
Transit-Oriented Development

Path to Sustainability

West Windsor

February 22, 2007
George S. Hawkins



Context for Presentation

- NJ Future is a non-partisan, 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
- Offer perspective, education and support

My Goals for the Evening

- Provide a context for current situation
- Suggest planning approach
- Conclusion: Seize the Day!

Part 1

Context of the Current Situation

Current Growth Patterns

- Low density
- Single use
- Auto dependent
- Loss of local/unique features
- Loss of open space
- Scattered – leapfrogging development
- Urban/older community decline

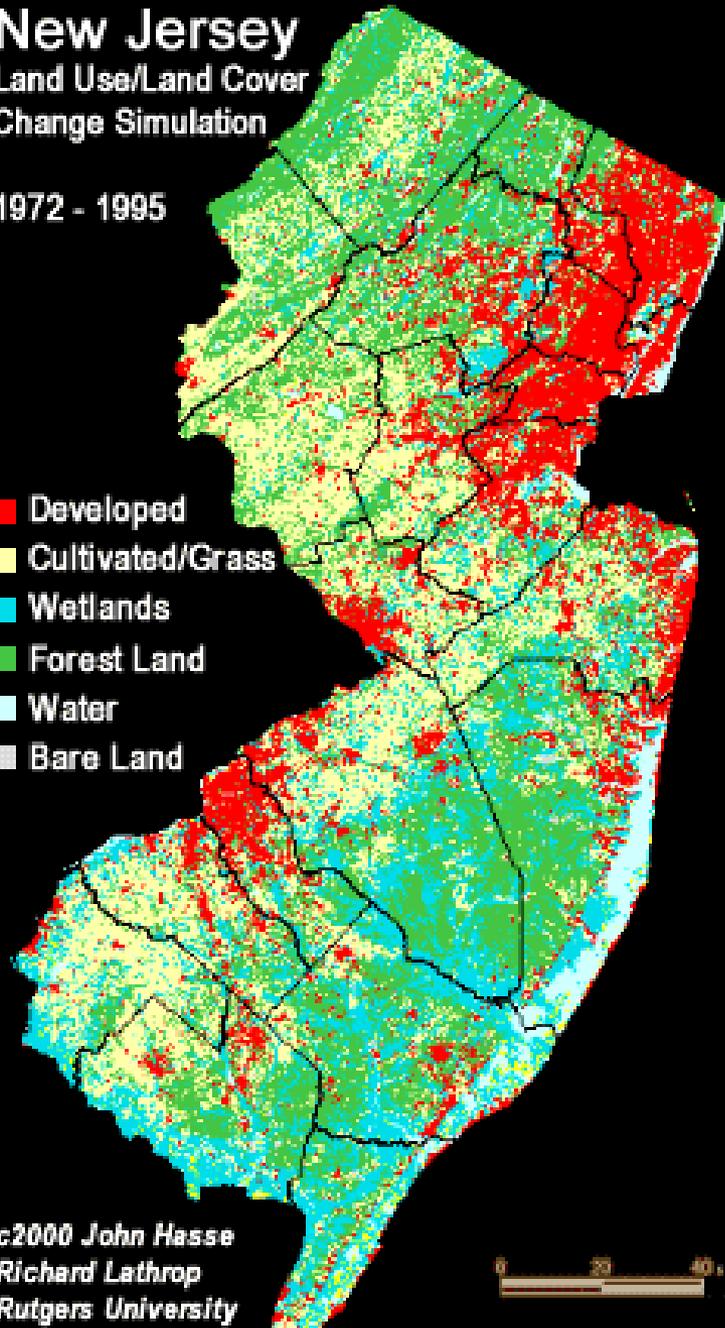




New Jersey Land Use/Land Cover Change Simulation

1972 - 1995

- Developed
- Cultivated/Grass
- Wetlands
- Forest Land
- Water
- Bare Land

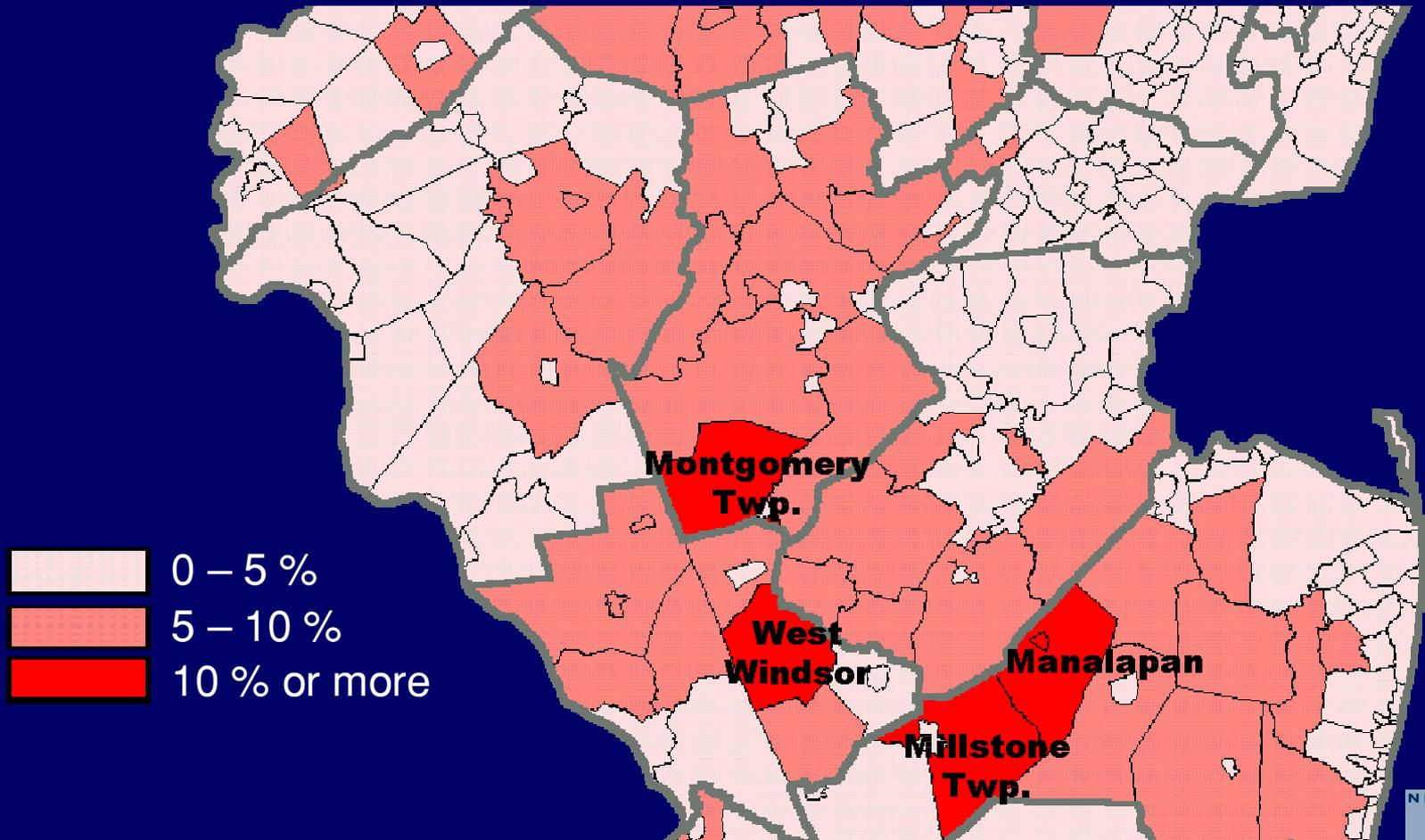


c2000 John Hesse
Richard Lathrop
Rutgers University
Center for Remote Sensing & Spatial Analysis

Land Consumption

- Land consumption 3.2 x faster than population growth
- New Jersey will be the first state to achieve full build-out

