Encourage more mixed-use.
- Encourage the transition of industrial activities to "green industries".
- Educate, facilitate and provide tools and incentives to empower municipalities to attract jobs, industries and businesses.

- Identify each county sub-area's strengths and develop strategies to capitalize on them.

### Open Space, Parks and Recreation, and Natural Systems

Parks and open space, whether free-standing or associated with natural systems such as river corridors perform invaluable environmental functions and also constitute important amenities for the local population. It is increasingly recognized that healthy natural systems perform invaluable services that sustain human habitation. Investments in the regeneration of deteriorated natural systems, such as wetlands, can generate significant returns in terms of improving natural resources, mitigating adverse impacts of climate change and enhancing quality of life.

#### Questions for Discussion:

- Will there be an appropriate amount of open space in the County in the future?
  - Will all areas of the County have appropriate amounts of open space?
  - Where could more open space be added and where might it disappear?
  - What land use policies can help ensure adequate amounts of open space?
- Are there better ways to acquire and manage open space in the future?
  - Could forming non-profit boards for open space and parks work?
  - Could a fund that developers contribute to for open space and parks work?

- What would you like to see the County and municipal park system look like in the future?
  - What features do you want to see more of or less of?
  - What amenities are needed that do not currently exist?
- Will the County have enough recreation areas, passive and active?
  - What specific recreational facilities will be needed, or not needed, and for which types of users?
- What natural areas and systems will be most vulnerable in the future? What are some ways we can better protect them?
  - Should there be bans on development in certain areas? If so, where and what should be banned?
  - What land use policies can help better protect natural areas and systems?
- What role will Open Space, Parks and Natural Systems have in facing a changing climate? Can they help us adapt and mitigate the negative impacts of climate change? How?
- What types of strategic investments in restoration of natural systems should the county be contemplating and what types of funding mechanisms should be considered?

#### Ideas and Issues Discussed include

There is a need to better establish the economic value assigned to the preservation of natural resources. The public also needs to be better educated on a variety of environmental issues, including climate change and the negative impacts of excessive impervious coverage, with a focus on what actions individuals can take.

It was perceived that there is a fundamental lack of open space in Bergen County; in particular, passive open space is at a crisis point. Everyone should have a park within ¼ mile walking distance of their home.

Additional open space that should be available to the public – including pocket parks – could include parts of the Upper Hackensack Watershed, Lake Tappan and Cedar Farms.

The mission and function of the County Parks Department could be expanded to include natural resource protection. The department could add environmental scientists and botanists to advise on

development constraints and environmental education. County Parks may be viewed both in terms of recreation and as natural areas.

It was suggested that vacant lands adjacent to parks be the County's first priority for acquisition. Other suggestions included that: local officials need to be educated on the benefits of open space trust funds, because there is concern about the ratable loss from open space; developers should be asked to contribute funds or contribute in some other fashion towards satisfying recreation needs; and that the use of grants for open space and recreation should be directed by the Master Plan. In addition, it was perceived that too much funding goes toward active recreation and not enough toward open space preservation.

The Hudson River is an air quality buffer between Bergen County and New York City. Preservation of natural areas and pristine open space areas along waterways should be a clear priority. Completing the construction of the Hudson River Walkway is a priority.

The original 1969 Hackensack Meadowlands Master Plan could be used as a model for a new study.

As far as impervious surface, it was suggested that additional parking for parks should only be provided in an environmentally responsible manner, and not in the riparian areas of the Upper Hackensack Watershed, for instance, and that trails through passive recreation areas should not be paved.

It was also suggested that river banks be returned to their natural state, where practicable. Better protection of water quality in reservoirs is very important to maintain clean water and also reduce the costs of removing pollutants from drinking water. For example, implementation of a larger buffer zone around the Passaic River between the Dundee Dam and Great Falls was suggested.

Public access should be provided to allow everyone to appreciate the rivers, but without compromising valuable bird habitats or other environmental resources. Goals may include: providing opportunities for waterborne recreation, as well as increasing visibility of the waterways; better publicizing of available access points; creating new river access in urbanized areas in tandem with redevelopment projects; and restoration of boathouses for canoe and kayak access, among others, including those near New Bridge Landing and Route 4.

Non-Profit open space preservation boards may be a good idea if they are accountable to County.

The existing recreation centers could better coordinate activities and share services, thereby eliminating the need to provide a new County Recreation Center or Aquatic Center.

It was suggested that farmland preservation efforts focus on legitimate working farms. A problem was cited in that the farmland assessment minimum requirement of \$500 in income and 5 acres is antiquated, and that the law allows for major tax incentives for farms of an insignificant size. Restrictions could be placed on the type of farming allowed on preserved farms, limiting them to traditional farming or community farming. In addition, it was suggested that farms surrounding reservoirs be prioritized, and that preserved agriculture should be better tied to the community through community supported agriculture, farm stands, farmers markets, community gardens, etc.

Shade trees in many communities are reaching the end of their life span; a "tree crisis" is on the horizon. This creates an opportunity to plant more sustainable species. It was suggested that every municipality should have a shade tree commission (not committee) to apply for grants and advise on appropriate shade trees for planting. Too many male trees are planted to avoid the fruit borne by female trees and the mess that results. The large number of male trees also helps explain why there is so much pollen – a better balance may be struck. In addition, utility companies were called out to be better stewards of trees. Overall, it was suggested that Bergen County adopt a "no net loss of shade trees policy".

Some participants suggested that bicycle facilities be provided through the addition of bike lanes to roads, rather than creating new paths and additional impervious surface. To encourage more biking, an appropriate bike infrastructure – conveniently located bike racks, bike lockers, showers at work and so forth – would need to be provided. Bike racks could also be provided at parks, along with better public transportation options. The County could investigate a "complete streets" policy, with continuous sidewalks on at least one side of road. Bikers must be required to follow the same safety rules that apply to automobiles.

Solar energy collectors could be placed on top of buildings, rather than in public open space. Permeable pavements could also be encouraged. Simple things like white roofs on large buildings would help to reflect heat and reduce energy costs as well as consideration for Green roofs (park-like) if possible.

## What we heard people suggest for the County's Vision

- Place a strong emphasis on "green" in the Master Plan, which needs clarity and structured goals for open space preservation (habitat, recreation, etc).
- Establish policies supporting LEED building standards, including municipal participation and tax breaks for LEED buildings.
- Make the public aware of climate change and green issues.
- Organize educational sessions for local officials focusing on environmental issues.
- Carry out a public educational effort to explain the benefits of open space.
- Take an active role in preventing passive open space from being converted to active uses.
- Play a strong role in storm water, floodplain management and associated land use control such as limiting steep slope and headwater area disturbance using the County's powers to regulate drainage.
- Protect the view sheds of parks and encourage buffer ordinances around parks.
- Maximize the use of County Open Space Trust Funds with municipal Trust Funds to acquire lands and create active parks.
- Encourage and provide assistance to towns that do not currently have a municipal open space tax program.
- Continue to encourage and assist landowners in placing conservation easements on their property.
- Take on a larger role in brokering open space deals between towns and private landowners.
- Focus on providing more forested areas along the Hudson River corridor.
- Audit the Hackensack River watershed and prepare a regional storm water and flood plain management plan.
- Provide increased access to trail heads at parks.
- Improve existing trails that are in a state of disrepair before building additional trails and work to interconnect trails from multiple parks.
- Organize a volunteer organization to provide trail maintenance.

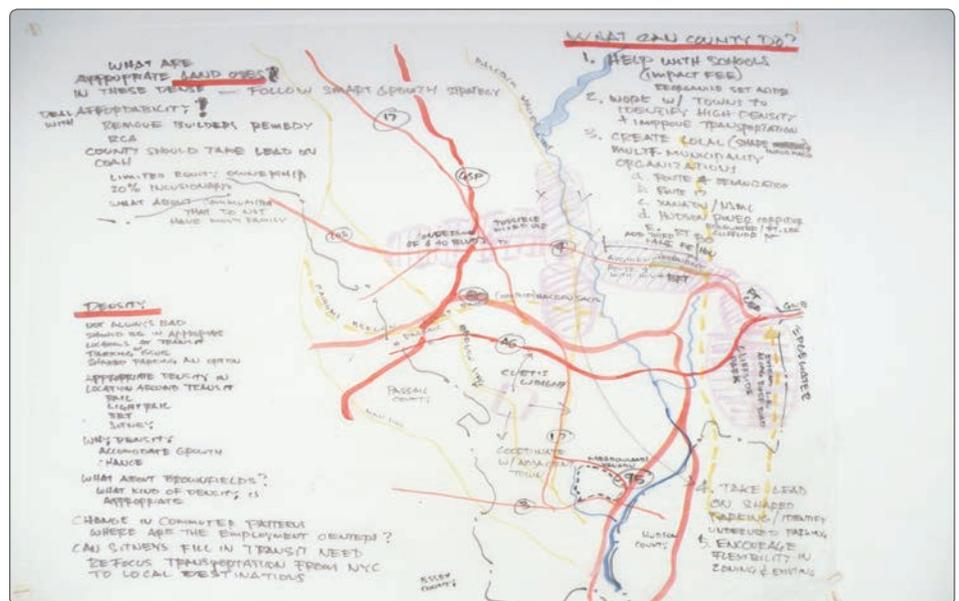
- Work to ensure flood hazard areas are protected and returned to their natural state.
- Consider enacting a 500-foot buffer rule to prevent over development of sensitive areas and provide assistance to municipalities to implement ordinances requiring buffer zones along all water ways.
- Combine historic preservation, recreation and educational activities.
- Investigate the establishment of a Parks Foundation that would raise funds to help improve the Bergen County Park System.
- Evaluate existing recreational and cultural resources and promote a network of shared resources so towns do not provide duplicate facilities in close proximity.
- Re-evaluate the farmland preservation program and tools to better achieve the goals of food access and community participation.
- Support an environmental commission in every town and help educate municipal officials about the advantages of different types of trees.
- How will the transportation system meet those future needs? What will the transportation system look like? How will people travel around and to and from the County?
  - What modes of travel will be more (and less) important in the future?
- How will linkages between different modes of travel be made?
  - Can the different modes of travel get people through to “the last mile”?
  - Do you see additional opportunities for expanding ferry service?
- Will the rail system in Bergen County be adequate to meet our needs? How might we expect the planned rail improvements (the Northern Branch, proposed Passaic-Bergen Line) to change travel behavior in the county?
  - How might the rail system be further improved?
  - How might this impact communities, both positively and negatively?
  - How can we get the most out of our rail system including the coming projects?
  - On the proposed Passaic-Bergen line, should stations be added to link the Bergen and Pascack Valley line?
  - What kind of service is envisioned for the proposed Passaic-Bergen line (i.e. what type of commuter might be expected to use the line)?
- Will bus transportation in Bergen County, including intra-county and New York City-bound buses, be adequate to meet our needs?
  - Where is bus service missing or inadequate?
  - How might bus service be improved and made more effective?
  - Where and how might Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) be used in Bergen County?
- What do we see in the future for our rail stations and the land immediately surrounding them? Do you think Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is a good idea? Where should it go?
  - How can we maximize the effectiveness of public transit?
  - How should we capitalize on its presence in communities?
  - How can we increase accessibility to transit – through additional parking, more walkable communities, more development within walking distance, better bus feeder routes, jitneys, others strategies?
- What will be the issues facing pedestrians and bicyclists in Bergen County? Where will they want to travel? Where and what kind of problems will they face?
  - How should they be accommodated on local roads, county roads, in downtowns and other commercial areas including retail centers?
  - How should they be accommodated in and around transit stations and in terms of better access to trains, buses and ferries?
  - Should the county take a comprehensive approach to local traffic calming?