Percent Developed 1986-95, Central NJ



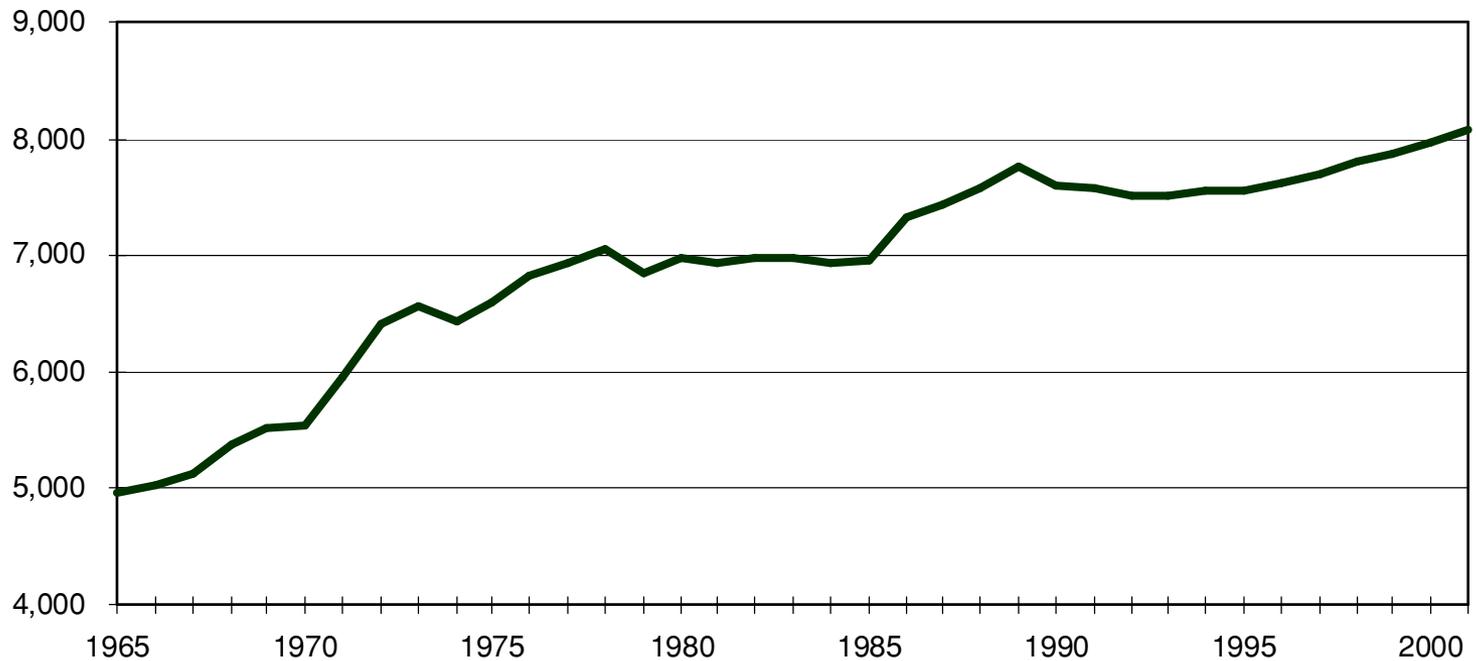


For every 1% increase in developed land, there is a corresponding 1-1.5% increase in VMT