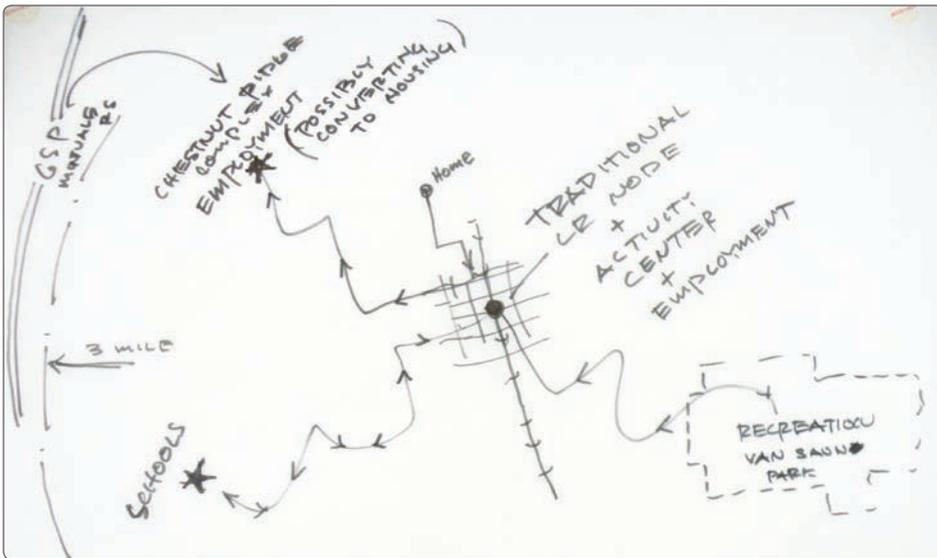
## Transportation

The macro arterial road system provides Bergen County with good North-South connections, including several limited access highways, but more difficult East-West connections. NJ Transit rail lines also provide North-South service, but East-West service is provided by bus only. Peak hour congestion on local and arterial roads is considerable and is not expected to improve. Rail transit service access will improve once the Northern Branch and the proposed Passaic-Bergen improvements come into service. Any future construction of a new trans-Hudson tunnel will improve rail service considerably

## Questions for Discussion

- Where and what will the demand for travel be in the future? What are our future needs?
  - Where will demand increase or decrease?
  - Where will people travel to more or less?
  - When will they travel more or less?





- What will the transportation needs of students be? Will those needs be met and how? What about the needs of the disabled, the elderly and low-income households?
- Knowing that most Bergen County residents use private vehicles for transportation, what will roadway travel be like in the future?
  - How will it look in specific areas, directions and corridors?
  - How can it be made safer and more efficient?
  - How can we reduce vehicle emissions that contribute to poor air quality and greenhouse gases?
- What types of issues will goods movement (freight) raise in the County, both in terms of rail and truck? What and where will the impacts of increased goods movement be felt?

## Ideas and Issues Discussed

There is a general recognition that we rely too much on the automobile. Discussion centered on improving transit alternatives as the transportation focus for the county. Transit could be improved for all users, including but not limited to transit alternatives for commuters destined for jobs in New York City and within Bergen County. Mobility should be improved for intra-county trips. Improving transit options that make it more convenient to riders is more effective in reducing road congestion than any approach focusing on the road system itself.

The county should implement Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to provide an alternative to the automobile, especially for intra-county trips.

BRT could connect existing rail and bus services and major activity centers, creating a transit network in the county. BRT should be fast, efficient, branded and marketed as a premium service with real-time information – all of which help attract current automobile users and help address congestion.

East/west mobility in the County is recognized as a major problem and some transit improvements could potentially worsen these conditions, e.g. increased delays at rail grade crossings, as a result of increases in both passenger and freight rail service. The solution could be to eliminate at-grade crossings within major east/west corridors, but those costs have yet to be estimated. The creation of “quiet zones” along active rail corridors may also be encouraged. There is recognition that current problems cannot be solved in the immediate future and the benefits from increased investments in transit will require a period of 5 to 10 years or longer to be fully realized.

There is general support for the Northern Branch extension of the Hudson Bergen Light Rail line, which will have eight new stations in Bergen County, but there is also some concern about how people will access the new service and about parking at the stations. It was suggested that NJ Transit continue to look at extending the line north beyond Tenafly to Closter, as this might help reduce the number of commuters driving to the currently planned terminus to access the light rail. (Current forecasts show little potential ridership north of Tenafly). There is also concern that the proposed service on the Northern Branch will not run late enough into the evening for riders to take excursion trips into NYC; NJ Transit may wish to look into extending the proposed service hours. In Leonia, there is concern about providing a parking deck on parkland for a station, and that nearby Fort Lee Road

already experiences heavy congestion. NJ Transit and the county must make sure that these issues are being mitigated.

It was suggested that NJ Transit analyze its existing rail schedules and look for opportunities to improve reverse commuter service, especially on the Pascack Valley, but also on the Bergen-Main Line. Not everyone is destined to NYC for work and efforts should be made to improve reverse-peak transit service for commuters within the county and for those who commute to the county from other parts of NJ and NY, as well as intra-county commuters. For example, in Montvale, employers would like to create a feeder service from the Pascack Valley station on Grand Avenue to the major office parks nearby. The Montvale, Park Ridge and Woodcliff Lake area has a large reverse commuter population, with over 25,000 jobs in corporate offices and a swelling daytime population. Most of these travel from the south by car on the Garden State Parkway. The current schedules of reverse commuter trains on the Pascack Valley line does not provide convenient service to reverse commuters.

The proposed Passaic-Bergen (“Cross-County”) Line has the possibility to serve as an east/west connector in the county, but as currently planned it will not have good connections with the Pascack Valley Line and few stations are currently anticipated in Bergen communities. Bergen county towns – specifically Rochelle Park and Saddle Brook – did not express an interest in stations along this line. Hackensack wanted a station near the hospital but not near Essex Street Station. Hackensack does not support the currently proposed rail stops on the Cross-County Line because it is perceived that they will not bring economic benefits.

It was suggested that NJ Transit electrify Bergen County rail lines to make them better and faster than diesel, and more like NJ Transit’s Morris-Essex line, where there is better service. In addition, some sort of overhead transit system was suggested on Route 4.

Amtrak does not currently stop at Secaucus Junction; such a stop would provide access from the 11 connecting lines without having to go to Newark or New York, giving Bergen County residents access to Philadelphia and Washington, DC.

It was suggested that in the long-term, NJ Transit should consider adding additional sidings or double-tracking the Pascack Valley line. This would create the operational flexibility to improve service dramatically in the reverse direction.

There is a perceived need to speed up bus service, increase frequency and improve coverage. Allowing buses on the Palisades Interstate Parkway would provide a strategy to

improve service to NYC, mostly to the George Washington Bridge Bus Station, although it is not clear how receptive the Parkway Authority is to this idea, and the geometry of the access ramps to the GW Bridge from the Palisades might prevent or make it more difficult for buses to navigate this route. The Port Authority is currently redesigning these approaches to the bridge and there may be an opportunity to make them more “bus friendly” and maybe even for a GW Bridge express bus lane.

There is a perception that more riders will take local bus service to NYC instead of driving to a park-n-ride or getting dropped-off at the GW Bridge if bus service is more frequent. Many of the existing local bus services in the north have headways of 30 minutes or more. Taking a bus to the GW Bridge Bus Terminal to access midtown or northern Manhattan is not as far fetched now as in the past. Subway service (A train) from the station to the rest of the City has improved; northern county residents tend to drive to the bridge and catch a bus over to the station and then connect to the subway. Better connections to the NYC transit system would help those northeast Bergen residents that commute to northern Manhattan, to work primarily in health care and higher education. Existing bus network coverage and the location of bus stops can be improved.

Some people cannot take transit to work in Bergen County, because although there might be a bus stop next to their residence, there may not be a stop close to the job site, and although the bus drives past the office the driver is not allowed to stop.

Many county residents are generally satisfied with existing express bus service to NYC. Improved express bus service in Teaneck (Teaneck Armory on Teaneck Road) is an example of a location where higher frequency of bus service has made it an attractive alternative to rail. In order to compete effectively, bus service needs to be clean, relatively fast, convenient and frequent. Train service is easier to find because riders know where the stations are – many bus stops are shabby, barely identifiable and hard to access. Suburban “cross town” green routes are needed and bus loading should be sped up. Visible improvement along with better branding and marketing are also needed to better promote bus service. Some thought buses need to move faster going up to the GW Bridge from Leonia. Better bus route data from Coach USA/Red & Tan is needed. There are three “high-density clusters” of bus service in Bergen County: Hackensack, the towns on the Palisades and the Garfield/Wallington area. Can we have better integration between bus and rail service at these (and other) locations?

Limited access highways should not serve only autos and trucks; there should be some form of public transportation. Efforts to implement Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) should be focused along major population and employment corridors.

Extending para-transit services to northern Bergen might be helpful with the commuter issues in the tri-Borough area. Local corporate employers are said to be keen to participate and contribute. This could also be a candidate for the shuttle program if NJ Transit is able to adjust the reverse train schedules to better match business hours.

Jitney buses run to and from north Hudson County and on Bergenline Avenue and Route 4. It is not known if they are insured. Meadowlink could use jitneys to provide better feeder services to rail. The success of the NJ Transit pilot program providing three years of funding is hampered when towns are not willing to contribute.

“Last mile” and transit parking issues – the need for feeder bus/shuttle services from train stations to local employment centers – are a priority. The need also exists to provide feeders from surrounding towns without rail service. For example, the Westwood station is running out of parking; but adding parking will increase station traffic and congestion. In Oradell, there was a feeling that parking should be limited – more centralized and integrated with transit feeder service. Feeder services could be provided from the surrounding municipalities that are not currently served by commuter rail. Better mode integration and feeder service is generally needed at train stations. More trains may be justified.

Other substantive comments include:

- Increased trans-Hudson rail capacity is desperately needed to enhance transit access and provide a one-seat ride to Manhattan.
- The West Shore Line is choking with freight and there is little public support for opening it up to commuter rail.
- Access to transit in general, and particularly to Manhattan, by the physically challenged is considered very difficult (if not impossible) and needs to be improved.
- There may also be demand for more and better transit service to sports facilities.
- Fare integration among transit systems would provide for easier and more efficient use..

- The Garden State Parkway and Route 17 are potential transit-ways; preferential treatments for transit should be considered and coordinated with park & ride facilities.
- Greater participation in the state’s Safe Routes to School program is seen as a way to alleviate peak school traffic.
- Participants generally favored slower speeds on local roads.
- It was suggested that the county revisit and reconsider the county route numbering system. In addition, a countywide way-finding and signage program would be helpful.
- Transportation Improvement Districts may be a useful tool for municipalities that anticipate significant new development or redevelopment.
- Carpooling and vanpooling should be encouraged.
- The feasibility of a roadway safety audit should be explored.
- Corridor studies can be valuable – the Kinderkamack Road corridor study is an example.

The increased popularity of transit-oriented development and the benefits of mixed-use zoning are recognized. However many towns prefer a maximum of three- and four-story buildings, and resist taller ones. Many towns are also still ambivalent about transit-oriented development, which they equate with increased density and traffic and which triggers additional affordable housing requirements which are difficult to satisfy. The Municipal Land Use Law and County Planning Act would need to be amended to change this cycle. A first step would be a recommendation of a Master Plan. Models from other States and Counties could be referenced to effect such changes.