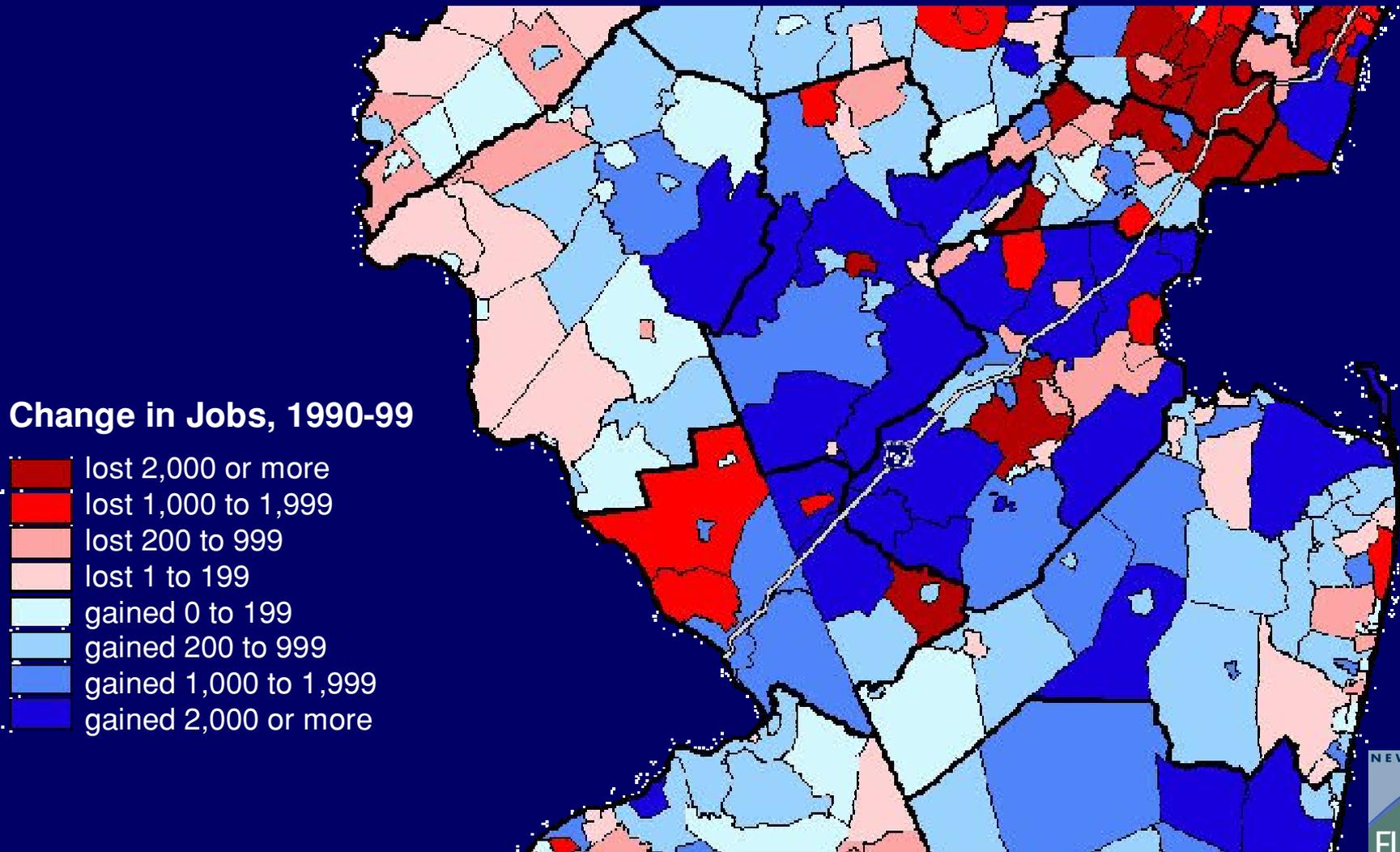
Traffic Increasing

Vehicle Miles Traveled

Annual vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita
on New Jersey's road system

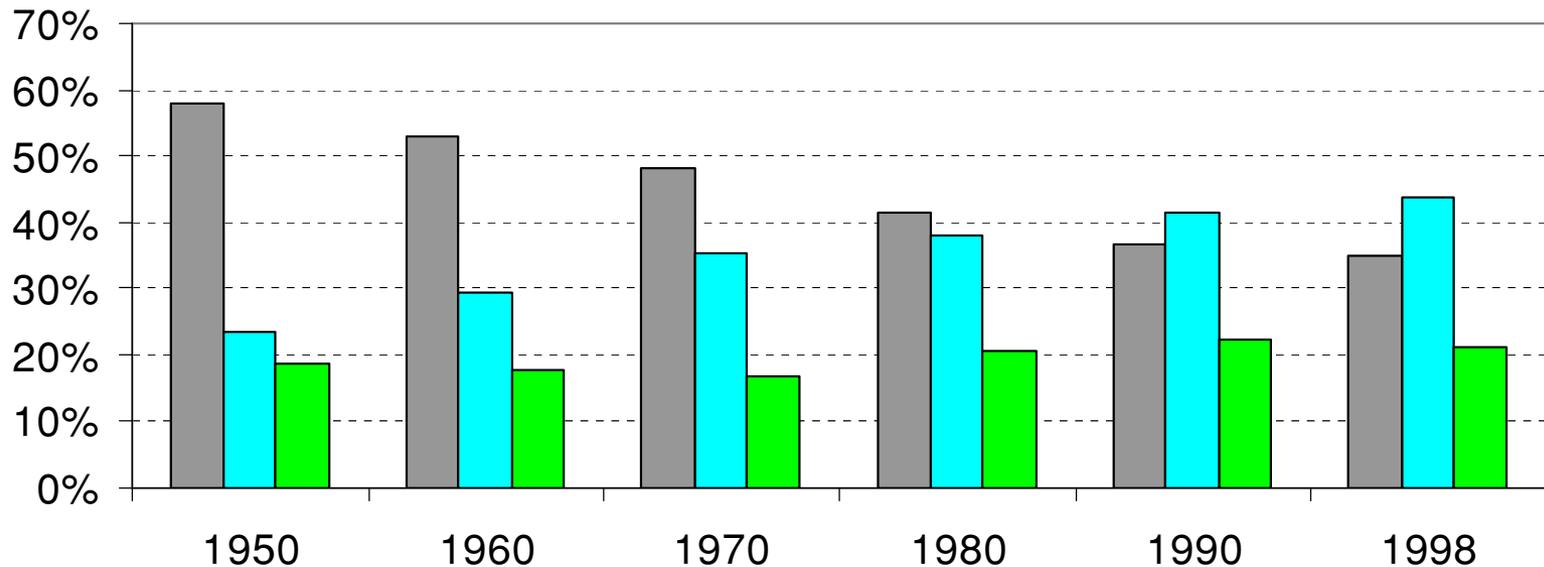


Auto-dependant Commuting



Low Density Development

Percentage of NJ population living at various densities: 1950 - 1998



Persons per square mile:

■ 5,000 and up

■ 1,000 - 4,999

■ < 1,000

Economic Prosperity

- Brookings Institution hired to do an economic diagnostic of the State.
- Issues a report “Prosperity at Risk”
- Single biggest threat: sprawled land use patterns, separation of housing from jobs, lack of housing choices.
- Not sustainable pattern: economic or environmental

Not Just *WHERE*, but *HOW* We Build

- *If...* New Jersey developed at the density of Princeton, its entire population could fit into 18% of the state's land area
- *If...* New Jersey developed at the density of Montgomery, we would need more than 2 "New Jerseys" to accommodate the people who are here today

Solutions

- Where we grow --- change state and local policies to favor redevelopment over greenfield development and fix it first over build new to save money and land.
- How we grow --- Mix uses, build more densely to save land, reduce costs and provide more mobility choices by connecting land use and transportation.

PART II

West Windsor and Transit Oriented Development

NJ Transit Village Program

- “The Transit Village Initiative helps to redevelop and revitalize communities around transit facilities to make them an appealing choice for people to live, work and play, thereby reducing reliance on the automobile. ”

Program Summary

- Interagency task force reviews applications
- Small number of municipalities selected to participate
- In last round, 20 applied – 2 were selected
- Now 16 Transit Villages

TOD: General Features

- Less automobile dependent
- Safer and more attractive for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Cleaner from fewer cars
- More viable for those who don't drive (seniors and children)
- Good for existing and new residents

Key Attribute: Pedestrian Friendly

- Wide, attractive sidewalks – connections and places to go
- Shops, offices, restaurants at street level
- Traffic calming devices, cross walks and speed bumps
- Landscaping and decorative devices

Improve the Whole Community

- Open spaces near transit facility, connected to walk and bikeways
- Location of parking lots along walkways, minimize walking in parking lots
- Wider walks near station to support sidewalk activities (sidewalk sales, outdoor dining)
- Connect outward to existing neighborhoods

Benefits of Selection

- State of New Jersey commitment to the municipality's vision for redevelopment
- Coordination among the state agencies that make up the Transit Village task force.
- Priority funding from some state agencies (NJDCA Smart Growth Grants)
- Technical assistance from some state agencies
- Eligibility for grants from annual \$1 million in NJDOT's Transit Village funding

Additional Benefits

- Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers found that residents of NJ existing “Transit Villages” rate their towns better places to live compared to other residents.
- Increased property values
- Safer streets

14 Criteria for Selection

- Criteria 1: A good Transit Village candidate must make a commitment to grow in jobs, housing and population.

Criteria 2

- A designated Transit Village must have a transit facility. This can be a rail or light rail station, ferry terminal, a bus hub or bus transfer station.

Criteria 3

- The candidate for Transit Village designation must have vacant land and/or underutilized or deteriorated buildings within walking distance of transit where redevelopment can take place.

Criteria 4

- A Transit Village candidate must have an adopted land-use strategy for achieving compact, transit-supportive, mixed-use development within walking distance of transit. This land use strategy should be based on transit-oriented development (TOD) principles and can be in the form of a redevelopment plan or zoning ordinance.