It was suggested that the county needs more mixed-use, center-based development. This is particularly relevant in Southern Bergen County where there are opportunities for redevelopment. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) was discussed for such locations as River Edge, Saddle Brook, Garden State Plaza, Paramus and the Mahwah Sheraton/Ford site. Participants pointed out that the former Ford site in Mahwah could have been a large TOD. A mixed-use community was proposed and turned down because the local officials feared it would contribute more kids into the school system. A TOD could have created a whole new village where the Sheraton Hotel is now and could have been served by rail, since there was a spur from the NJ Transit Main Line to the old Ford



Plant, although trains would have had to back into the spur. In addition, Ramsey Lumber on Route 17 was cited as a large property available in the future for redevelopment into a TOD. Essex Street Station in Hackensack has significant underdeveloped land. It has great potential to be a TOD as it could connect the “downhill” and “uphill” parts of the City. The parking lots at the station are always full, and parking would have to be addressed. The opportunities for TOD activity at Anderson Street in Hackensack are not obvious. It was also noted that there is not enough parking provided at the Garden State Parkway Park and Ride lot in Paramus.

The discussion touched on many such land-use issues. A question was posed: where can we build up density and have people willing to live in a 50-unit complex? In Manhattan, Hoboken, Jersey City, but also in Hackensack along Prospect Avenue and in downtown Englewood.

Poor coordination between traffic signals at signalized intersections is a big problem in Bergen County. With recent legislative changes, this relatively simple and inexpensive work can now be done locally as NJDOT no longer has jurisdiction over non-state highway signals. Better signal coordination can significantly improve roadway performance and alleviate congestion hot-spots.

It was suggested that the average road is off limits to everyone but motor vehicles; there is no room for bikes. Roads should be for everyone. Bike lanes are needed on County roads. All new roads should be designed for all users, according to a “complete streets” policy. County roads should be viewed as complete streets because they connect towns. However, County roads were built out of farm roads and tend to be too narrow.

Bikes are part of a sustainable strategy for our transportation problems, but municipalities would need technical assistance in promoting their use. Bike storage would need to be made available on the front of every bus, and bike parking at malls and other large trip generators would need to be increased. Both the general public and the Police would also need to be educated on the use of bikes on roads. Pedestrian and bicycle accidents are on the rise. County site plan and subdivision review standards could be amended to require bicycle parking as part of the review process. Local land development ordinances could also be amended in such a way, to promote increased pedestrian and bicycle use.

Municipalities require more guidance from the County and State regarding funding for transportation projects and how to apply for it. Lack of funding for transportation is causing a crisis. One strategy to fund transportation would be to collect additional

gas tax. NJ has one of the lowest gas taxes in the nation and there have been numerous attempts to raise it.

An aging population is cause for concern on the transportation front. Seniors cannot easily get around. Shuttle loops or circulators can help address this problem. The changing demographics will affect town finances; as populations age, low-density land use patterns will become even more financially unsustainable; in 30 to 50 years towns may feel differently about increasing density as a matter of finance.

### What we heard people suggest for the County's Vision

- Explore potential BRT service along Routes 4 and 17 and major county roads, serving activity centers throughout the County, including Hackensack, Ridgewood, Englewood, and the Meadowlands.
- Engage Meadowlink, Bergen's Transportation Management Association, along with NJ Transit, to explore the possibility of extending para-transit services to northern Bergen.

- Work with the Access Management Division of NJDOT to develop access management plans for Route 17 and Route 4 to improve mobility and safety along these two very busy corridors.
- Develop a countywide way-finding and signage program.
- Reconsider the county route numbering system and improve posted signage.
- Revise County development review standards regarding transit oriented development and bicycle and pedestrian amenities.
- Play a role in major commercial development. As a neutral regional agency, encourage the County to provide input into local plans for each downtown and/or major shopping area.
- Take the lead in coordinating traffic signals at signalized intersections.
- Consider creating a traffic signal operations center.
- Adopt a “complete streets” policy and make sure all new roads are designed for all users.
- Take the lead in helping municipalities complete their sidewalk networks.
- Provide guidance to municipalities regarding funding for transportation projects and how to apply for it – technical assistance, workshops, and the latest manuals, rules and regulations.

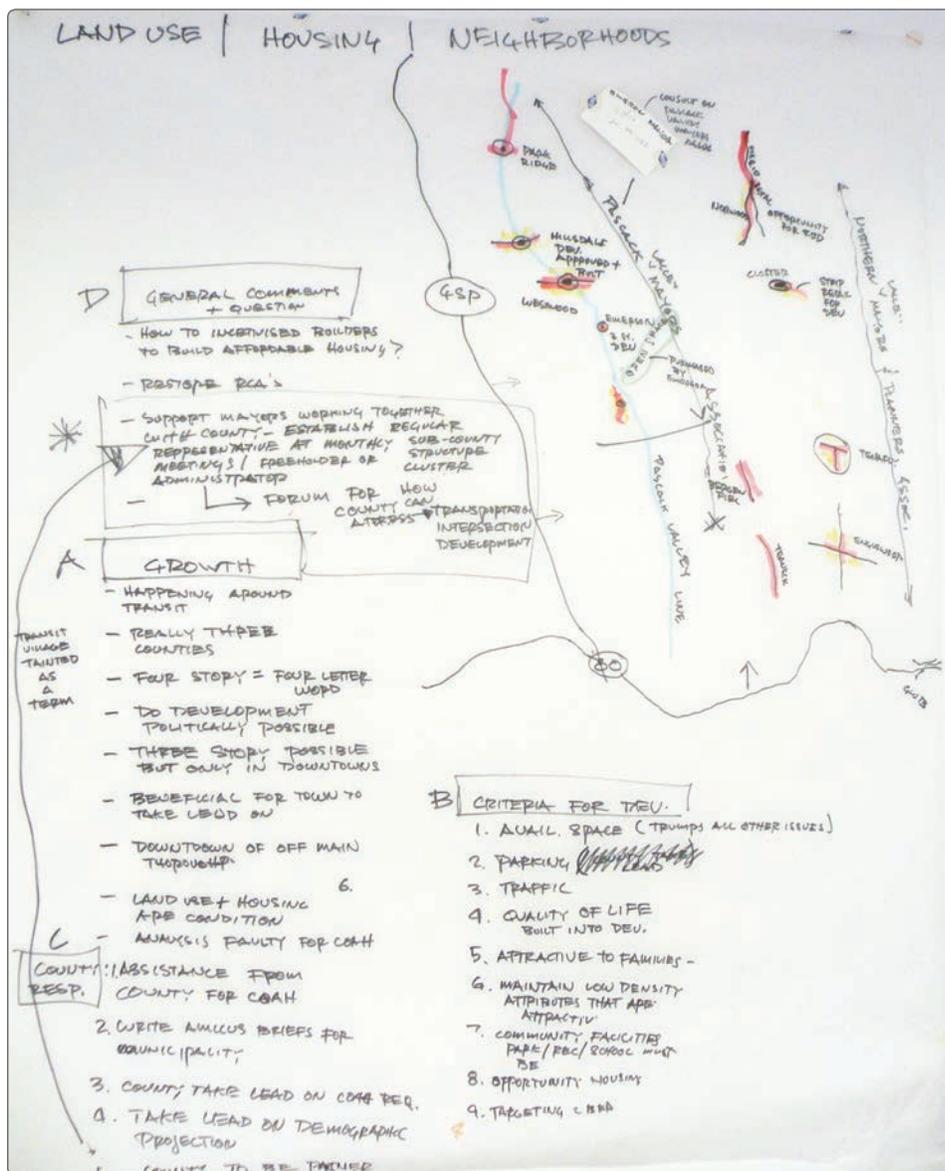
## Land Use, Housing, and Neighborhoods

Bergen County is a highly complex physical and natural environment, exhibiting a wide variety of conditions in terms of land use and transportation patterns. Land use patterns and transportation systems have significant consequences in terms of economic competitiveness, household budgets, community character, energy use, environmental impacts and quality of life.

All areas reflect past choices and values, which may no longer be valid. These areas also perform differently in terms of economic activity, environmental impacts, place-making and quality of life.

## Questions for Discussion

- Are there parts of the County that are too dense, or not dense enough? Where and why?



- What land uses are missing in neighborhoods and in downtowns?
- Why are they missing and what can be done about it?
- What strategies should be pursued by county/municipalities to strengthen these areas?
- What types of planning and design principles create the most successful mixed-use environments? Can new public spaces assist in this effort?
- Are there creative ways for towns to increase housing choices and diversify the existing housing stock that might bring additional benefits to the community as a whole, including:
  - Help satisfy the state’s affordable housing requirements.

- Create new workforce housing. What criteria should towns follow to identify potential sites and development opportunities?
- Increase the supply of age-appropriate housing.

## Ideas and Issues Discussed

Bergen County is really three different Counties in terms of development patterns. Any approach to land use and housing should recognize that.

Growth has been occurring around transit hubs and this trend is expected to continue and intensify. But the term Transit Village is “tainted” because of its association with state-mandated affordable housing requirements. It is better to find another name for this type of development?

In some parts of the county, four-story development is a “four letter word”; three-story development is only possible in downtowns. But it is accepted that density is not always a bad thing and is an effective strategy to better accommodate future growth. In keeping with smart growth, it should be located in appropriate areas where transit access is available and parking can be reduced or shared. Appropriate transit oriented locations for increased density include those with rail, light rail, bus rapid transit (BRT), jitney service and located along key highway corridors, such as Routes 4 and 17.

How can the county help encourage greater mixed use density around rail stations? It was suggested that NJ Transit re-establish commuter rail service on the Susquehanna line through Wyckoff, Franklin Lakes and Oakland; this line could tie into a proposed hub station in Hawthorne (Passaic County).

It was suggested that municipalities take an active lead with respect to future development, and that all new development projects should have quality of life features and amenities built in. Community facilities (parks, recreation, schools) must be provided and attractive to families, even though the county’s demographics (like the state and the nation) are shifting rapidly toward non-traditional households.

COAH is not popular in many parts of the county for a number of reasons. In particular, the vacant land analysis is seen as faulty and a number of towns have questioned the methodology that was used to arrive at housing and employment growth projections assigned to them by COAH. Are there viable models for affordable housing provisions that might be applied in communities that do not have (and do not want) multi-family housing?

While legislation was proposed in 2010 that was conditionally vetoed by Governor Christie, the courts invalidated the COAH “Growth Share” methodology and ordered COAH to come up with a new method of calculating the fair share of affordable housing. A simple alternative to COAH would be to require that a fixed 20% of housing units in all developments over a reasonable size be set aside as affordable. This can be implemented locally, but it may not satisfy State requirements. How can we incentivize builders to build more affordable housing?

Should the State restore Regional Contribution Agreements? Should impact fees be implemented to cover the cost of additional school children?

Monthly sub-county meetings between the County Executive, county directors, freeholders, mayors and administrators could help to build trust and discuss issues of common interest. In this context, the County would likely be seen as a willing

partner with municipalities over the full range of development and conservation issues. The meetings could become a forum for disseminating best practices and publicizing success stories.

How can Saddle River County Park be integrated into other county or municipal parks via utility rights of way, stream beds, dedicated easements and Route 17 right-of-way?

### What we heard people suggest for the County’s Vision

- Become a leader / partner in helping promote viable downtowns that fulfill local retail needs and do not compete with regional retail (Paramus, Hackensack and Rutherford).
- Work with municipalities and NJ Transit to get increased bus service through their downtowns / commercial centers.
- Take the lead with respect to new jitney and local circulator services.
- Produce more detailed demographic projections that will show the municipalities what to expect in terms of market shifts.
- Take the lead in helping municipalities figure out how to best meet affordable housing requirements and help them avoid builder’s remedy lawsuits.
- Provide technical and financial assistance in building and managing affordable units as well as in disseminating alternative ownership and financing models, such as limited equity ownership.
- Create more opportunities for mayors to work together and with the county.
- Evaluate projects of major impact, in particular if they affect several municipalities.
- Take the lead in effectuating improvements to county roads so as to allow for better east – west traffic flow.
- Work with the municipalities to improve the Route 17 corridor and encourage a better balance between the types of commercial uses – the mix of office and retail space – and allow for some green space as well.
- Work with the municipalities and NJDOT to evaluate the viability of service roads along the Route 17 corridor.
- Work with communities to analyze industry types and evaluate the existence / need for support businesses.

- Engage in the development of business retention / attraction strategies.

### Property Taxes and Shared Services

The property tax burden in New Jersey generally, and in Bergen County is one of the highest in the nation and a source of continuous frustration for homeowners. A struggling national and international economy and a crisis in public finance and government revenue require that we carefully re-think how we do things. Long established practices that have served us well in the past may not be viable or appropriate in the future. The state has encouraged consolidation and shared services as a way to reduce public sector costs and increase efficiency. There are a number of on-going initiatives in Bergen County which have shown some promise.

### Questions for Discussion

- What are the most successful examples of shared services agreements currently operating in Bergen, and do they provide transferable models that can be emulated in other jurisdictions and by other organizations (e.g. BCCLS Library system)?
- How should the ways we make decisions with economic consequences evolve to ensure the county remains highly competitive and retains a high quality of life?
- What opportunities do you see for shared services in education, law enforcement, fire, EMS, municipal administration, Public Works, sanitation, etc?
- Is there a greater role for the county in promoting shared services?
- Are there corridor-wide (roadways, transit, bikeways, stream corridors, etc.) issues that would benefit from a shared services focus (traffic signal coordination, connecting municipal/county parks, bikeway identification, way finding signage, etc.)?

### Ideas and Issues Discussed Include

There are a number of on-going initiatives in Bergen County which have shown some promise, including: shared sewer trucks, health department services, cooperative bidding road programs, senior van shuttles and lending through the Bergen County Improvement Authority.

Further coordination and sharing efforts could include facilitate leaf removal (support/replicate efforts of Pascack Valley Managers Association), common permitting for de-snagging streams, brine distribution, bicycle/pedestrian best practices (sidewalk inventory, etc.), provide technical support for challenging the “if it is not in the NJDOT manual it can’t be done” mentality, affordable housing clearinghouse, open space acquisition along waterways, and improved transportation options to transit stations. None of these are very controversial. Waste management / garbage collection can provide a good starting point for an inter-municipal shared services program. While the cost savings to the tax payer are not likely to be significant, it nevertheless starts to build a sense of trust and working relationships and towns can tackle more difficult (and potentially more rewarding) areas later on.

The County’s role might be viewed as helping to build trust and confidence at the local level, starting with the “smaller things” which may eventually lead to increased support for the much “bigger ticket” shared services items, such as school districts or emergency services. The County might take the lead in educating and facilitating; and provide economic incentives where appropriate to get things moving. Greater efficiency in the dissemination of information about shared services between the County and municipalities, between the municipalities themselves and between Departments within County Government is also needed. Better and more current technology (e.g websites, streaming media, and newsletters) was discussed as the probable solution to this.

The master plan could address what is perceived to be the “core fear” of sharing services and attempt to diffuse this feeling through better education as well as financial incentives. Examples of how much can be saved without losing service quality might be more broadly publicized. A “monetary value” for shared service initiatives for example, could be publicized to educate the public. Another core fear is the perceived loss of “power” – local elected officials feeling they have lost control over the delivery of services in their town. A possible solution to this is to have the County act as negotiator and facilitator. The Library “BCCLS System” – where the various member libraries take turns running the cooperative – provides a successful model. The New York Police Department’s precinct system provides another model where management responsibilities rotate at the highest level. Bergen Community College is a possible model for high schools – it has 3 campuses and provides excellent education.

Should the County openly encourage towns to merge? Perhaps not, but at a minimum, the County could provide data and technical assistance to municipalities. The Master Plan should not be constrained in its proposals just because this is a difficult issue. As part of the educational process, the County can also develop a case study of a hypothetical municipality which is run like a business, including a non-profit business plan and a mission statement. This would show local officials that if their towns were a “business,” they would not survive without making important adjustments. But while economies of scale can be found, sometimes wealthier towns are reluctant to “pair up” with less affluent towns.

Everyone agrees that schools and police represent the areas where big savings can potentially be achieved. Bergen County has 78 school districts. Consolidation might start at the very top, down to the level of school principals. In Pennsylvania, counties run the schools and there is a single superintendent for the entire county. They also have centralized procurement and bulk purchases. The same principle can be applied to police. Use a “precinct” approach, and only cut the highest level. Consolidation of police staff makes it more efficient. What about equipment? It is often said that Bergen County municipalities combined have more police and fire trucks than New York City. This equipment – which many towns cannot afford – is woefully underutilized. Perhaps the county should sponsor a program for sharing specialized heavy equipment? Consolidation at a higher level should also be considered, for example should the Sheriff’s office and the Bergen County police be merged? Westchester County (NY) did something similar when it created a Department of Public Safety. The County can demonstrate its commitment to shared services by looking carefully at the possibility of combining police and sheriff’s departments.

Perhaps special needs education could be addressed on a County-wide basis and managed by the County. Children are sometimes sent out-of-state, sometimes to the age of 23. The annual cost to educate special needs children often exceeds \$100,000 per child. Perhaps special needs could be treated similarly to the technical schools, with satellite locations; otherwise, it is too expensive. Schools might also consider charging service fees for clubs and other extra-curricular activities.

Some have suggested that County government could be eliminated. But approximately 80 – 85% of local property tax goes to municipal schools and services, and the

County accounts for only 3% of the average property tax bill. That is not where significant savings can be found.

Should the County be responsible for all tax assessments and property valuation? Maybe there should be a separate county tax (e.g. sales tax). Or should the county impose a new charge of \$1.00 per person at Giants Stadium to generate extra county revenues?

We should all carefully examine the rules we have in place for emergencies, overtime costs for crossing guards and other possible savings. School crossing guards earn \$10.00 or \$11.00 an hour, but collect unemployment during the summer. The County might help train crossing guards for all municipalities. Police officers are too expensive to work on construction. The County pays municipal police officers \$80.00 to \$120.00/hour to direct traffic in construction zones. NJDOT pays flaggers \$45.00/hour. Two police officers from each town are required by NJDOT to be present when test borings are conducted. Why not only pay NJDOT flagger rate? In the end, the tax payer pays for that. We should only use police for police work – non-law enforcement staff can handle other tasks, such as flagging. Municipal traffic control reforms are needed. The Ridgewood Police made over \$1M in fees from construction projects last year.

Governor Christie’s message is that unless towns partner with their neighbors, the State will continue to reduce funding. But State-imposed mandates for certain personnel, e.g., recycling coordinators for each town, also drive up costs unnecessarily. Towns have separate police contracts and fire contracts. Labor unions are part of the cost discrepancies and the State has not yet provided towns with the proper tools to take them on.

### What we heard people suggest for the County’s Vision

- Help build trust and confidence at the local level, starting with the “smaller things” which may eventually lead to increased support for the much “bigger ticket” shared services items, such as school districts or emergency services.
- Continue to take the lead in educating and facilitating; and provide economic incentives where appropriate to get things moving.
- Openly encourage towns to consolidate?
- Sponsor a program for sharing specialized heavy equipment?
- Help train crossing guards for all municipalities.

- Impose a new charge of \$1.00 per person at Giants Stadium to generate extra county revenues?

## Water, Sewer, Utilities, Energy Infrastructure

Much of Bergen County has public sewers, which is a pre-requisite for higher density development. Some of these systems are old and need to be upgraded. While there appears to be ample water and energy available to meet current (and perhaps future) needs, everything suggests that conservation measures, greater efficiency and smarter systems will become increasingly important in the future.

## Questions for Discussion

- Are there areas that would benefit from new utility infrastructure? From better maintenance / rebuilding of existing utility infrastructure? How should these upgrades be funded and who should take the lead?
- Are there opportunities for regional approaches to storm water management?
- What types of programs can the County and its municipalities employ to encourage the reduction of unnecessary impervious surfaces on both public and private property? (e.g. shared parking lots? Reduced parking standards? Narrower streets? Green roofs? Regulatory limits on impervious coverage? Financial incentives to reduce storm water run-off?)
- What / where can renewable energy projects be promoted? What about energy conservation?
- What can the county and municipalities do to better promote energy-efficient building options (technology and building types, solar orientation, wind, hydro)?

## Ideas and Issues Discussed

Combined (sanitary and storm water) sewer systems are a big concern for Hackensack, Little Ferry, Teaneck and other Bergen county communities. Fixing the Hackensack system alone has been estimated to cost \$490 million. No one has the resources to meet the USEPA mandate. All development could be shut down if USEPA decides to enforce its rules. Hackensack has been approached with the possibility of privatizing its sewer system and is currently conducting an evaluation. Older cities in the southern part of the county are particularly at risk because they are largely

built out, with little opportunity to address storm water issues through new development or larger, corporate development.

There is a need for regional approaches to stormwater management. USEPA is considering imposing a Total Maximum Daily Discharge Load (TMDL) into the Hudson River. Better storm water management in the northern part of the county will help with south county flooding. NJDEP watershed planning, Rutgers and the Northeast Watershed Alliance have identified many of the storm water issues and opportunities in the county. Homeowners also need to be better educated with respect to what they can do to help address storm water issues.

Green infrastructure is key – street trees and pervious surfaces intercept rainwater and increase real estate values. But is permeable pavement practical in this climate? Will the freeze thaw cycle rapidly break down the permeable pavement structure, especially since pavement surfaces are generally plowed or snow exposing the pavement surface to a freeze thaw cycle every sunny day? The alternative is for stormwater to be directed to a swale and then percolate into the ground. Draining an impervious pavement surface to a buried recharge basin might accomplish the same ground water recharge objective.

Green Roofs also reduce stormwater run off. Cisterns can be used to capture excess stormwater and later used to irrigate the green roof and other vegetation. Philadelphia is embarking on an effort to map 10,000 green roofs in the city.

Stormwater management regulations need to encourage existing development to retrofit their drainage systems to retain more stormwater and return it to the ground even in highly urbanized areas. Some flexibility is needed since some areas of Bergen County can not rapidly absorb stormwater. Current NJDEP regulations for redevelopment sites only require retention / detention for the additional impervious surfaces created. Some towns require additional actions to reduce the predevelopment stormwater run-off as well. The responsibility for maintaining new stormwater management systems – while usually spelled out in a developer's agreement – can be expected in the future to impose some enforcement costs on municipalities.

Potable drinking water, while only available thru the tap for roughly 100 years, is taken for granted as a readily afforded resource. United Water Services provides, either directly or indirectly through municipal Water Departments, drinking water to roughly 85% of Bergen County.

An agreement between New York and New Jersey requires New York to pass 8 million gallons of water a day down the Ramapo River into New Jersey. Rockland

County returns roughly 1.5 million gallons of tertiary treated sanitary sewer water into the Ramapo River north of the state line. Monroe Township's wastewater treatment plants contribute roughly 5 million gallons a day to tributaries to the Ramapo River. The Mahwah River feeds wells serving Orangeburg and Tuxedo Reservoirs. At one time the Ramapo River had much more water flowing to it, but it has been diminished by wells drawing ground water in New York State. There are wells along Route 202 in New York that draw down the water table along the Mahwah River.