Criteria 5

- The candidate must have a strong residential component. This can include mid-rise buildings, townhouses or apartments over first-floor businesses. A wide variety of housing choices within walking distance of transit helps to support transit ridership.

Criteria 6

- A good candidate will have "ready-to-go" projects. This means at least one transit-oriented project that can be completed within three years.

Criteria 7

- In order for a municipality to succeed as a Transit Village, it should demonstrate pedestrian and bicycle friendliness. This means clear, direct pathways from the transit station to shops, offices, surrounding neighborhoods and other destinations.

Criteria 8

- A good candidate views its transit station as the focal point of the community and uses its station plaza as a gathering place for community activities such as festivals, concerts, public ceremonies and farmers markets.

Criteria 9

- A good candidate includes its transit station in a station area management plan, in a special improvement district (SID) or as part of a Main Street New Jersey designation.

Criteria 10

- A good candidate should strive to minimize automobile use by maximizing the appeal of transit. One example of this is the concierge service in the Metuchen train station. Commuters drop off errands (such as dry cleaning, packages for mailing, etc.) in the morning and pickup items on the opposite side of the tracks on the way home.

Criteria 11

- The candidate should provide commuter parking for residents and non-residents. A Transit Village should also strive to reduce parking requirements near transit stations and implement shared parking solutions wherever possible.

Criteria 12

- The candidate should support local arts and culture. This brings vibrancy and activity to a community. Designating an arts, antique or restaurant district helps make a Transit Village a destination.

Criteria 13

- The candidate should support the historic and architectural integrity of the community by ensuring that new buildings blend in with the existing buildings. This can be done with architectural design guidelines that govern new building facades, window replacements, awnings, lighting and signs.

Criteria 14

- The candidate should consider how to incorporate some affordable housing within walking distance of transit since low and moderate income households rely heavily on public transportation.

From Transit Village Selection Criteria

Key Criteria for West Windsor

- 5 – Variety of residential uses
- 7 - Bicycle and pedestrian friendly
- 8 – Focal point
- 10 – Minimize automobile use
- 11 – Residents and non-residents – shared parking arrangements
- 12 – Local arts and culture
- 13 – Integrity with historic design and community
- 14 – Affordable Housing within walking distance

Part III

Planning for the Future

Planning 101

- Process Issues
 - Transparency of process – Who is doing what, and when.
 - Accessibility of information – public can easily attain and review information
 - Structured decisions:
 - Characterize
 - Assess
 - Plan
 - Evaluate
 - Select

Characterize

- Design aspects of Transit Village are variable.
- Need to start with characterization of capacity – roads and parking
- Need to understand financial implications – scale of residential housing, type of residential housing, commercial development offset – financial modeling
- Other issues: stormwater, open space, pedestrian access, retail opportunities

Public Involvement

- Opportunity: Develop a consensus vision for the community
- Engage in Choices of Design:
 - Roads/intersections to be included and/or redesigned
 - Amenities to be added
 - Location and design of new development

Open, Outreach, Outcome

- Public process that is open
- Public process that reaches out to all participants
- Public process that starts by defining some clear outcomes
- Public process that develops alternatives to compare to outcomes

Example Outcomes

- Improved connection through the town center
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle access to station and neighborhoods
- Improved access to retail that is desirable addition
- Improved housing choices that limits financial cost
- Improved traffic flow, including shared parking
- State funding support in planning and development
- Neighborhood Center that adds to the quality of life of WEST WINDSOR residents

Critical Point to Remember

- West Windsor Town Center is not a “redevelopment” in many ways, but is the opportunity to design development, trails, walkways, open space, and roads to form a completely new landscape.

Today

- West Windsor already bears most of the costs associated with a major transit station, but has gained very little of the benefit.

Tomorrow

- West Windsor can plan, design and build a focus of town that connects neighborhoods, that reduces traffic, that adds retail and housing choices, and that becomes a community and cultural destination

Conclusion

“Carpe PM”

Seize the Day!

Key Websites

- <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/village/>
- <http://www.njfuture.org> (Look in Issues Section for more on transportation)
- <http://Policy.rutgers.edu/vtc/tod/index.html>
- <http://www.princetononline/pjnc/>
- <http://www.livableplaces.org/policy/todincen tives.html>
- <http://www.transitvillages.org>
- www.reconnectingamerica.org



**...*more* Livable Places
and Open Spaces**

George S. Hawkins
www.njfuture.org