United Water has water lines to some municipal water departments to supplement their water supplies in the case of drought or other cause. Currently United Water does not have the resources to increase its water supplies. United Water is exploring the possibility of purifying Hudson River water for domestic use in Rockland County. But there is a need to more aggressively promote water conservation. There are concerns that we could run out of water for domestic consumption.

Domestic water consumption in Bergen County has continued to grow despite its stable population. Per capita water consumption increased dramatically in the 1990's with lifestyle changes. The use of domestic water for lawn watering is an area where conservation measures could be effective. We should discourage the use of domestic water for lawn irrigation and encourage the use of non-domestic water (stored rain water or possibly treated water from septic systems) for such use. Since ground water is used in many municipalities for domestic purposes, the use of well water to irrigate lawns is counterproductive and should be discouraged. Workshops should be held for lawn care professionals to encourage them to install and maintain smarter lawn irrigation control systems to conserve water. Smarter systems do not irrigate during rain events and monitor ground moisture to determine when there is a need to irrigate the lawns. Towns might consider requiring annual inspections and certifications by trained professionals that the irrigation systems are functioning to conserve water and are not leaking.

Identifying and repairing broken and leaky pipes should be part of water conservation efforts. United Water loses about 20% of its flow to leaks, but replacement and repairs are very expensive. Sewer and water pipes have a useful life ranging from 40 to 100 years. Some of our pipes have exceeded their anticipated useful life and their replacement will be a major infrastructure expense.

Legislators have been reluctant to impose conservation measures on homeowners outside of drought conditions. It may be politically difficult for legislators to impose restrictions



on water consumption. State or County government can help promote conservation by providing model ordinances for municipal consideration. A state mandate may be needed.

Septic systems that recharge to ground water are preferable to extending sanitary sewers systems to lower density areas. Improved septic systems also diminish the need for sanitary water treatment plants. Water flushed into the sanitary sewer systems is for the most part lost to the ground water table and placed in systems which expedite its flow to the ocean. In addition to the water diversion, bio-solids are also being removed from the land. These bio-solids should be composted and returned to the soil. And the current wastewater treatment technologies may not always be effective at removing from the water certain drugs, pesticides and other elements that are flushed into the sanitary sewers.

The Bronx Zoo has toilets which only use 3 ounces of water per flush, versus the 1.5 gallons typical of commonly used toilets. Nordstrom uses waterless toilets.

Over fertilization of lawns is a big source of non-point pollution. Should artificial turf be used in playing fields? Natural fields are believed to work just as well. The public's expectations about the quality of playing fields are often overblown. There are increased demands for bigger and better playing fields, and existing fields are over used. Lighting playing fields for use at night further exacerbates their over use. Grass playing field absorb solar energy while artificial turfs radiate heat back up to the players on the field and into the atmosphere.

All Hackensack (United) Water Company lands are now under a water conservatory. Additional restrictions on development on or near critical watershed lands may be necessary.

The cost of improving water quality can be a burden for water providers. When the standard for arsenic in drinking water was changed from 10 parts per million (PPM) to 5 ppm, it cost Ramsey \$2 million (un-reimbursed) to install the necessary facilities to reduce the arsenic content in its water from 7 ppm to the required 5 ppm.

#### What we heard people suggest for the County's Vision

- Undertake a comprehensive environmental resource inventory, calculate the carrying capacity of the County as a whole and prepare a Countywide build-out analysis based on existing zoning. This exercise would identify areas of discrepancy between zoning and capacity. Target population and housing densities should maintain the variety of Bergen County and reject a "one size fits all" solution.
- Better address non-point sources in the stormwater management system.
- Work with SWAN, Rutgers and others and sponsor educational efforts on stormwater management in selected neighborhoods, bringing together a variety of partners. While these efforts may showcase small solutions they will help identify the need to raise and allocate the resources required to address larger issues.
- Lead by example by retrofitting its own property and assets including buildings, roads, bridges and parks. These could be educational, demonstration projects. It should look to other counties that have taken on this role.

- Expand the Bergen County CAP program, which promotes energy efficient fixtures, to include water efficient fixtures. This effort could be focused in redeveloping older neighborhoods.
- Work with older malls and other large commercial properties to plant street trees and undertake other greening efforts that increase value and help reduce storm water issues.
- Promote the use of waterless (or lower water consumption) toilets.
- Take the lead in encouraging homeowners and other property owners to allow lawns to return to a natural state.
- Lead by example in terms of energy conservation and renewables. It should publicize existing solar panels on municipal or educational buildings. The County can set itself targets for renewable sources – solar and wind – for the energy it consumes. It can look aggressively for opportunities to place solar panels on its own facilities, where appropriate and possibly wind turbines, if justified. It can also engage local industry, such as Sharp, a major producer of solar panels.

#### Arts, Culture, and Historic Resources

Arts and cultural activities play important roles in defining and strengthening a community's fabric. As anchors in downtowns, arts and cultural institutions can jumpstart downtown revitalization, support ancillary businesses and ensure long-term stability. Historic resources are also fundamental to a community's identity and knowledge of its past. All have documented significant positive economic spin-offs. However, the importance of this sector is not always appreciated by local officials.

#### Questions for Discussion

- What are the big issues with respect to Arts, Culture, and Historic Resources in the county? Are they well promoted and adequately supported? What ingredients are necessary for arts and cultural institutions to survive and thrive?
- How can we create greater synergies between the arts, cultural and historic resources? How can we create greater synergies between these institutions and the places where they are located?
  - What are the factors or ingredients that can increase success (e.g. location in a vibrant downtown; access to

public transit; high pedestrian access; proximity to restaurants, cafes, hotels, schools; proximity to vibrant public spaces)?

- Do these synergies need to co-exist to make them successful?
- How can we tap into other synergies between these institutions and other complementary institutions such as schools, universities, local employers and local foundations?
- What types of land use, zoning and transportation policies encourage/discourage these activities?

## Ideas and Issues Discussed

The Manhattan draw for arts, culture and entertainment is hard to compete with, but there is a strong local market in Bergen which needs to be nourished.

Arts, culture and entertainment activities generate significant income and there are empirical studies to prove it.

Arts and culture events would benefit from better promotional efforts.

Need to diversify sources of funding and financing for arts and culture and explore innovative funding techniques, such as Certificates of Participation and Municipal Bond Financing. More corporate support, beyond PSEG and United Water, is needed.

Need to better engage the hospitality industry and hotel operators to provide greater support for arts and culture institutions and events. Would a hotel tax be an appropriate mechanism to raise public funding to support the arts and culture?

Need better planning to more effectively integrate arts, culture and historic resources with downtown revitalization and redevelopment. There are opportunities in downtowns and Main Street environments to create new performing arts facilities associated with new public spaces by more efficiently using land. Mixed use projects can perform better financially and create opportunities to expand the arts which otherwise will be missed.

There are also opportunities to create synergies between natural areas and the arts. Arts and cultural facilities can benefit tremendously from being located in high visibility reclaimed locations, such as newly created public spaces, waterfront locations or in new parks. The arts can also be very effective and powerful in attracting people to places where they might not otherwise think of going. Are there opportunities to do something similar or comparable along the

Hackensack River? This could benefit both river restoration and arts and culture activities. Arts in the Park?

Continued support of agri-tourism and local farmers' markets provides important ways to allow our remaining farms to be economically viable and to remain a part of our historical agrarian landscape.

It is often hard to engage elected officials from neighboring towns to work collaboratively on projects of common interest. Should we seek to convene the mayors of Hackensack River towns to discuss potential interventions with – an arts and culture incidence – along the river? Might the Rutgers Blue Raritan initiative provide a model for Bergen County institutions of higher education to collaborate on an initiative involving the Hackensack River that might also create opportunities for arts, culture and historic preservation projects? Might it be possible to engage Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck, for example?

There are also potentially very exciting but mostly untapped synergies between the visual arts programs in institutions of higher education, public spaces in need of animation and arts and cultural special events. Some towns have negotiated to host long term, large public art exhibits from foundries that do not have the capacity to store large sculptures. The area around the New Jersey Transit train station in Hamilton, Mercer county is a prime example, showcasing the work of the Johnson atelier. Kingston, NY also has a program that exhibits public art and sculpture in streets and public buildings. Where in Bergen County might this model apply?

## What we heard people suggest for the County's Vision

- Engage the Arts Build Communities program at Rutgers Bloustein School for technical assistance.
- Fund an analysis quantifying how much arts and culture pump into the local economy.
- Create a user-friendly clearinghouse (web portal) for local groups promoting events and for the general public seeking activities.
- Develop a promotional booklet – similar to the open space booklet developed with Hackensack Riverkeeper – listing countywide arts groups and facilities.
- Take the lead in establishing “Preserve America” districts.
- Organize joint promotional and marketing efforts with Passaic County.

- Create a County Office of Tourism.
- Create a County-sponsored 501(c)3 non-profit subsidiary to facilitate fund-raising to support arts and cultural activities.
- Develop and implement a new and improved county-wide way-finding scheme.
- Provide greater transparency in the way funds for arts and culture are allocated.
- Act as broker or facilitator to match arts and culture groups looking for new space with developers/landlords looking to recruit them.
- Identify and promote case studies of successful, multi-purpose projects that combine office and commercial space with the performing arts.
- Create the Bergen equivalent of the Liberty Science Center.
- Publicize examples of towns that showcase the arts in the public realm and identify towns or locations that might be interested in pursuing this.
- Convene the mayors of Hackensack River towns to discuss potential interventions with – an arts and culture incidence – along the river.
- Promote arts and culture events along the riverfront.
- Encourage farmers markets and locally grown markets



## Summary of Vision Bergen Symposium

Following our well-attended round of regional visioning sessions, the opportunity presented itself to offer a summary session of sorts – a symposium that would provide a forum to provide input, ideas, and issues for discussion on a whole spectrum of quality of life issues confronting Bergen County and the region as a whole.

Experts from a wide variety of fields were invited to participate in **Vision Bergen: Blueprint for Our Future**, and the discussion was timely, especially given the current economic climate and its inherent challenges. In discussing the challenges and opportunities we face, the symposium kept an eye toward greater insight and best strategies to preserve our quality of life for years to come. This premiere event was held at the Sheraton Mahwah on May 18, 2010.

A synopsis of the conference and salient points of discussion, organized by topic and panel discussion, is presented below.

### Networking Transportation to Make it Work

*Creating a Premium Transportation Network Using Our Existing Roads, Rail, and Rapid Transit.*

How can we better tap into our resources in place to create an effective transit network that is geared not only toward the New York City commute, but also serves users who travel throughout Bergen County?

#### Panelists

Moderator: **Darius Sollohub, AIA, NJIT**

**Dan Baer, AICP, Parsons Brinkerhoff**

**Andre Luboff, P.E., HNTB Corporation**

**Paul May, P. Eng., York Region Rapid Transit Corporation, Ontario**

**James Hamre, Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority**

**Anton Nelessen, M.A. Arch. UD, PP, CNU, A. Nelessen Associates Inc.**

#### Presentation Summary

Bergen County is served by a complex public transportation network that is largely oriented towards New York City but does

not adequately serve intra-county trips. Furthermore, the public transportation systems in the County are viewed as competitive rather than coordinated.

The County's north/south spine, New Jersey Route 17 (Route 17), carries over 90,000 vehicles per day and is plagued by congestion that is exacerbated by a general lack of public transportation options. Further, with very few updates to the design of the road over its 80+ year lifetime, the ever-worsening congestion is spilling over to adjacent roadways that were never intended to handle high volume traffic. To try and address the congestion and related safety concerns, several alternatives for improvement are being examined in the "Route 17 Bottleneck Project" study.

To further alleviate congestion and provide greater public transit along the entire Corridor, a study is currently underway to investigate the viability of implementing Bus Rapid Transit Service (BRT) along and parallel to Route 17. BRT, as described by Darius Sollohub, is an innovative bus service that provides the best features of light rail service – including large windows, a curving frame, an articulated look, and low floors – while providing the flexibility of bus service. The modern vehicle design signifies an updated high quality transportation system to its riders and provides the capacity to add-on articulated segments – similar to light rail – to accommodate increased demand. On the road, BRT vehicles receive signal priority and dedicated lanes at intersections

eliminating 11% of the delay associated with stop and go traffic while providing constant speed and frequent, predictable schedules for riders. In terms of regional service area, the implementation of BRT service is forward-looking, aiming to accommodate the region's booming population while quickly meeting the needs of the existing population.

Public Transportation improvements – such as those being carried out in Ontario, Canada and Washington DC – provide examples of ongoing BRT projects that focus on relieving congestion on regional highways comparable to Route 17. In Ontario, the first phase of construction has provided the essentials of BRT service with intelligent transportation systems such as signal priority, electronic message signs, added infrastructure to bypass congested intersections via tolls, and the ability to pay fares before boarding. Subsequent phases of the service will provide increased pedestrian facilities, dedicated right of ways, and streetscape improvements. Since the start of implementation, the region has seen a significant increase in transit ridership and acceptance, which has led to improved air quality, pedestrian friendly streets, and a vibrant mix of commercial, residential and employment land uses. Similarly, in Washington DC, the focus has been on select priority corridors, enhancing stations and the level of service while creating express routes that are coordinated with targeted land use objectives.

Intensity of land uses dictates the viability of public transportation. As illustrated by Anton Nelessen's planning transect – a planning tool that helps people visualize how land uses differ across development types – areas with demand for public transit ridership are distinguished by the 5 minute (1,500 feet) and 6-12 minute walk (3,000 feet), and the two and a half mile bike ride from station stops. As such, the highest density levels should be found within close proximity to station stops. As distances from station stops progress through the urban center and urban residential areas, density levels decrease significantly as does the demand for public transportation access. In further sections, land uses become primarily rural and auto-centric. In the high density areas, creating shared use of roadways provides for increased pedestrian mobility and access to goods and services within walking distance. Access to public transit, such as BRT, provides opportunities for mobility across greater distances such as between residences and areas of employment.

A key component to developing and implementing an effective BRT system is public participation to gather the input of potential riders and those who would benefit and be impacted by the system. It must be recognized that we cannot solve tomorrow's

problems with yesterday's solutions. Sprawl, the type of development that has largely made public transit unviable, is clearly unsustainable; but transportation solutions can be a catalyst for exciting new development schemes that create a sense of place.

### Ideas and Issues Discussed by Panelists and Audience

- There are 251 train stations and over 38,000 bus stops in New Jersey. Bus is a major form of transportation in the state. BRT needs to be “bus rebranded”
- The Newark BRT effort has been growing from the bottom up and serves as a good example for Bergen County.
- What happens to land uses within the 5 to 10 minute walking distance?
- Route 17 in Bergen County
  - Identifying trunk lines
  - Route 17 Bottleneck – how do you add another lane to be used for BRT or should we take away an existing one
- York region in Canada has a very successful BRT branded as Viva which includes 9 municipalities and 1 million people (roughly the population of Bergen County).
  - The lesson learned is to establish a transportation vision early on, in order to be able to successfully sell it to people and engage project champions
- Bus stops and gateways to the system need to be dignified
- The system needs courteous drivers
- The area within a 5 minute walk around a train station should have the highest density; followed by an area within a 15 to 20 minute walk; finally the area within a two and a half miles.
  - A Rutgers University Studio estimated that there are 96 billion square feet of possible new construction around the 251 existing train stations in NJ.
- The Federal Government is finally focusing on funding projects that promote sustainability and public health.
  - Each brick saved saves three gallons of gas
- The new generation (Millennials) has shown a propensity toward living in areas offering increased mobility options, and away from the isolation from the community that is characteristic of the suburbs.

- The City of Stockholm in Sweden has adopted a 9-foot standard for street travel lanes. This reduced standard makes room for bicycles by taking away some space normally dedicated to the vehicular right-of-way.

- There are 43,000 highway fatalities in the US every year.
- We should restripe our roads and highways and turn them into “skinny streets”.
- Similar efforts are underway in New York City to “give the streets back to the pedestrian.”
- In Ridgefield Park one participant mentioned that County roads are truck routes and are less than fifty feet wide.
- Bicycling in Portland, Oregon is a huge business. It has pumped \$800 million into the local economy. This success story could be replicated in Bergen County through the implementation of a county-wide series of bike routes and localized networks of bike lanes that provide access to public transportation and key locations of employment and residence.
- Ridgefield Park has 44 developable acres on the proposed Light Rail Transit line, along with existing bus service, and is looking to find a developer to spur revitalization.
  - How do they get the word out?
    - Through trade organizations, word of mouth and a Request for Proposals and to make sure the redevelopment plan is solid and feasible in terms of the market.
  - Municipalities should work closely with the County on major development and redevelopment to ensure coordination between County-wide efforts and to take advantage of any assistance programs that may be available.

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## Taming the 800 Pound Gorilla

### Reining in Local Budgets

Property taxes are out of control in New Jersey, and hit Bergen County communities especially hard. How can we realize real cost savings for taxpayers and greater efficiencies for our communities?

### Panelists

Moderator: **Dave Roberts, AICP/PP, LLA, RLA, LEED-AP, Maser Consulting**

**Douglas Blonsky, Central Park Conservancy**



**Tim Evans**, *New Jersey Future*

**Gina Genovese**, *Courage to Connect New Jersey*

**Mark Pfeiffer**, *Division of Local Government, NJ Department of Community Affairs*

**Hiram Birch**, *Department of Legislative Services, Office of Policy Analysis, State of Maryland*

### Presentation Summary

The debate surrounding property taxes in New Jersey often results in more questions than answers. New Jersey residents' competing desire to have both comprehensive public services and lower taxes often puts an extensive strain on municipalities to do more with less. Identifying and implementing the greatest opportunities for cost savings – including municipal consolidation, shared services, and school district consolidation – requires out-of-the-box thinking as well as greater levels of transparency in budgeting processes at all levels of government.

In Bergen County, according to the 2005 U.S. Census estimate there are 903,000 residents in seventy municipalities and seventy-five school districts. Each school district requires a budget for administrative operations. In other similar-sized counties, such as Montgomery County, Pennsylvania and Montgomery County, Maryland, there are far fewer school districts. Montgomery, PA has 62 municipalities and 23 school districts while Montgomery, MD has only 19 municipalities and one school district. However, Maryland's system of local government is much different from that of New Jersey. In Maryland, counties provide most basic local services such as police, fire, water, and parks and recreation,

creating economies of scale that cannot be realized with the fragmented home rule style of government in New Jersey.

To create the necessary economies of scale, municipalities must begin to implement municipal consolidation and shared services programs. The consolidation of five to ten municipalities can be used as an optimal model to realize such economies. Woodbridge, New Jersey is an excellent working example of this model. The Township contains approximately 97,000 people in nine distinct communities, all of which function under one unit of local government yet maintain their individual identities.

Public Private Partnerships are another way that government can trim costs while providing high quality services. Central Park in New York City has long been subject to periods of decline. In 1998 the City entered a public private partnership with the Central Park Conservancy for continued maintenance, public programming, and capital restoration. Since this agreement the Conservancy, through a public private partnership, has received only a fraction of its annual revenue from City government with the remaining levels coming from fundraising efforts. City budgets support the Conservancy's fundraising during difficult times; and similarly, the Conservancy makes up for losses in government funding through fundraising during City budget shortfalls. The Conservancy has also developed a core of volunteers to offset the need for full time staffing thus mitigating costs while ensuring a high level of maintenance and giving City residents a stake in the Park's future. Through the public private partnership Central Park has once again become the most valuable piece of real estate in New York City while fundraising and volunteer coordination has limited the costs to tax payers.

### Ideas and Issues Discussed by Panelists and Audience

- One major road block to consolidation is that people are in favor of home rule and it would be difficult to modify it.
  - There is a better chance of consolidating schools with an alternative school funding formula.
  - Wealthy schools are affected disproportionately
  - Many of the challenges to reducing or stabilizing property taxes such as school consolidation and coordinated land use are exacerbated by jurisdictional fragmentation.
- Good business decisions are not always good political decisions.
  - Per pupil costs are higher in regional school districts than in local districts
  - There is no explanation for this except employee costs.
- Property taxes were reasonable until employees unionized and salaries escalated.
  - Superintendent and police chief salaries are out of line with their responsibilities.
  - There has been a 14% decrease in public jobs in Bergen County in the last four years; the County government is doing its part to keep costs down.
- Jobs lost through consolidation and the impact on the economy need to be considered.
  - There is currently a study being conducted by Courage to Connect New Jersey to investigate this very issue.
- People fear consolidation; the pension system in New Jersey was consolidated and is now in trouble because of special interests.
  - Participants argued that there is a fear that larger government will overwhelm local character.
    - Large bureaucracies are not compatible with quaint communities. There is greater accountability with a local mayor and council, not a county. But can we afford it?
    - Consolidation in many cases may not deliver the level of cost savings that some believe.
  - In Maryland representation is regionalized to ensure local concerns are heard.



abilities are able to move safely along and across. They are characterized by a variety of features, including sidewalks, bike lanes, special bus lanes, transit stops, frequent crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, and curb extensions; all of which may vary depending on the street's setting in urban, suburban or rural areas. In December of 2009 the New Jersey Department of Transportation adopted a complete streets policy to "create and implement complete streets through the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of new and retrofit existing transportation facilities within existing rights of way that are federally or state funded."

Recent national polls found that 52% of Americans want to bike more than they do now and 55% of Americans would prefer to drive less and walk more. This apparent demand for alternative modes of transportation presents a welcome opportunity for the implementation of complete streets, which could serve as important tools to reduce car use. Jersey City and Montclair, New Jersey are great examples of where complete streets programs have been implemented. Jersey City has transformed from a place characterized by industrial uses to a high density metropolis without creating a single lane of highway. In fact, 40% of Jersey City residents do not drive, leading to greater demand for and acceptance of bicycling and walking facilities.

In Montclair – the first New Jersey municipality to adopt a complete streets policy – change was difficult, but the Township had many of the ideal elements to implement complete streets. Such elements included six commuter rail stations, four local bus routes, two private commuter bus routes (NJ Transit), five business districts, and 97.7 miles of road (14.4 of which are county). Combined with the consensus building efforts of local advocacy groups – who provided vital public education through seminars and events like the "walking school bus" and walk or bike to school days – the complete street policy was successfully implemented.

Complete streets are more than just bricks and mortar and they will change from one place to another. They should be place-appropriate and place-specific, taking into account present and future land uses and should contain amenities that are specific to the type of use anticipated and desired. If implemented properly, complete streets can provide desirable change in a municipality's traffic and land use, offering a diverse set of transportation options, while instilling a sense of place and community.

- The County needs to look at services provided by higher levels of government versus efficiency in terms of municipal consolidation
  - Municipal consolidation has occurred, but obstacles included in the impacts are never equitable between the merged towns.
- In Westwood the municipality has driven down the cost of road construction by combining projects with eight towns. The result was savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars in engineering fees and ten million dollars in construction costs.
  - Similar results have been seen with regional stream cleaning between ten towns and saved hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- The Woodbridge – Carteret shared sanitation services has proven extremely beneficial to both towns
- Numerous towns in Bergen County already share schools and a variety of other services
- A participant stated that some state taxes (utility, railroad, ect) used to be collected at the local level and stay local. Now the state does not return these sources of revenue to the local level.
- Another participant mentioned that he was tired of towns getting hit financially. If you take away the character of small communities, that's not sustainable. Bigger is not always better. Small towns can partner with others to achieve good things without formally merging.
  - Voluntary inter-local service agreements are a way to achieve efficiencies without getting stuck on a discussion about municipal size.
- Can we deliver new sources of revenue for towns? Should we pursue privatization of certain services?

- The Central Park Conservancy has had great success in revitalizing the park as a public private partnership while continually reducing its reliance on public money for maintenance and construction projects.
  - The Conservancy consists of only 250 employees and has over 100,000 volunteers that help maintain the park in zones.

## Complete the Street! Roads Aren't Just for Cars Anymore

### *Squeezing More Out of Our Landscape by Thinking Multimodal and Multi-Use*

Vibrant Communities are intrinsically tied with a mix of land uses, travel modes, and street life. What opportunities and challenges arise when we consider all modes of travel and a mix of uses in our planning?

#### Panelists

Moderator: **Sharon Z. Roerty, AICP/PP,** National Center for Walking & Bicycling-

**Robert Cotter, AICP/PP,** City of Jersey City

**Kimberli Craft, P.E.,** Township of Montclair

**Michael Dannemiller, P.E.,** The RBA Group

**Louis L. D'Arminio, Esq,** Price, Messe, Shulman, & D'Arminio

#### Presentation Summary

"Complete streets" are those that are designed and operated to accommodate all users and all trips safely and efficiently. On a complete street, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and

## Issues and Ideas Discussed by Panelists and Audience

- Walkable communities are very expensive and can be cost prohibitive for lower income families, why?
  - There is a limited supply of dwelling units within walkable communities which pushes prices higher as demand increases. Increased supply and a contentious effort to include affordable housing can provide a diverse stock of housing options within walkable communities.
- The new generation (Millennials) desires increased mobility options that are not isolated from the community as they are the suburbs
- The City of Stockholm in Sweden has adopted a 9-foot standard for street travel lanes. This reduced standard makes room for bicycles by taking away some space normally dedicated to the vehicular right-of-way.
  - There are 43,000 highway fatalities in the US every year. We should restripe our roads and highways and turn them into “skinny streets”.
  - Similar efforts are underway in New York City to “give the streets back to the pedestrian.”
  - In Ridgefield Park one participant mentioned that County roads are truck routes and are less than fifty feet wide.
- Bicycling in Portland, Oregon is a huge business. It has pumped \$800 million into the local economy. This success story could be replicated in Bergen County through the implementation of a county-wide series of bike routes and localized networks of bike lanes that provide access to public transportation and key locations of employment and residence.
- To eliminate surprises the governing body and the County should be engaged early on in the Complete Streets process to flesh out any issues and ensure cooperation and coordination

## Safeguarding Our Health & Heritage

### *How Open Space, Cultural and Historic Resources Provide Bergen with an Enriched Quality of Life.*

Our residents and visitors are treated to a wealth of such resources. How can we maintain, expand upon, and continue to preserve these value-added assets in Bergen County’s overall portfolio?

### Panelists

Moderator: **Michael Catania**,  
*Conservation Resources Inc.*

**Dorothy Guzzo**, *New Jersey Historic Trust*

**Terrence Nolan**, *Trust for Public Land*

**Teresa Penbrooke**, *CPRP*,  
*Green Play LLC, Colorado*

**David Rodriguez**, *Bergen Performing Arts Center*

### Summary of Presentations

Open space and the arts both contribute to Bergen County’s economy. Parks have been found to increase property values by 10 to 15%, while every dollar spent on the arts generates four dollars in indirect revenue for the local economy. Further, protecting lands, preserving historic landmarks and improving existing and creating new parks generate intangible values such as keeping communities vibrant, improved health and increased social interaction. Clearly, protecting the landscape and historic development that has shaped our culture is of the utmost importance but requires adequate funding, good stewardship, and close monitoring.

While there is widespread demand for programs to support open space and cultural landmarks, there are only 160 Historic Preservation Commissions in all of New Jersey’s 566 municipalities. Many of these commissions have limited staff, little to no budgets and a membership untrained in Historic Preservation. In terms of open space programs, 232 New Jersey municipalities have open space trust funds which should not be viewed as expenses, but rather as investments for creating a quality tourism experience in an urban or suburban setting. Partnerships with local businesses and grants for technical assistance can further assist the County in historic preservation efforts and drive open space preservation and park development efforts.

Comprehensive Plans, Business Plans, Master Plans, and Strategic Plans create a framework for implementation and decision making that allows preservation efforts to thrive and new cultural institutions to meet the needs of an ever-changing society. The Master Planning process provides an avenue for prioritizing preservation needs that ensure funding is directed to the most critical sites, while special districts for the arts can have a dramatic effect on retail sales and downtown revitalization creating a comprehensive tourism experience that brings dollars into struggling downtowns and strengthens the long heritage of Bergen County.

## Ideas and Issues Discussed by Panelists and the Audience

- There is a need for volunteers who care to give time to Historic Preservation Commissions and provide funding for technical assistance.
- Finding new uses for historic buildings are often the best way to preserve them
- The County should leverage public and private funding for parks
  - Parks are viewed as number one on the chopping block for funding during tough economic times. We need to prioritize funding as an essential service.
  - Businesses can be supportive of preservation efforts
  - The reallocation of the Bergen County Hotel Tax to Heritage and Tourism will yield the greatest return for the County.
    - For every one dollar spent on the arts four are generated for the local economy
- There is still much land left to preserve in Bergen County, including the Ramapo Mountains and areas surrounding waterways and reservoirs (such as Lake Tappan).
- Parks promote better health
  - 10% increase in greenspace equals five year increase in lifespan
  - Parks promote physical activity which can help decrease the alarming obesity rate in the United States
  - Parks bring people together and encourage social interactions
- Parks help mitigate air pollution and serve as a natural filter for water

- A participant mentioned that linking Bergen County arts, historic, and open space sites is a good idea.
  - Look at Middlesex County and New Brunswick
  - Public transportation and signage is essential. It is currently easier to get to New York City than it is to get to the Bergen Performing Arts Center.

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## Toward a Sustainable Future

### *How Green Initiatives and Innovative Approaches to Energy, Utilities, Transportation, and Land Use Decisions Can Secure a Sustainable Future*

How can we continue to engage our communities in taking on an innovative perspective for the sake of sustaining not only our environment, but also our economy, quality of life, and viability as a regional force?

#### Panelists

Moderator: **Martin Bierbaum, Ph.D., J.D.**,  
*National Center for Smart Growth*

**Mitchell Hersh, Mack-Cali Realty Corporation**

**Ashwani Vasishth, Ph.D.**,  
*Ramapo College of New Jersey*

**Jonathan Meisel, LEED AP, Jones Lang LaSalle Americas, Inc.**

**Joanne Potter, Cambridge Systematics, Inc.**

#### Presentation Summary

In order to accurately discuss sustainability, the issue needs to be defined. At the 2005 United Nations World Summit it was noted that sustainability requires the reconciliation of environmental, social and economic demands. Our actions must be based on how they will affect the future; whatever we take, we must put back. So-called “green technologies” can play a significant role in helping us to achieve a sustainable future.

Transportation currently accounts for 28% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. As a society we need to live, work, play, and shop, but doing so by driving less is not only more environmentally sustainable, it is more socially sustainable as well. Smart growth interventions can help to create neighborhoods that are less automobile-oriented and reliant. By focusing on underdeveloped areas near transit stops and transforming them into livable, walkable, mixed use communities

filled with green spaces and exciting storefronts, it is possible to revive existing downtowns and reduce car trips. Planting shade trees along streets and in parking lots in these communities serves to mitigate the urban heat island effect while providing better air quality and increased ground water recharge. This can then relieve strain on aging stormwater and Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) systems, helping to minimize the discharge of untreated effluent into rivers and streams during major storm events.

Another major source of greenhouse gas emissions comes from our residential and commercial building stock. Existing buildings, particularly those that are within urbanized areas impacted by the urban heat island effect, consume significant shares of energy for heating and cooling. While green technology and programs such as the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) have become the state of the art in building over the past few years, Bergen County’s building stock is too young to be considered economically viable for “green” retrofits given the current rates of return. New buildings on the other hand can and should be built using green technology. Until it becomes more economically favorable, existing buildings should take small, inexpensive measures to minimize energy consumption such as painting roofs white, which helps to mitigate the urban heat island effect. Then, as Bergen County’s building stock ages, rehabilitations should be done using green technology.

#### Ideas and Issues Discussed by Panelists and Audience

- Investment in green technology must bring a positive return.
  - Studies show that green buildings have a lower vacancy rate, which in the right market can be an incentive for a developer to go green.
- Private investment is the only way that green technology will move forward. The Public sector does not have the investment capabilities to take on large scale green projects especially in light of the recent budget crunch.
- Social responsibility will be the driving force toward sustainability while economics will drive what types of green technology will develop.
- We should look at different ways to address greenhouse gas emissions such as the effects of reducing speed limits and increasing density.

- Roof tops and pavement create a temperature difference of five to ten degrees higher than the surrounding areas.

- Urban forestry is one way urban heat islands can be tamed.
- There must be a maintenance and replacement program for trees
  - Many street trees in the county are dying of old age
  - The Master Plan should look at the type of tree that will best suit the street and provide the most benefit for the environment.
- Bergen County needs to see more mixed-use high density developments, especially in areas that need revitalization.
  - With more density green technology becomes more economically feasible
  - Higher densities better supports mass transit
  - Increased densities use less land area allowing more to be preserved for open space.

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## Health, Education, and Human Services

### *Strategies to Optimize a Desirable Future*

What actions will be necessary to make our visions for managing the health care system, preparing tomorrow’s work force, and coordinating a system for delivering human services a reality?

#### Panelists

Moderator: **Julia Orlando, CRC, Ed. M., MA, Bergen County Housing and Human Services Center**

**Tammy Graves-Milinelli, Bergen County Workforce Investment Board**

**Luis Tamayo, Northern Region, NJ Department of Human Services**

**Tom Toronto, Bergen County’s United Way**

**Marla Kein, MS, RD, CHES, Bergen County Department of Health Services**

#### Presentation Summary

Preparing a vision for the future of Bergen County’s health care, health education, and human services revolves around the ways these systems can be improved to serve greater



levels of the population. There is a distinct need across the Country to train and retrain workers to build a 21st Century health care workforce that can meet ever-changing employment conditions in the field. In order to train a new work force, it is essential to maximize individual potential, natural skills and abilities in today's workers while providing the next generation with the social skills, technological capacity, and self-sufficiency that will maintain Bergen County as an economic engine in the state. The County should focus on facilitating these necessary skills through life-long learning programs and career counseling in the field of health care, a growth industry in the County.

Bergen County needs more health care workers and better access to health services for the nearly 180,000 homebound individuals. However, State aid cuts and inadequate pay for providers make the field undesirable for many. There is also a need for more support for housing disabled individuals, and for chronic disease prevention and treatment. Initiatives such as electronic record keeping and information sharing enables collaboration and can provide a single point of access for services that are currently segregated throughout the County administration. Further, the new federal health care legislation should be fully understood by the County to help position it well in a new age of health care.

### Ideas and Issues Discussed by Panelists and the Audience

- Increase Medicaid, Medicare and charity care reimbursement rates
- Increase chronic disease self management programs to decrease health care costs in emergency rooms, hospitals, and clinics
- Pay home health aids a competitive salary.

- Create a system for mobile health care services
- General Assistance (GA) programs are being cut or having their budgets reduced which could push more individuals towards homelessness.
- The New Jersey Family Care program needs to be better publicized, especially towards the Latino population.
- Partner with schools to build a system to reach children with no healthcare
- State and local departments need to collaborate as partners to share information and use it to assist families in accessing services
  - Create a single point of access for clusters of services

### Keynote Address

#### *Changed Circumstances Create Future Development Opportunities*

**Jeff Otteau, The Otteau Valuation Group**

Beneath the recent crisis gripping the financial and real estate markets are long term structural changes that are reshaping consumer demand in New Jersey. Mr. Otteau led the discussion to explore the sweeping economic and demographic changes taking root in New Jersey and their effect on future real estate development patterns.

### Summary of Keynote Presentation

The train wreck that has occurred over the past couple of years in the real estate and financial markets, and in the overall economy has obscured some very broad, underlying shifts taking place in New Jersey. These structural

changes have been in motion for a decade will dictate spending patterns as we climb out of the great recession. What began with the unraveling of the housing market back in 2005 led to what we have seen in the past couple of years. The direction of commercial real estate markets, job markets, unemployment conditions, and financial markets, all flow from what begins in the housing market. Going all the way back to 1900 there has never been a recession that did not begin with a slowdown in housing and a slowdown in new home building. Our economy is 70% driven by consumer spending and housing development is the key driver of that spending.

Before any hint of the recession, larger shifts in economics, demographics and societal attitudes toward spending were underway, comprising a long term trend that will guide where the State will head on the other side of this recession. What led to New Jersey's rapid growth, prior to the recession, was largely rooted in the low cost alternatives to employers looking to flee the high costs of New York City and Connecticut. This brought high paying jobs to a state that largely had a manufacturing economy and opened the door to tremendous economic growth, creation of wealth, and prosperity for several decades. Today, the State has reached the point where high costs need to be balanced with what is sustainable going forward.

Starting with economics, New Jersey's job creation coming out of the recession is growing at a slower pace than in the rest of the nation. While the nation as a whole came out of the great recession in the third quarter of 2009 New Jersey continued to experience high unemployment growth. In past decades the nation had a record economy with 26 out of 28 quarters in a seven year period seeing growth in GDP. Meanwhile, New Jersey saw stagnation in private sector employment growth. The state was not creating jobs in very good times. The changes made now will govern how New Jersey moves out of the recession. Moving forward we can count on the federal government to raise interest rates – stifling New Jersey's spending power – and can anticipate higher energy costs as more oil is consumed by nations emerging from the recession. Although New Jersey has fared relatively well compared to the rest of the country in terms of home mortgage challenges, there is still a long line of foreclosures that will come to market during the recovery phase. Finally, banks have been so financially weakened that it will be a long time before we see the free flow of money appear in the markets again. The free flow of money is crucial for businesses to create and expand jobs that will push the economic recovery forward. In other words, this will be a slow process.



Demographic changes have also been underway in the State for some time now. Excluding immigrants from other countries, New Jersey now has more people leaving than coming in. The net loss of population is approximately 49,000 per year, going back to 2002. People are leaving because the high paying jobs are leaving and New Jersey's cost of living no longer matches up with the relative reduction in pay. "According to Boston University, between 2004 and 2008 New Jersey saw a net loss of \$70 Billion in personal wealth as a result of households leaving the state".

The number of New Jersey households with children is also declining and along with it, school enrollment. Since 1985, the number of New Jersey households with school children has declined such that 67% of households are childless. The reasons for this decline are relative to the reduction of income Generation Y is seeing as compared to their parents. Generation Y earns approximately 15% less than their parents and cannot afford to have children when taking into account the need to give up one income or pay for childcare. This decline in school children has been seen where municipalities have had hundreds of housing units built yet still saw a decline in school children. There are obviously some exceptions but by far the overwhelming majority of municipalities are seeing a decline in school enrollment. The upshot is that municipalities need be less concerned with density and the effects it has on school enrollment. It also makes clear that childless households are going to have less interest in living in far flung suburbs and more interest in high quality walkable communities because of their inherent efficiencies.

The rise of multigenerational households is also beginning to take hold in the State. As of now, approximately one in six households is multigenerational and that number is on the rise mostly for of the inherent economic

advantages. In part it is Generation Y who cannot find jobs or if they do find jobs they are not high paying enough to afford to live on their own. The other contributor is senior citizens who can no longer afford housing in the state. These citizens will either leave the state in pursuit of areas with little-to-no-income tax and relatively low property taxes or move in with their kids at costs much lower than those that currently exist in the housing market and tax structure. Going forward, we need to think about housing differently as an increasing portion of housing demand will be generated by multigenerational households and young, childless professionals.

Finally, there are societal changes that have been underway in New Jersey since before the recession and that will continue long after recovery. The reordering of spending patterns moving from conspicuous spending to practical consumerism will continue to drive value-shopping as a long term trend. Also as the baby boomers retire, a generation more comfortable with the internet will spend more via online shopping, changing the face of retail shopping as we know it today. The baby boomers, who account for 75% of spending, will begin to spend less to conserve their retirement funds. As many as six in ten baby boomers do not have enough savings to last their retirement years, in part because of the recession, and in part because cost of living has risen. As a result baby boomers will begin to sell housing for equity to make up the shortfalls and as they do that they will move into smaller more affordable housing if they stay in New Jersey at all.

All of this brings New Jersey to a new version of normal which is more of a European market model. There are things that we can do to keep some of the market structure we have – such as attracting new economic growth into our markets – but over the long term the shift will take place. Capitalism loves cheap real estate and cheap labor. New Jersey can

no longer compete with other states and other countries while maintaining the quality of life here. Going forward, we are going to have much more basic housing demand. Already new housing construction is on average smaller and it will likely get smaller still. The nation as a whole is going to see first time home buyers get progressively older because it is going to take longer before personal economic conditions meet the cost of homeownership. The upshot is that there will be a rental rebound that takes place and the percentage of owner-occupied, versus rental housing will shift, creating an enhanced market for upscale rental units. As housing demand begins to circle back away from the sprawling outskirts of the city, municipal officials and planners need to rethink zoning with higher densities and make clear these rental units are not the ones now associated with blight; they are upscale luxury units with working, childless professionals. As with every type of housing development trend, the retail and office markets will begin to follow the housing demand into areas where there are higher efficiencies and desirable communities. All of this provides great opportunity for planning and coordination to rethink developments and rethink zoning with efficiency as a mandate.

## Tying It All Together

### *Sense and Sustainability Thinking Beyond Borders to Create A Shared Vision for Future Prosperity*

All of our visioning efforts have driven home the notion that our key quality of life issues are intrinsically tied together – land use decisions affect transportation which affects business, trade, and economic viability which impacts revenue generation and taxes which in turn affect future land use decisions, ect. ect. These all criss-cross, comingle, and interplay to affect and create our current state of being and wellness. How can we break the cycle and thing outside the box and beyond the scale of our neighborhoods to create a shared vision to ensure our future prosperity.

### **What we heard people suggest for the County's Vision and the Panel's response to those suggestions.**

After the inspiring speech by Jeff Otteau, Jim Hooker, Senior Anchor for NJN News, asked the moderators from each of the six panels to present to the audience a brief summary of their discussions and opened the floor to general questions from the public. The intention of this session was to allow the exploration of all ideas relating to the

development of the Bergen County Master Plan within the context of the six previously discussed topic areas.

- An audience member first suggested that Bergen County needs retention policies for residents. People are leaving the County because they are being priced out of their homes. These are mostly people on fixed incomes such as seniors who desire affordable housing however we are also dealing with declining school enrollments. How will the Master Plan address these concerns? Will it call for the development of additional age restricted housing?
- The issue of population retention is a complicated problem. The Baby Boomer generation is retiring at nearly 10,000 people per day, making affordable senior housing a real concern. At the same time, declining school enrollment could possibly mean that there are empty schools. In this respect, Bergen County represents a snap shot of the state. People are leaving the State, and the issue going forward is not just that we need housing that is affordable to people of all generations, but where do we put that housing and at what density. Should the County consider converting empty schools to senior housing? If so, then what happens when school enrollment increases, will we have to then build new schools? If we do build new housing then that housing should follow general principles of sustainability where residents can be fully mobile via walking and biking on safe streets, and public transportation is readily available. These are the issues that make developing a Master Plan difficult and why the County is not just trying to develop a standard Master Plan, but one that is unique to Bergen County. The culture of the retired Baby Boomer is far different than that of past generations. Baby Boomers prefer to retire in place or retire in places where they can continue to lead active lives. Developing places where seniors can lead active lives mixed with other generations will foster the creation of lively downtowns. Where downtowns are more active and people tend to walk more, the community will see safer streets which will in turn create an even more livable community.
- Another participant suggested that the County needs to create more affordable housing, but how do you create more affordable housing? You can either sprawl more, or you can densify. Is it possible to densify Bergen County?

- Density is relative. There are ample places in Bergen County where infill development is possible, and there are even more places where redevelopment or rehabilitation is possible. At issue is the word density. Many people associate density with increased school children and an increased tax burden, but studies have shown that the Millennials, or Generation Y, are delaying starting families or not starting families at all. They also do not want what their parents wanted; they desire urban situations where public transportation is available and numerous activities and opportunities for social interaction are available. This suggests that dense urban developments can contain units that are significantly smaller and thus will not create nearly as many school children as traditional single family detached housing. Further, these more dense developments that are located with access to public transportation permit residents far more discretionary income that supports a variety of activities that help make lively downtowns. Right now, places in New Jersey like these (e.g Princeton, New Jersey) are amongst the most expensive places to live. This is largely because there is a strong desire to live in areas that are walkable, but there are so few of these places that the supply and demand factor in turn drives prices up. Increasing the number of these types of communities will help to alleviate the high costs of living in walkable communities ensuring more affordable units and a greater diversity of residents.
- A small business owner said capital formation and job creation have been absent from the conversation. What will the “new normal” in economic growth look like? Over eighty percent of jobs are created by small business. We need to increase job formation and economic wealth through tax incentives and bail outs for small businesses not large banks.
- A participant from Ridgefield Park said the town has forty-four developable acres on the proposed Hudson Bergen Light Rail Line that have been deemed in need of redevelopment. The town created and adopted a redevelopment plan but as of yet has not found any interest in developing the property? How can they make it work?
- The Panel suggested that they continue to advertise the redevelopment plan through trade organizations, word of mouth, as well as the issuance of a Request for Proposals to gather interest from potential developers. Further, the panel suggested that the

Town examine the redevelopment plan to determine if it is feasible in terms of market demands. Right now, because of the economic recession, there are not many developers willing to take on big projects; however, activity is beginning to take hold and though right now it is primarily related to infill developments, larger projects will begin to materialize. Another big deterrent that could be at play is whether or not the redevelopment plan requires the developer to fund a huge infrastructure project as part of the development of the site.

